

PHA Obstacle Challenge

Judging Guidelines

Number Score and Definitions:

0 - Not executed: Cannot approach or missed/skipped

1 - Very bad: Approached but not close

2 - Bad: Approached but not able to enter at all

3 - Fairly bad: One step into obstacle but not able to complete

4 - Insufficient: Several steps into obstacle but unable to complete

5 - Sufficient: Completed but with major or frequent hesitations, rushing or jumping part of obstacle, needs much encouragement from rider/handler

6 - Satisfactory: Completed with hesitation or rushing and encouragement from rider/handler. May have a stop or two. Hit part of the obstacle (ie. Pole).

7 - Fairly Good: Some hesitation but fairly confident. May have a stop or bump part of obstacle.

8 - Good: Slight hesitation but confident. May touch a pole or part of obstacle, but not enough to knock out of place. Some aids from rider/handler visible.

9 - Very good: Entered and exited obstacle straight and with confidence. No stepping on any poles or bumping obstacle not meant to be touched. Minimal aids from rider/handler may be visible.

10 - Excellent: Entered and exited obstacle straight, with confidence. Absolutely no hesitation but quiet, focused confidence and care. No stepping on any poles or bumping any part of the obstacle not meant to be touched. Rider/handler has invisible aids.

Judge's decisions are final, and a competitor may be eliminated for any unsafe situation, including dangerous behavior or equipment and any sign of abusive practices. Competitors will not be eliminated for going off course, but 10 points will be deducted from final score as well as points lost for any obstacles not executed.

Equitation score:

Handlers will position themselves safely at the side of the horse and hold lead correctly. Riders will demonstrate correct rider position. Both handlers and riders will be scored on effective use of the aids.

Partnership score:

Handlers and riders that are in tune with their horse and communicate seamlessly, and horses that look to their handler for direction with confident obedience, will be rewarded. Handlers will lose points for: sharp corrections with the lead, touching the horse to guide ("Good Boy" rubs/pats allowed between obstacles), yelling, hindering the horse in any way and placing him or herself in the path of the horse. Riders will lose points for: excessive use of aids, loss of control, misguiding horse through obstacle, and misinterpretation of obstacle.

Presentation score:

The horse is groomed appropriately and displays health and good care. Handler/rider is dressed to match tack. Tack is clean, well-cared for, fits correctly, and is consistent.

Examples of Possible Obstacles (and How to Execute):

Canopies: Enter straight with no hesitation, maintaining careful rhythm.

Backing through poles: Stride carefully but purposefully, with legs moving in diagonal pairs. Maintaining a “round frame” is ideal. Do not step on a pole.

Gate: Approach and line up easily, maneuver handily through gate, and close with no resistance.

Bridge and tarps: Enter straight and cross with careful smooth steps, straight and deliberate.

Weave poles: Flex through, with efficient strides, and show correct bend and round frame.

Mailbox: Approach with confidence and stand quietly with loose lead or rein, and move off with minimal cue from rider/handler.

Car wash: Enter straight and step through with confidence, maintaining rhythm.

Moving objects on course: No hesitation, confidently move past.

Skeletor: Approach confidently and maintain rhythm of stride. Stand quietly while he “whinnies.”