



Forging the future of the Shire Horse in Australia

Code of Conduct for Judges on the SHSA Official Panel of Judges

Judges on the SHSA Panel are qualified to judge led classes for the major heavy horse breeds, as well as heavy horse harness and ridden classes. Qualified Judges and Probationary Judges on the SHSA Panel uphold the current SHSA Breed Standard and direction for Shire Horses and The Australian Shire Horse Stud Book, and they are subject to the Code of Conduct.

Before and After the Show

Judges and probationary Judges should not make public comments about horses in any media, including social media, which are likely to cause annoyance, suggest perceived biased results or are in contradiction to the SHSA Breed Standard and direction for Shire Horses and The Australian Shire Horse Stud Book. Judges should not have close contact with, or accept hospitality from, likely exhibitors in the days leading up to the show.

Dress

Judges should dress appropriately for the role they are going to fulfil, not in casual clothes.

Arrival at showground

A judge should never look at animals he/she has been asked to adjudicate on, either in the horse area or anywhere else on the showground, before judging.

Basis of Judging

Exhibitors enter shows in the rightful belief that their animals will be fairly judged according to the Shire Horse Society Australia Shire Breed Standard with no irregularities. Judges should not allow any background, pedigree or show history information about an exhibit, to influence their judging of that horse on a given day.

It is not only important for all judges to act properly, but to be seen to act this way. An adequate amount of time should be spent with each animal and all exhibits should be seen to have equal attention. Judges should never unnecessarily give exhibitors a chance to be critical.

Exhibitor's Behaviour in the Ring

If for any reason the exhibitor wishes to leave the ring before the final completion of the class judging, then the exhibitor should ask the Steward's permission to do so, and the Steward in turn should seek the Judge's permission.

Only one person is allowed in the ring with each entry unless special permission is sought from the class steward. This will be granted in exceptional circumstances ie where someone is needed to trot the horse.

If in the opinion of a Judge an exhibitor conducts himself or herself in an improper way during judging, the Judge should instruct the Steward to ask the exhibitor to leave the judging arena. The Judge should also do the same if the horse's behaviour is unacceptable or the judge feels that the safety of the competitors and spectators is at risk.

Discussions during Judging

Judges are asked to follow the accepted rule that they do not hold discussions whilst the class is in the ring either with the stewards or with exhibitors unless it is to ask direct questions. During the break while classes are leaving the ring judges should not hold discussions with spectators around the ringside. At that time, the judge is perfectly entitled to talk to his or her steward, but not spectators.

Judges' Public Comments on Placings and Shire Horses

Many shows now require judges to give comments on placings in the class to the commentator over the public address system. Only positive points should be made, on public address systems, written judges' reports, and in other public opportunities to communicate the Judge's views about placings, classes and exhibitors. In these contexts, never criticise exhibits. But Judges can help promote the breed by commenting on what they are looking for to improve the public's awareness of the judging process.

Judges and probationary judges should not comment on particular Shire Horses on social media or other public outlets. This will protect their reputation for integrity as objective judges in the show ring who have no preconceived ideas.

Reasons

If on the completion of judging, an exhibitor asks, in the correct way, for the Judge's opinion on their animal which they had exhibited, the Judge at his or her discretion is perfectly entitled to give a reason for his or her placing. However this is entirely a matter for the discretion of the Judge. Quite often exhibitors find Judges' comments helpful to them, and to their understanding the breed standard etc.