



2012 CLASS OUTLINE & RULES

Norco, California – May 18-20

OVERVIEW:

Trainers and Mustangs will be judged in five preliminary areas – (1) handling and conditioning, (2) a pattern class, (3) a combined leading and riding obstacle course, (4) a rural trail challenge and (5) an urban trail challenge. One or more judges will assess the handling and conditioning component, and two or more judges will assess the pattern, obstacle and trail classes. The top 10 Mustangs with the highest combined total scores from the preliminary classes will return for a finals competition that includes compulsory maneuvers and a freestyle performance.

CLASS DESCRIPTION & SCORING:

A. Handling and Conditioning – 20 points

1. **Handling – 10 points** - The trainer will bring the horse into a small pen and the Handling and Conditioning components will be judged during this time. During the Handling portion, the trainer will un-halter and release the horse in the pen. The trainer or a designated individual will then move the horse around the pen, approach the horse and re-halter. During this process the horse will be judged on handling and mannerisms using the following guidelines:
 - Trainer/Horse demeanor in pen (5 points).
 - Trainer/Horse responsiveness/communication/relationship during re-haltering process (5 points).
2. **Conditioning – 10 points** - The horse's condition will be judged in two areas:
 - Appropriate weight/muscling (5 points).
 - Overall Appearance – this score will reflect hair coat, feet condition, etc. (5 points).

No person shall alter, change or attempt to hide the natural marking and/or rubbed or raw skin of a horse by surgery, dye, powder or in any other manner. Trainers may clip/trim horses, or leave mane, tail, ears, muzzle and fetlocks natural. Use of false tails or extensions on the mane or tail are prohibited. No points will be deducted for short or rubbed out manes or tails. The score will not reflect conformation.

B. Pattern Class - 40 Points from each judge

This class is intended to show the horse's willingness and ability to complete a pattern of generic horsemanship maneuvers. Judges will assess exhibitors showing in either Western or English discipline accordingly. For example, the pattern may call for a 360 pivot – judges will expect a horse shown under English attire to turn on the backhand and expect a horse shown under Western equipment to attempt to spin. A horse will be given credit for traveling with his head held in a natural position, ears alert and moving at a natural speed for the gait requested. Credit will also be given for making a smooth transition between gaits and for keeping the correct lead. Maneuvers may include but are not limited to:

- Walk
- Trot
- Lope or Canter
- Change directions while on the rail
- Stop
- Back
- Pivots or turns to right and left
- Lead changes

C. Combined Leading & Riding Obstacle Course – 40 points from each judge

This class will be held in the arena and is designed to show a horse's ability and willingness to perform several tasks that might be asked of him during the course of a normal trail ride or work day. Exhibitors will be asked to lead and ride their horse through a course of basic, generic obstacles and maneuvers. Exhibitors will be able to “walk thru” the course with the judges prior to the class. **Horses are not allowed during the walk-thru.**

Leading elements obstacles/maneuvers may include but are not limited to:

- Walk, trot, stop and back
- Walk over logs/poles
- Walk/trot between cones/obstacles
- Maneuver forward and/or reverse through a simple chute
- Pick up all four feet
- Brush horse once on each side
- Load and unload from stock trailer

Riding obstacles/maneuvers may include but are not limited to:

- Walk, trot, canter/lope, stop and back
- Turns and circles to the left and right
- Walk over logs/poles
- Lead change
- Walk over bridge
- Maneuver forward and/or reverse through a simple chute
- Pick up object and carry from barrel to barrel
- Dragging items specified length
- “At Best” - Trainers will be given 90 seconds to show their Mustang with no restrictions or requirements. Props, jumps, mechanical devises, etc. are not allowed during this portion of the competition. Trainers may use obstacles already incorporated into the riding course; but obstacles may not be moved. Trainers may use any piece of tack and/or equipment that is essential to their riding discipline (rope, gun, whip, etc.). Items must be carried on saddle or by the trainer during the entire course. All items subject to review and approval by MHF staff.

**Additional elements may be added such as brush, artificial foliage, rain slickers, etc.*

D. Rural Trail – 100 total points – Approximately 2 hours of riding

Trainers and Mustangs will be scored on obstacles on the trail which may include but are not limited to:

- Negotiating rocks
- Maneuvering up and down steep hills
- Dismounting and mounting on the trail
- Crossing draws and bridges
- Walk, trot and lope or canter

E. Urban Trail – 100 total points – Approximately 2 hours of riding

Trainers and Mustangs will be scored on obstacles on the trail (bridle paths are located on every street) which may include but are not limited to:

- Crossing streets
- Using tie rails
- Traffic noises
- Live animals
- Negotiating river beds
- Crossing creeks of knee-high water
- Walk, trot and lope or canter

FINALS DESCRIPTION & SCORING:

- A. Competitors will come into the finals with a “clean slate.” No previous scores will be counted toward the final placing.
- B. Each contestant will have 90 seconds to complete required compulsory maneuvers (listed below).
- C. The completion of the compulsory maneuvers will take place separately from the freestyle performance.
- D. For the freestyle performance, trainers will have four minutes to stage or set the arena.
- E. Trainers must provide their own props and assistance for arena set up and tear down - it is the trainer's responsibility to make sure all props are cleared from the arena immediately following the conclusion of the freestyle performance, including hay, confetti, etc.
- F. Trainers will have 3.5 minutes to complete their freestyle performance – music and time will start when competitor enters the arena.
- G. "Voice-overs" and/or commentary from the trainer are not allowed during the performance. Music is a required component of the freestyle performance – if the trainer does not turn in music during the finalists' meeting at the event, management may select music for him/her. All music is subject to review and approval by MHF staff.
- H. One cow will be provided for those finalists requesting one.
- I. Other animals (dogs, additional horses, additional cattle, etc.) will NOT be allowed in the arena during the finals performance for any reason.
- J. Other people (including children) will NOT be allowed in the arena during the finals performance for any reason other than to set up obstacles, hand obstacles to the exhibitor or drive a vehicle to be used during the performance. Other people are NOT allowed to act as props, ride or come in contact with the horse at any point during the performance. All items subject to review and approval by MHF staff.
- K. Ties will be broken by the compulsory score. If a tie exists between compulsory scores, the score from a predetermined compulsory maneuver will break the tie. The tiebreaker compulsory maneuver will be determined prior to the start of the event. In case of further ties, a tiebreaker judge may be used. Management reserves the right to use a “ride off” as a tie breaker for first place.
- L. Finalists will be scored on the following:
 - 1. **Execution of Compulsory Maneuvers – 40 total points per judge**

Contestants will be judged on the execution of 10 compulsory maneuvers. Each maneuver is worth four points each. This score will reflect completion of the maneuver as well as the horse’s level of willingness to execute the maneuvers in a relaxed and confident manner. Contestants may perform the following in any order (pattern will not be provided to finalists):

 - 1. Walk a minimum of six steps
 - 2. Trot a minimum of six strides
 - 3. Lope/canter a minimum of six strides
 - 4. Stop
 - 5. Back a minimum of six steps
 - 6. Lope/canter one full circle to the right
 - 7. Lope/canter one full circle to the left
 - 8. Lead change
 - 9. Pivot or spin 360 degrees to the right
 - 10. Pivot or spin 360 degrees to the left

2. Freestyle Performance – 60 total points per judge

The freestyle portion of the finals competition encourages trainers to choose music, costumes and props which permit them to show the athletic abilities of their horse in a crowd appealing way. During the freestyle performance, contestants will be scored based on the following:

A. Overall Horsemanship - 30 points:

- The horse's overall willingness to perform and execute maneuvers in a relaxed and confident manner (10 points)
- Communication and partnership between horse and rider (10 points)
- Incorporation of maneuvers and their degree of difficulty (10 points). These maneuvers would include but are not limited to: *sidepass, two tracking either direction, pulling or dragging, jumping, serpentines, rollbacks, roping, mounted shooting, lead changes, circles with variance in size and speed, stops, etc.*

B. Artistic Interpretation - 30 points:

- Components of Choreography – the composition and arrangement of the ride in relation to the music and its rhythm, as well as the use of maneuvers, costumes, and/or props to enhance the performance (15 points)
- The “WOW” Factor – level of originality and the overall entertainment value of the performance (15 points).