

GUIDELINES ON RING ETIQUETTE FOR
JUDGES, STEWARDS &
OWNERS/EXHIBITORS

As directed by the BDS Judges Committee

February 2009

INTRODUCTION

These guidelines have three important objectives.

- The first is to give guidance and hints to all Judges and Stewards, especially to Probationary Judges and those in their first few years. These should be read in conjunction with the Rules for the Osborne Refrigerators Qualifiers and HOYS Qualifiers, etc. in the BDS Yearbook. It is not intended to be a comprehensive guide but to assist with the smooth running of Driving Classes.
- The second is to provide a reference for those who will have had long experience in the showing world, but who might like to refresh their memories on various points, in order to maintain the high degree of excellence in the way that they conduct themselves.
- The third is to provide some guidance as to what should be expected of an exhibitor/owner, which is just as important for the smooth running of the class and also will hopefully ensure professional and fair behaviour by all involved, both during and after the judging of the class.

NOTES FOR JUDGES

- Judges will have certain personal preferences but all should have similar values as to type and conformation etc. and all will have the same values as to standard of turnout and should be able to give good reasons for their decisions. They should be able to give comments, when asked by, for example the press, as to their final placings, but these comments should be confined to general remarks on a class and avoid criticism of individuals and their turnout.
- Judges should be polite, diplomatic and convey a pleasant disposition towards competitors without engaging in a personal conversation and should not make detrimental remarks about any turnout, however much they may be tempted, particularly when approaching the end of a line-up where there may be some more moderate exhibits. If Judges are approached by an exhibitor after judging and asked for a reason for the placing of a particular turnout, it is suggested that they begin by saying, 'In my opinion', which should indicate to the exhibitor that it is an opinion, which, can differ between Judges. It is wise to be as brief and as polite as possible and avoid getting into a heated discussion.
- Judges should avoid talking to people at the ringside at any time, either immediately before, during, or between classes and at no time must they enter the collecting ring area and converse with competitors. They must not consult a catalogue/programme at any time and must accept instruction from the Steward as to Championships or special prizes without reference to a catalogue/programme and this information must relate only to such categories. A Steward should not be allowed to influence the judging in any way, either by their own knowledge of individual turnouts or such reference to the catalogue/programme.

- ❑ Judges must familiarise themselves with the show schedule and be fully conversant with the rules for their classes and any qualifiers to be awarded.
- ❑ Judges will not accept any influence either from a Steward or a competitor and must be seen to be entirely independent of any outside influence. They **MUST NOT** enquire as to the breeding of any animal. They are entitled to enquire as to the age of an animal during the class.
- ❑ Judges should approach the task of judging each class with a completely open mind and even though some of the exhibits might be well known by their previous performances, they must be judged as a class against all other entrants on their own merits.
- ❑ Judges **MUST NOT** judge an animal with which they have had previous connections. Judges **MUST NOT** accept entry into their classes, of an animal exhibited by someone with a family or business association. In the latter instances it is ultimately the competitor's responsibility because they will have seen the name of the Judge in the schedule. If for some unforeseen reason there has been a change of Judge, when there has been no time to notify entrants before the day, causing this problem to arise, it is still the competitor's responsibility to withdraw.
- ❑ A Judge is asked not to accept judging appointments at more than one or two shows in the same locality in any one-year. Furthermore, a Judge is asked not to accept judging appointments at the same show within two years.

To summarise, judging is not merely a question of equine knowledge and experience, but also diplomacy, dignity, common sense and loyalty towards the BDS to uphold its standards.

NOTES FOR STEWARDS

The smooth running of a class depends greatly on an efficient Steward. There have been many people with long experience of showing horses, who have served us well at many of the major shows, but sadly, that experience has been lost, as many have passed on. We now find, certainly at the lesser horse shows, that we may have Stewards with little or no experience, who may not even have 'horsey' backgrounds. Hopefully these Notes will particularly help newcomers who are willing to seek advice, because we need Stewards as much as we need Judges.

- ❑ Stewards should be smartly and sensibly dressed, hats to be worn.
- ❑ Before judging commences and before the arrival of the Judge, the Steward must have in his/her possession, the Judge's book/slips, a catalogue purely for their own use and not for the Judge, the rosettes, prize cards and trophies (if they are to be presented by the Judge).
- ❑ The Steward should arrange to meet the Judge 15-30 minutes before the Class.

- ❑ The Steward must acquaint himself/herself with the conditions of the class, the special awards to be made and qualifications for the Championships in order to determine which exhibits are eligible to compete and approximate times of judging the various classes and Championships.
- ❑ If there are local awards to be made they must know the residential qualifications and previous wins that might preclude class winners or placed animals according to the rules of the Show.
- ❑ The collecting ring Steward must ensure that competitors have been called over the loudspeaker, by class, before the class is due to start and as they enter the ring, check their numbers against the list of entries. Judges should then be informed as to numbers competing as against catalogue entries so that they may begin judging the class. Should an exhibitor arrive late, with an acceptable reason, it is the Stewards duty to ask the Judge's permission as to whether they can join the class, which they may give if the class is not too far advanced. A Steward must ensure that once a class has started no horse/driver/groom may leave the ring without the Judge's permission.
- ❑ When judging commences, the ring Steward should stand beside but slightly behind the Judge/Judges in order not to impede their view and listen for instructions as to when the exhibitors are required to change pace or direction.
- ❑ Whilst standing close to the judge the Steward must remain quiet and discreet and at no time should they disclose any catalogue information, other than special awards and Championships, nor be seen with an open catalogue beside the Judge in case it be construed as imparting information, nor may the Steward attempt at any time to influence the Judge. During the judging of a class, the Steward must not be intimidated by any exhibitor or engage in conversation with them as to their placing in the class and should such intimidation take place, they must report the matter to the Judge at the end of the class, but not during. Any serious incident coming to the attention of the Steward should be reported to the Secretary after completion of judging.
- ❑ When the Judge asks for horses to be called in, the Steward should place them from left to right and facing the spectators if possible, unless otherwise directed by the judge.
- ❑ When the class has been judged, the Judge and Steward will check the placings to ensure the exhibitors are standing in the correct order and before the class is dismissed the Steward must fill in the Judge's book/slip and have it signed by the Judge before despatch to the award office or Secretary. After informing exhibitors, which placed turnouts are required for the Championship and parade (if scheduled) and at approximately what time, the class may be dismissed.
- ❑ The Steward should try to ensure that the commentator has the result sheet before the competitors leave the ring.
- ❑ Between class judging, particularly in hot weather, the Steward should ensure that the Judge/Judges have refreshments and after judging, if necessary, escort them to lunch/tea.

The secret of a successful judging day is in no small part due to the efficiency and co-operation of a good Steward, who every Judge appreciates.

NOTES FOR EXHIBITORS/OWNERS

As with Judges and Stewards, Exhibitors/Owners have a responsibility towards the BDS, the Shows who promote driving classes, themselves and to the general public who come to watch.

Whether driving equines is for pleasure or business, it is their responsibility to act in a manner which is acceptable to Judges, Stewards, the Show at which they are competing, their fellow competitors and to those spectators.

All too often a class can be marred by the action of exhibitors who feel that they have not been placed where they think they should be. Similarly, an atmosphere at the edge of the ringside can develop when an owner thinks likewise.

Listed below, are some notes which it is hoped exhibitors/owners will take account of, bearing in mind that many of those, both professional and amateur, need no advice and who always conduct themselves impeccably and who are known to Judges and Stewards as such.

- ❑ Competitors should familiarise themselves with the approximate timings of classes in which they intend to take part and make every attempt to arrive in the collecting ring promptly. This avoids the need for constant calling-up of classes and subsequent delays in starting, all of which can result in a late running time-table and hurried judging of the classes, which is far from satisfactory for all concerned.
- ❑ They should at all times be polite to Stewards and Judges when being given instruction throughout judging. During the judging of any class, competitors **MUST NOT** leave the ring, either on foot, or with their turnout, without asking permission, from the Steward, who will in turn ask the Judge and the reason given, must be genuine.
- ❑ At no time should they attempt to influence a Judge by offering any information regarding their exhibit for effect.
- ❑ At no time must they attempt to intimidate a Steward by suggesting anything detrimental regarding any exhibit stood with them in a class in the hope that this might be conveyed to the Judge to influence them.
- ❑ Competitors should respect their fellow drivers when being asked to execute the changes of paces. Overtaking should be avoided if possible and space found by circling and making full use of the ring.
- ❑ Competitors should have regard for others, particularly if they have an unruly animal in danger of misbehaving and make every attempt to retain control. If their equine becomes so unruly as to prompt the Judge to ask for it to be removed, they must accept the decision with good grace.
- ❑ Exhibitors/Owners should ensure that they and their grooms are appropriately dressed at all times in the ring.

- Exhibitors/Owners are responsible for their equines welfare whilst at the show. They should be mindful of adverse weather conditions causing distress and provide appropriate action when necessary e.g. water, shade, shelter.

Driving is a sport and like all sports, those who take part, in whatever capacity, should act in a sporting manner, which will ensure their enjoyment of their sport and the enjoyment of all concerned.

WELFARE OF THE HORSE/PONY/DONKEY (EQUINE) IN THE SHOWRING

It should be the competitor's responsibility to ensure that the equine is sound in wind and limb for showing purposes.

Judges should be prepared to consider shortening the time turnouts are on the move during hot weather conditions and also if the going is particularly heavy through mud and water logged turf.

Judges should also consider the welfare aspects of turnouts that may be:

- Over bitted.
- Ill-fitting harness or carriage that may cause rubs or sores.
- Asked to pull excessive weight ratio.
- Fit to do the job (may include show drives).
- Excessive use of the whip.
- Condition and weight of shoes.
- Irregular rhythm should be penalised in your placings.
- Lamé, or in a condition unsuitable for competition. Judges have the right to ask exhibits to leave the ring in extreme cases but are advised to consult the show organiser/chief steward/or vet if at all possible. (This should be done via the ring steward).

All horses must at all times be handled and driven in accordance with the overarching provisions of the Animal Welfare Act 2006

RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES

Competitors

- Should there be cause for complaint by a competitor it should be made in accordance with the show schedule and within the specified time. If the show

cannot resolve the matter they may refer it to the BDS who will pass it to the appropriate Committee.

- Should a competitor feel there is a case for complaint against a BDS judge that is not covered by the show rules, the complaint should be sent in writing to the BDS head office, within seven days, and accompanied by a £50 deposit refundable if the complaint is upheld.

The BDS head office will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and pass the letter onto the appropriate Committee who will implement an investigation and deal with the complaint as fairly and as swiftly as circumstances will allow.

Judges

- Judges may complain to the BDS about an owner/exhibitors behaviour should it be offensive/threatening/intimidating towards the judge or other competitors (this includes erratic or furious driving). The BDS will then investigate the matter through the appropriate Committee.

In everyone's interests a true account of events will assist in resolving any dispute. Therefore it is advised that witness statements are taken where necessary.

It is anticipated that most complaints can be rectified amicably; failing this disciplinary action may be necessary in accordance with BDS procedures.

*Let BDS members stand for the best in sportsmanship as well as in horsemanship.
Let us compete for the enjoyment of driving and take winning or losing in our stride.*