

ENGLISH HUNTER SEAT CLASSES

Gaits

The following descriptions of gaits apply in all English hunter seat classes:

1. The **walk** should be a true four-beat forward working gait, rhythmic and flat footed. An extremely slow or excessively quick or jiggy walk will be penalized.
2. The **trot** is a two-beat diagonal gait, and should be long, low and ground covering with cadenced and balanced strides. Correctness is more essential than speed. Extreme speed or a jog trot will be penalized.
3. The **canter** must be a smooth, free moving, relaxed, three-beat gait that is straight on both leads. The stride should be ground covering. An over-collected or four-beat gait will be penalized. Excessive speed will be penalized.
4. The **hand gallop** is performed with long, free, ground covering strides, with the horse under control. The amount of ground covered may vary between horses due to natural differences in their stride length. The hand gallop is not a fast canter, but a true lengthening of stride, correct and straight on both leads. Extreme speed or lack of control will be penalized.

◆ Hunter Seat Equitation on the Flat

Hunter Seat Equitation on the Flat Scorecard Points

Rider's position (seat, hand, use of aids)	90
Horse's performance and appointments and suitability of horse and rider	10
Total	100

Scorecard Explanation

RIDER'S POSITION – The method of holding the reins should be consistent with the type of equipment being used; however, all reins must be picked up at the same time. The rider should keep the ankles flexed in, the heels down and the calves of the legs in contact with the horse and slightly behind the girth (see fig. 6).

HORSE'S PERFORMANCE – Riders will be instructed to have their horses walk, trot and canter both ways around the ring. The order to reverse may be executed either toward or away from the rail. Light contact with the horse's mouth is required. Riders may be asked to perform any appropriate tests.

APPOINTMENTS OF HORSE AND RIDER – See page 10.

General Guidelines

The rider should have a workmanlike appearance, and light and supple seat and hands, conveying the impression of complete control should any emergency arise.

Mounting and Dismounting – To mount, the exhibitor should take the reins in the left hand and place that hand on the withers. The exhibitor should grasp the stirrup leather with the right hand, insert the left foot in the stirrup, and mount. To dismount, the rider may either step down or slide down. The size of the rider must be taken into consideration. The rider is permitted to lengthen the stirrup to mount.

Hands – The hands should be over and in front of the withers, with the knuckles 30 degrees inside the vertical and the hands slightly apart and making a straight line from the horse's mouth to the rider's elbow. The method of holding the reins is optional; however, all reins must be picked up at the same time. The bight of the reins may fall on either side. Direct contact should be maintained at all times.

Basic Position – The rider should have eyes up and shoulders back. The toes should be out at an angle best suited to the rider's conformation. The rider should have the ankles flexed in, heels down and the calves of the legs in contact with the horse and slightly behind the girth. The iron must be on the ball of the foot.

Rider's Position in Motion – At the walk and sitting trot, the rider's body should be slightly ahead of the vertical. At the posting trot, the rider's body should be inclined slightly forward, but not exaggerated. At the canter, it should be halfway between the posting trot and the walk positions. When galloping, riders should use the same inclination as at the posting trot.

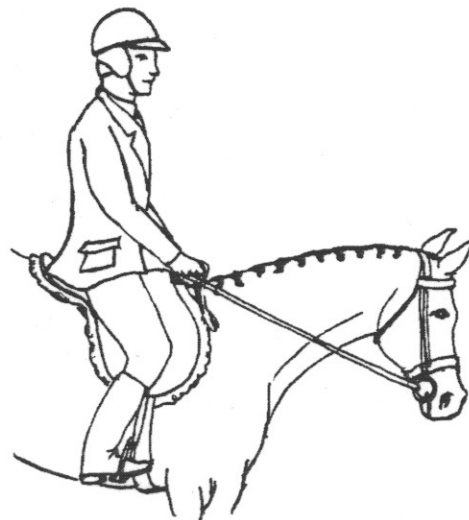


Figure 6. Correct hands and seat for hunter seat equitation.

ENGLISH RIDING DIVISION

Individual Tests

These tests may be performed individually or in a group.

1. Address the reins.
2. Back.
3. Individual performance on the rail.
4. Figure eight at the trot (or second gait), with a correct change of diagonals. At the left diagonal, the rider should be sitting the saddle when the horse's left front foot is on the ground. At the right diagonal, the rider should be sitting the saddle when the horse's right front foot is on the ground. When circling clockwise at a trot, the rider should be on the left diagonal; when circling counterclockwise, the rider should be on the right diagonal.
5. Figure eight at the canter with a simple change of lead. Figures should begin in the center of the two circles so that one lead change is shown.
6. Change leads down the center of the ring or on the rail, with a change of leads through the walk.
7. Ride without stirrups (no more than 2 minutes at the trot). The class must be halted before starting this test. The riders will pick up their irons and cross them in front of the pommel for safety before the class is continued. At the end of the test the class must be halted so that riders can regain their irons. Then the class will resume.
8. Answer the judge's questions. It is recommended that the same question be asked of each rider privately. An example would be one question each about tack, anatomy and equitation.
9. Serpentine at the trot or canter demonstrating the correct diagonal or lead changes.

◆ Hunter Seat Equitation Over Fences

General Rules

1. Exhibitors will be allowed to walk the course.
2. If a warm-up fence is not provided outside the show arena, exhibitors will be allowed one practice jump designated by the show committee.
3. The course should include at least six jumps, each a minimum of 10 feet wide and not to exceed 3 feet tall, with wings at least 30 inches wide. Ground poles on the take-off side of the jump are required. When jumps are approached from both sides, ground poles are required on both sides.
4. The fall of a horse or rider will eliminate a contender. If such a fall (or three disobediences) occurs during a rideoff, the contestant will be placed last of all those chosen for the rideoff.
5. Any rider not having his or her mount under control must be dismissed from the ring and disqualified from the class.

ENGLISH RIDING DIVISION

6. Class courses should be posted near the in-gate well before the class begins.
 7. Horses must be serviceably sound.
 8. Judges will penalize unsafe jumping and bad form over fences, whether an obstacle was touched or not.
 9. Judges should review the course and make any necessary alterations before the first horse and rider enter the course.
- Before placing a class, the judge must call the horses back in the order of performance merit to consider soundness. The horse must be led into the ring at a trot or second gait, with the reins in hand and the stirrups run up. Two horses more than the number of ribbons available should be called in. Horses are to be evaluated for soundness as they come into the ring and line up.

Hunter Seat Equitation Over Fences Scorecard

Points

Rider's position (seat, hands and use of aids): Over and between fences, appointments and suitability of horse and rider	90
Horse's performance	10
Total	100

Scorecard Explanation

RIDER'S POSITION BETWEEN FENCES – See "Hunter Seat Equitation on the Flat" on page 13.

RIDER'S POSITION IN THE AIR – The rider should exhibit weight in the heel, and the rider's calf should be in contact with the horse's sides behind the girth supporting the upper body of the rider. The seat should be next to but out of the saddle, and the upper body should follow the horse's arc. Eyes should be up, shoulders back, the back should be flat, and arms and hands should ensure freedom of the horse's head and neck. Crest release or correct automatic release is equally acceptable.

HORSE'S PERFORMANCE – The performance begins when the horse enters the ring or when the rider is given the signal to proceed after entering the ring. Except for refusals, jumping faults of the horse are not to be considered unless they are the result of the rider's ability. Each contestant may circle once if desired before approaching the first jump. He or she will then proceed around the course, keeping an even pace throughout. Three cumulative refusals will result in the contestant's elimination. Following the third refusal on the course, the rider must leave the arena. If a refusal occurs in a double or triple jump, the rider must rejump all elements of the combination. Any or all contestants may be called back to perform at a walk, trot (or second gait) or canter (or third gait), or to execute any appropriate tests included in the class requirements.

ENGLISH RIDING DIVISION

Individual Tests

These tests are to be performed individually.

1. Jump low fences at a walk or trot (or second gait), as well as at a canter (or third gait).
2. Jump fences on a figure eight course.
3. Jump fences in the middle of the ring at right angles to the course.
4. Any of tests 1 through 9 in the "Hunter Seat Equitation on the Flat" section on page 14.

◆ Hunter Under Saddle (Hunter Seat Pleasure)

Hunter Under Saddle Scorecard	Points
Horse's performance and manners	90
Appointments of horse and rider.....	10
Total	100

Scorecard Explanation

HORSE'S PERFORMANCE AND MANNERS – Horses are to be shown at the walk, trot and canter both ways of the ring. Light contact with the horse's mouth is required. Horses are to be judged strictly on performance and soundness. They should move freely, exhibiting the gaits as described on page 13. Any horse showing evidence of lameness will be refused an award. If horses are hand galloped, there should be no more than eight performing at one time. Manners are to be emphasized.

APPOINTMENTS OF HORSE AND RIDER – See page 10.

◆ Working Hunter Over Fences

Working Hunter Over Fences Scorecard	Points
Horse's performance	90
Appointments of horse and rider.....	10
Total	100

Scorecard Explanation

HORSE'S PERFORMANCE – Horses should have an even hunting pace, good manners, a safe style of jumping, a correct way of moving over the course and a correct way of moving when being judged for soundness. Extreme speed **will be** penalized. Correct leads in corners are preferred. Breaking gait (canter or trot) will be penalized.

APPOINTMENTS OF HORSE AND RIDER – See page 10.

ENGLISH RIDING DIVISION

Hunter Course

Judges are responsible for the correctness of each course after it has been set, and should call the show committee's attention to any errors that would result in unfair or inappropriate courses. Exhibitors will be allowed to walk the course after the judge has approved the course.

Course or Arena Arrangement

1. Arrangements should include a minimum of four obstacles. Horses are to make a minimum of eight jumps, and at least one change of direction is required.
2. The following types of obstacles may be used: Fences that simulate obstacles found in the hunting field, such as post and rail, brush, stone wall, white fence or gate, chicken coop, Aiken or hedge.
3. The following jump types are prohibited: A pole over brush, triple bars, hog backs, hinged chicken coops and square oxers.
4. The top elements of all fences must be securely placed so that a slight rub will not cause a knockdown, but so that the elements will fall if hit hard.

5. Obstacle characteristics include:

- Single obstacles should be located at 12- to 18-foot intervals. There should be a minimum of 48 feet between obstacles.
- The height of obstacles must not exceed 3 feet.
- The use of wings on obstacles in hunter classes is recommended. Ground poles placed on the take-off side of jumps are required. When jumps are approached from both sides, ground poles are required on both sides.
- Unused jump cups and pins must be removed from jump standards.

6. A combination jump is recommended in all hunter courses. The recommended distance for combination jumps is:

- One stride in-and-out 22 feet to 26 feet
- Two stride in-and-out 36 feet
- Three stride in-and-out 48 feet

Fences must be at least 10 feet wide, though wider fences are desirable, and wings of at least 30 inches are recommended.

Scoring Hunter Classes

Horses should be sound and have an even hunting pace, good manners and a safe style of jumping, together with a smooth way of moving over the course. Extreme speed **will be** penalized. Circling once when entering the ring and once when leaving is required.

Faults – Following are guidelines to use when scoring faults:

- When a horse makes two faults at one obstacle, only the major fault will be counted, except for refusals, which will count in addition to other major faults.