

SIDE SADDLE EQUITATION CLASSES

What happens; Hints & Tips; Scores/Results

Equitation classes are run in the following manner:

Competitor step-by-step

1. All competitors walk into the ring on the right rein
2. All competitors trot on.
3. All competitors canter on.
4. All change rein in trot
5. All canter left
6. All line up, sometimes in set order.
7. Individually come forward, have safety of stirrup checked, perform individual show, have turnout checked. Return to line.
8. Walk round together, final order chosen.

Correspondingly, the judge will look for some or all of the following:-

1. How elegant you look, who chooses a good spot in the ring (ring-craft), how straight you are.
2. How correct and elegant you are, how well your horse is going, whether it is sound, may check straightness by standing by side of ring.
3. As above.
4. As above. By now the less fit/able riders will be puffing, bouncing, and looking uncomfortable.
5. How secure you are in left canter, correct position of legs, right shoulder & straightness.
6. Who sits tall and looks tidy in the line up – DO NOT SLOUCH!
7. Safety of tack, correctness of show, length of show, straightness of position, way of going of horse, elegance and ease of rider. Turnout will be checked at end of show, and fit of saddle.
8. Final decision, so try to look at ease, tall and elegant!

Hints & Tips

A horse can misbehave slightly, and not be penalized, so a well behaved horse can be beaten by a badly behaved horse, that is ridden well. However, some judges say it is the rider's job to produce it to go well, and will not let a badly behaved horse win.

Ring-craft will play a fairly important part in where you are lined up initially. If you have not done much showing, look at the other competitors in the collecting ring. When you go into the ring, avoid anyone who looks unsafe, or as if they may behave badly. It often helps to follow a horse of a different colour to your own horse. When you are first starting it is often best to follow the best person in the class, and see how they use the ring, and learn from them!

When the steward is calling people into line, be observant, and do not miss your call. If they meant to call someone else, and you go in, they will soon send you out again!

When the person before you is doing their show, make sure you and your horse are awake, and be ready to come out of line as soon as asked to. While you are waiting plan your show, so you know where you are going. When you finish your show, try to get the horse to stand well, while the turnout is looked at.

In the turnout section the judge will look at the fit of the saddle to the horse, the fit of the saddle to the rider, how level the saddle is, and the correctness of the girth, balance girth etc. They should also look at the rider's attire, for correctness, cleanliness, and neatness. Things like spur too low, hair untidy, gloves too dark, stick tatty, or with coloured end on dressage whip can all make a difference to your placing. The judge will also look at the bridle, for fit and cleanliness, the way the horse is turned out and the overall impression.

Scores/Results

The final result will be a combination of good effective riding, correct position, horse going correctly, good turnout, well planned show, and a well fitting, clean saddle. Because of all these factors, the result can be a little mystifying to onlookers. When the rosettes are given out, the show rosettes will be given out as normal. If it is an open class, with seniors and juniors in it, the side saddle association rosettes and points can take a bit of understanding. The top three seniors who are carrying their membership cards, receive rosettes first to third and points accordingly as do the top three juniors who are carrying their membership cards. Any other competitor carrying their membership card gets 2 points. No card, no points! Thus it is perfectly possible for someone who is sixth or lower to receive a SSA rosette, and points!

Most equitation classes are open, so competitors who have won at the national championships on many occasions may well be competing against someone who is a total novice. The total novice is very unlikely to beat the experienced competitor. However, do not be disheartened. All the top competitors started out as novices, making the same mistakes that this year's novices will make! Also, if you want to do the equitation at the SSA championships, the experienced people will not be eligible for the novice class that you will be in!

It is a good plan to keep a record of judge's comments. If one particular judge likes canes rather than schooling whips, use that information to your advantage. Try to act on the comments, but if a judge consistently does not like your horse, or your way of riding, find classes with another judge!