

# Youth Guidelines for Showing Shires

Adapted in February 2003 from the Belgian Draft Horse Youth and Educational Fund, Inc. Guidelines with permission from the Belgian Corporation of America.

Modified for Shire exhibitors 2003 by the ASHA Youth and Breed Show Committees.

## Youth Showmanship Guidelines:

### *Purpose:*

**The purpose of youth showmanship is to present the horse to the judge in the most positive manner possible.**

### *Preparation of the Animal:*

**Cleaning:** The animal should be bathed and groomed before entering the ring.

**Clipping:** Head in general, long hairs on face, around eyes, ears, and bridle path. Shorten and even up the mane hair as needed. Body hair may be trimmed if desired.

**Bridle or Halter:** Should fit properly and be cleaned and polished with appropriate lead shank.

**Hooves:** Finished neatly and shod if over two years old. Polish is optional, but should always be clear (never black).

**Tail:** Braided or tied to include all tail hair.

**Mane:** Rolled when appropriate (geldings are always rolled, mares and foals are optional).

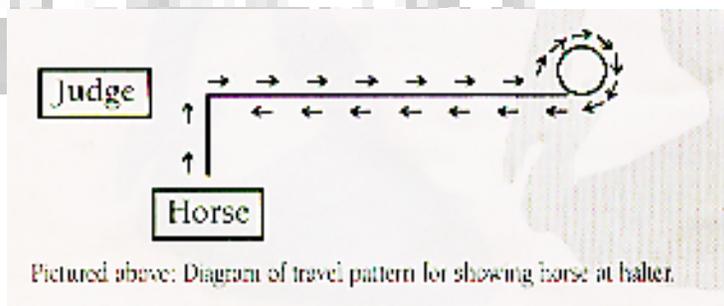
### *Preparation of the Exhibitor:*

1. Select and practice with animal prior to entering the show ring
2. Dress neatly, generally in black pants with shirt tucked in. **NO SNEAKERS.**
3. Have exhibitor number clearly visible.
4. If you carry a show stick/dressage whip, understand its use.

### *Exhibiting:*

1. Exhibitor should have lead in right hand and show stick/dressage whip in left. When moving the horse, its head should be even with your right shoulder. If you are out ahead pulling the animal, the head will come down and the horse will not be able to travel freely. If you are too far behind the horse you may lose control. Horse and exhibitor should travel together.
2. Enter the ring at a controlled trot, horse's head up, watching the judge if he is already in the ring.
3. After entering the ring, line up on the rail at the direction of the judge or ring steward. After stopping at the rail, turn yourself 180° so your left shoulder is next to the horse. Change the lead to the left hand and show stick/dressage whip to right hand. When **setting up, showing, or backing** horse, lead should always be in **left hand**. When moving horse at a walk or trot, lead should be in **right hand**.
4. Set up horse. In setting up the horse, the front feet should be set squarely underneath shoulders and the hocks should be together. Back feet should neither be parked out, nor set too far underneath the horse. The horse should be kept alert, and its head should be up. After horse is set, evenly divide your time between watching the judge, the other exhibitors, and your horse. Generally as each exhibitor is called out to the judge the next exhibitor will move over and take his/her place. This means you should back your horse a few steps, then move up a spot closer to the judge. Be careful not to get too close to the other horses, as they may not be familiar with your horse.

5. Exhibitor should wait their turn for judge to call or motion them to present horse. When directed, walk horse to judge and get instructions for presenting horse, if they have not been given earlier by the ring steward. Instructions generally are: "Walk a few steps, then trot, turn around walk a few steps then return at a trot with your horse." Always be polite, quick, and alert. SMILE!
  - You will line yourself up in front of the judge and go directly away as instructed. Always watch the judge (by looking over your shoulder) and your horse while traveling. While leading horse away from the judge the exhibitor must prepare for the return and should do as the diagram below suggests unless otherwise specified by judge or ring steward. The horse should be led straight away from the judge, and he/she should never have to move to see the horse travel. Alternate patterns include a "keyhole turn" or a triangle.
  - ALWAYS turn the horse away from you, NEVER towards you, and return back to the judge in a straight line.
  - In preparing for the final inspection, the exhibitor should stop the horse a safe distance away from the judge.
  - Set up your horse for the judge's inspection. Never get frustrated while setting your horse- do the best you can as quickly as you can. Be sure to look back and forth from the judge to the horse while setting the horse up.
  - Exhibitor attention should be closely divided between the horse and the position of the judge as the inspection is completed.
  - As the judge inspects the horse, the exhibitor should not obstruct their view. In senior showmanship (and sometimes in junior showmanship) a question may be asked regarding conformation, showing, or general health and management. The judge can ask you ANYTHING- so be prepared- though he/she will generally ask you to point out a part of the horse or describe a conformation fault.
  - When the judge has completed inspecting the horse, the exhibitor should turn the horse away from him/herself and trot smartly away from the judge behind the horses on the rail to the far end of the line, unless otherwise instructed.



Pictured above: Diagram of travel pattern for showing a horse at halter.

6. Upon returning to the rail, the horse should be set up in line and presented in anticipation that the judge could be looking at any time. However both the exhibitor and the horse are allowed a less "at attention" stance. During the final inspection on the rail, the judge may ask you to move the horse from the line to be placed in a new position off the rail for placing. When doing so, the horse should be backed from the line, turned to the right and led to the assigned position.
  - Sometimes the judge may ask certain exhibitors to trade horses to help him/her make a decision. You should be prepared for the possibility of this happening. Do the best you can with the assigned horse, as the point is to show the judge how well you can show ANY animal, not just the one you know.

7. Remember to keep showing your horse until the class is over. The judge may still switch the placings around until he/she has turned in his/her judging card.
8. The judge should make every attempt to speak with each exhibitor before they leave the ring.
9. Be a gracious winner and a good sport, no matter where you place.

## **Youth Decorating Guidelines:**

*Purpose:*

**The purpose of the youth decorating class is to show your skills in the art of braiding and turning out.**

Participants must enter the ring with a horse that is clean and groomed. Braiding bench, braiding decorations and all braiding equipment should be provided by the participant. An assistant may be used to hold the horse.

Participants will be required to complete the minimum requirements:

1. A five-flower hitch braid.
  - a. Braid should be tight and close to neck.
  - b. When viewed from the back the braid should be down the center of the neck.
  - c. Braid should be consistent in size.
  - d. Flowers should be tight and uniformly spaced.
  - e. A seven-flower halter braid and the braiding of the forelock are preferred, but not absolutely necessary.
2. Tie or braid the tail, depending on its length.
  - a. When doing a scotch knot it should be tight, neat and high in the center of the tail.
  - b. When doing a long tail it should be tight, correct and include all the tail hair.
  - c. Sprigs are optional.
3. All decorations should be complete within a 30-minute time limit. The ring steward should keep all participants informed of how much time there is left, usually at 10-minute intervals.
4. Final placings will be determined by the mane and tail decorations, the overall appearance of the horse and your performance throughout the class.
5. The judge should make every attempt to speak with each exhibitor before they leave the ring.
6. Be a gracious winner and a good sport, no matter where you place.

## **Youth Single and Team Driving Guidelines:**

*Purpose:*

**The purpose of youth driving is to exhibit proficiency and become a better driver.**

*Preparation:*

**Practice:** The youth should gain experience driving at a walk, trot, back, and other maneuvers generally used with draft horses.

**Horse:** The horse(s) in this class are to be judged on their performance with and suitability for the youth driver, NOT on conformation. The Horse(s) should be clean, groomed, and presented in the most positive manner. Remember that the most important thing is to be comfortable with the horse(s). It is how you drive and handle the horse(s) that will win you the class, not how hitchy the horse(s) is/are. Be confident and patient with your horse(s), because if you are relaxed, your horse(s) will relax as well.

**Show Harness:** Harness must be safe, sound, clean, and properly adjusted.

**Vehicle:** A cart or wagon that is clean, safe, in good repair, and is proper for use in the show ring.

**Attire:** Youth must dress in clean, appropriate, clothing. For girls that means a skirt or nice pantsuit, appropriate shoes, a hat, and gloves. For boys that means a nice shirt, dress slacks, a tie, appropriate shoes, as well as a hat and gloves. In some shows a vest or jacket is required and is always acceptable. One must ALWAYS carry a whip, which should be held at a 45° angle.

**Posture:** The driver must be straight in the back, the feet reaching the foot rest with the elbows slightly forward of the body. SMILE!!

**Position:** The driver is usually seated on the right, sitting back in the seat, with access to the brake when driving to a wagon, and is generally accompanied by an experienced driver.

#### *Final Preparation:*

1. The driver must check the hitch for appropriate adjustments for safe driving.
2. The driver must achieve proper tension on the lines and have the whip in hand at all times.
3. Be sure number is prominently displayed on the back of vehicle.

#### *Exhibiting:*

When the unit enters the ring the driver will be evaluated throughout the class on their posture, use of hands to gather and adjust the lines, and use and position of arms and legs to steady themselves. The driver's arms should be forward of the body while the horse(s) work(s) as a smooth consistent unit. Drivers will be evaluated on their ability to command horses along the rail at a walk and trot, to reverse direction, to line up, to stop, and to back. A figure eight or swing (fan) may be requested at the discretion of the judge. Other maneuvers should NOT be expected in youth classes.

1. Enter at a trot with the unit bearing to the right at a safe speed. The driver should be aware of the location of the judge and the ring steward
2. When all units are in the ring, you should space yourself at a trot and follow the directions of the ring steward.
  - Use of whip may be necessary, but shouldn't be excessive.
  - Correct posture should be maintained at all times.
3. Upon direction the driver will bring the horse(s) smoothly to a walk.
4. Upon completion of the walk, the driver will be asked to make a smooth transition to a trot.
5. At the direction of the ring steward the driver will reverse direction on the diagonal assuming an inside path until the rail is clear. Your reverse should be smooth and arced, not choppy, and should cut straight across the diagonal of the ring.
6. After all units have reversed, a trot on the rail will be continued. Another walk may be requested before leaving the rail. Usually you will trot, walk, trot, reverse, walk, trot, and then line up.
7. Upon direction the units will be asked to line up in the center of the ring. The horses should continue at the requested pace until they reach the center of the ring and then come to a smooth and controlled stop.

8. After stopping, the horses should stand quietly. The driver may relax the lines but must hold them in anticipation of starting, whip in hand. A header is optional but the experienced driver must remain in/on the cart/wagon.
9. The judge will complete an inspection of the hitch. When asked to back the driver should use the lines to signal the unit to move backward in unison, complete the back, stop and move forward at the judge's direction.
  - After this the judge may ask a question about such things as the name of a piece of harness or its function, or a question about the wagon/cart.
10. After picking up ribbon, the driver should leave the ring at a controlled trot. The class winner stays in the ring until all others have exited for the "victory lap".
11. The judge should make every attempt to speak with each exhibitor before they leave the ring.
12. Always be a gracious winner and a good sport, no matter where you place.

## **Youth Judging Guidelines (all breeds):**

### *Purpose:*

**The purpose of youth judging is to be able to confidently show your ability to judge and place animals, as well as to gain experience.**

You are judging every time you so much as glance at a horse. Each time you look at a horse you will have thoughts about things you will see that you may or may not like. You may like its color, the way it stands, its size, or you may wish it were trimmed or groomed differently. However, at some point you formulate your thoughts and determine which you like best. You must know the parts of a horse and learn to use the terms. You are putting your knowledge and skill to use each time a judgment has been made.

You will be asked to place each individual in the class in order of overall quality. Your placings will be compared with those of an official judge. Questions may be asked and/or oral reasons may be given on or about horses in each class. A typical class for a judging contest will consist of four animals. When judging you will be asked to compare each individual animal in a class with the other individual animals in the class and place each one in the order of your preference. Remember that you may not always be judging Shires, so you should familiarize yourself with all of the four major draft horse breeds.

Judge every horse you see to practice and develop confidence in yourself and your ability to recognize types of horses, their condition, and their conformational strengths and weaknesses.

### *Judging Procedure:*

When judging you should look for the most ideal individuals today, in terms of soundness, confirmation, correctness, quality, fitness, correct way of moving, and the potential of breeding stock to improve the breed.

A definite method of judging a horse should be used to help you avoid overlooking any faults with the horse. The following is a common method:

1. Stay in a position to get a long-range view of the horse. You are developing an opinion of overall appearance.

2. Watch the horse move. When watching the way of going you will try to get directly in line with the direction the horse is moving to get a view of foot and leg movements at a walk and trot. Watch for good movement, as well as lameness, crampiness, and stringhalt (stringhalt is noticed more while the horse is moving backwards).
3. Study the knee action both at the walk and trot. The front feet should break over straight with no wing or paddle. Pay special attention to hock action. The horse should go close behind with a lot of flex to the hocks. A high going horse that can move correctly, with its head held naturally in the air is the ideal.
4. Once the horse has stood for inspection, you may be allowed to move in closer. Always move quietly and steadily as you approach the horse.
  - a. Start at the front of the horse. Check the eyes for blindness. Look at the teeth for signs of overbite or underbite. Look at the head. It should have breed character and be masculine if it is a male and feminine if it is a female. Its should be sharp looking with an attractive ear and eye. The horse should stand with its feet spaced squarely. Check for splints, although in most cases they are not considered and unsoundness in a draft horse unless they are too close to the knee. The hoof head should be large and well shaped. Look at the lower legs for unsoundness at the hoof heads such as side bone and/or ringbone.
  - b. Move to the near (left) side. The front legs should be straight, not bowed back (calf kneed) or forward (buck kneed). The forearms should have width and muscling, the cannon bone should be long. The rear legs should be neither parked out nor set too far underneath the horse and hocks should be together. The horse shouldn't be too straight in the hocks or sickle hocked (too much of an angle to the legs). Look for length of neck, sharpness at the withers, and a sloping shoulder. Note the balance of the horse: heart girth deep, well-ribbed middle, medium slope to the croup and a strong back. Study the underpinning. Note the amount and quality of the bone. The pastern should be long, sloping and neat in the ankle. Observe the inside of the hock for unsoundness.
  - c. Move to a position in the rear. Remain at a safe distance. The hocks and lower legs should be close. The hocks should be free from unsoundness (i.e. curbs, bone/bog spavins, thoroughpins, and windpuffs). The hock itself should be smooth and blend well into the cannon bone. The cannon bone should be flat and have width. When judging Clydesdales and Shires look for fine, straight, silky feathering and a well-defined pastern and hoof head. Note the width of heels front and rear. The breeching should be well muscled. Always check stallions for normal size testicles.
  - d. Move to the off (right) side. Repeat the same procedure as on the near side.
  - e. After evaluating all entries, place them on your judging card in the order you feel is correct.