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## SHOW CLASS & EVENT DESCRIPTIONS

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All Shows are run under [AQHA Rules](#).

All Competitors 18yrs/under: Are required to wear an approved ASA helmet in all ridden events.

#### Darwin Quarter Horse Association (DQHA) Classes:

**Beginner Lead-Line:** Open to competitors Lead-line 3-6yrs/under. A lead at least 1.8 metres long must be attached to a halter that is under the bridle so that while the rider is on the rail the horse is controlled by the adult. The rider will be judged on their basic position in the saddle, hand positions, leg position, seat position and back position. The horse must be led and controlled by an adult who is over eighteen years of age. If the judge asks the rider to back the horse in line up, the adult is not to aid the rider. The adult should only keep the horse under control. A saddle with suitable stirrup length must be used. Both competitors and handlers should be suitably attired for the event according to the AQHA rule book ie: all western classes should be western attire; all English classes should be English attire.

**Beginner:** Beginner refers to the rider not the horse. All competitors in this class will be required to do ridden events at a **walk and jog** only and are not eligible to enter Intermediate events (loping). Any legal style of bit is permitted and all competitors are to use two hands on the reins when riding either a Junior or Senior horse in this class. All competitors must be suitably attired in Western wear. Western saddle and equipment is recommended.

**Intermediate:** Intermediate refers to the rider not the horse. Competitors in this class must be able to **lope** in any of the ridden events and are not eligible to enter Beginner (walk/jog) events. Any legal style of bit is permitted and all competitors are to use two hands on the reins when riding either a Junior or Senior horse in this class. All competitors should be suitably attired in Western wear. Western saddle and equipment is recommended.

**Seniors:** Open to competitors aged between 19yrs and 49yrs. All Junior and Senior horses in this class must be ridden according to AQHA rules/regulations for the age of the horse and equipment to be used. All competitors must be suitably attired in Western Wear.

**Masters:** Open to competitors aged 50yrs and over. All Junior and Senior horses in this class must be ridden according to AQHA rules/regulations for the age of the horse and equipment to be used. All competitors must be suitably attired in Western Wear.

#### Australian Quarter Horse Association (AQHA) Approved Classes:

**Youth:** Open to competitors aged 7-18yrs. All Junior and Senior horses in this class must be ridden according to AQHA rules/regulations for the age of the horse and equipment to be used. All competitors must be suitably attired in Western Wear.

**Junior Horse:** Open to horses aged between 2yrs and 5yrs as of August 1st annually. To be ridden in a snaffle bit with two hands or a curb bit and chain with one hand. AQHA rules/regulations apply regarding the choice of this and all other equipment to be used. All competitors must be suitably attired in Western Wear.

**Senior Horse:** Open to horses aged 6yrs and over as of August 1st annually. To be ridden in any legal style of curb bit and chain with one hand. AQHA rules/regulations apply to this and all other equipment to be used. All competitors must be suitably attired in Western Wear.

**Open:** The Open events are held in classes that don't have a Junior or Senior horse category eg: Western Horsemanship and Hunter Under Saddle, and are open to any aged horse. If you have a Junior horse (five years old and under) they must be shown in either a hackamore, bosal or snaffle bit. If you have a Senior horse (six years and over) they must be shown in a bit and ridden one-handed.

**Amateur:** An Amateur is a member who does not receive money or remuneration for horse related activities, that is, he or she is not a 'professional horse-person'. There are exceptions such as Veterinarians, Stud Owners/Managers and Farriers etc. The horse or horses used by an amateur participant must be owned or leased and registered wholly or in part by the participant and their name must appear on the horse's registration certificate. The member must possess a current breed specific Amateur card.

**Select Amateur:** If a person has attained the age of fifty (50) years and provides proof of age, which must be in the form of a copy of a drivers licence or birth certificate, then their Amateur Permit will be endorsed as to allow them to compete in Select Amateur classes.

#### **Two Year Olds:**

- a) A two (2) year old horse cannot be shown under saddle in any AQHA approved show or program or at any AQHA sanctioned event, prior to 31 March of its two (2) year old year and must have reached a minimum age of twenty-four (24) months;

- b) Only the following performance classes can be offered for two (2) year olds: Western Pleasure, Hunter Under Saddle, Trail, Led Trail and Lunge Line;
- c) Any horse competing in two (2) year old Led Trail or two (2) year old Lunge line at a show, is not eligible to compete in any ridden classes at that show;
- d) The two (2) year old can only compete in either the two (2) year old or junior horse categories, not in both;
- e) A two (2) year old can only compete in a maximum of three (3) ridden classes at a show and is restricted to Western Pleasure, Hunter Under Saddle and Trail.

#### SHOW EVENT DESCRIPTIONS:

**Halter Classes:** All horses must wear a suitable leather halter with chain and lead for all Halter events including Showmanship at Halter. Horses are individually judged on their confirmation, condition, symmetrical arrangement of body parts and balance.

**Showmanship at Halter:** This event is judged strictly on the exhibitors' ability to fit and show a horse at halter. The ideal Showmanship performance consists of a poised, confident, well groomed exhibitor, leading a well groomed, conditioned horse that quickly and efficiently performs the requested pattern, as set by the judge, with promptness, smoothness and precision.

**\*Western Pleasure:** A ridden group event is where the horse is judged on movement and in keeping with his conformation. The ideal Pleasure horse has a free flowing, balanced stride with head and neck in a relaxed, natural position, with the nose slightly in front of the vertical. He should be shown on a reasonably loose rein, with light contact and be responsive and smooth in transitions. The overall appearance is of being fit and a pleasure to ride.

**Western Riding:** Western Riding is a class where the horse is judged on quality of gaits, lead changes at the lope, response to the rider, manners, and disposition. The horse should perform with reasonable speed, and be sensible, well-mannered, free and easy moving. *Flying lead changes are mandatory.*

**Western Horsemanship:** An event ridden to a pattern, set by the judge of the day. The rider is judged on his or her ability in the saddle, including body position, use of aids, prompt, precise execution of the set pattern and the horses' willingness to respond to the riders' cues.

**\*Ranch Riding:** The purpose of the Ranch Riding horse is to reflect the versatility, attitude and movement of a working horse. The horse's performance is to simulate a horse riding outside the confines of an arena and that of a working ranch horse ie: the ability to work at a forward, working speed while under control by the rider. Light contact will be rewarded and the horse will not be shown on a full drape of reins. The required manoeuvres will include the walk, jog, and lope both directions and the extended jog and extended lope at least one direction, as well as stops, and back. Three optional manoeuvres may include a side pass, turns of 360 or more, change of lead (simple or flying), walk, jog or lope

over a pole(s). One of the suggested three AQHA patterns can be used, however a judge may utilise a different pattern as long as all required manoeuvres and the three (or more) optional manoeuvres are included.

**Reining:** All ages - horses six-years-old (6) and older must be shown in bit; horses five-years-old (5) and younger may be shown in either bit, hackamore or snaffle bit at the discretion of the exhibitor. Any one of the twelve AQHA-approved reining patterns can be used and is to be selected by the judge of the class and used by all contestants in the class. Each contestant will perform the required pattern individually. To rein a horse is not only to guide him, but also to control his every movement. The best reined horse should be wilfully guided or controlled with little or no apparent resistance and dictated to completely. Any movement on his own must be considered a lack of control. All deviations from the exact written pattern must be considered a lack of or temporary loss of control, and therefore faulted according to severity of deviation. Credit will be given for smoothness, finesse, attitude, quickness and authority in performing the various manoeuvres while using controlled speed.

**Trail:** Horses are judged, by a set scoring system, on their ability to negotiate obstacles typically encountered on the trail, together with their response to the rider. Each Trail course set by the judge, will have a minimum of six obstacles. Mandatory obstacles include a gate, at least four logs which must be ridden over and an obstacle which is to be backed through or around. Horses will be required to walk, jog and lope (according to the pattern) individually through the course.

**Hunter Under Saddle:** Horses and riders are to be shown in traditional English riding attire and gear. Hunters under saddle should move with long, low strides reaching forward with ease and smoothness, be able to lengthen stride and cover ground with relaxed, free flowing movement. Horses should be obedient, have a bright expression with alert ears, and should respond willingly to the rider with light leg and hand contact. Horses should be responsive and smooth in transition.

**Hunt Seat Equitation:** Horses and riders are to be shown in traditional English Riding Attire and gear. The judge will set a pattern and individually each competitor will ride the pattern. They may then be required as a group on the rail. The rider is judged on equitation including body position, use of aids and prompt and precise pattern execution.

**English Pleasure:** Ridden one handed. In English Pleasure class, the horses perform as a group, exhibiting the natural gaits of the walk, trot, and canter, and may also be asked to extend the trot or to perform a hand gallop. Horses are judged on their manners, performance, quality and conformation. The horse is to give the impression of being a pleasure to ride.

For more information on approved equipment, attire and judging criteria please refer to the **AQHA Rule Book**.

**\* Please note, a horse cannot enter Western Pleasure class at a show if it enters Ranch Riding.**