



## GROOM SQUAD CONTEST

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The purpose of this contest is to offer members an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to work together in a safe and humane manner to groom and prepare a horse for a show. This educational and fun contest allows members to develop communication, leadership and support skills with one another and is open to 4-H members enrolled in the Horse program, as well as provides an area of participation for horseless horse members.

Members compete in squads of three. Each squad brings a gentle, ungroomed horse or pony with hooves in good condition, a handler and a grooming kit. Grooming kits will be judged for suitability and cleanliness. Equines are traded so that no squad grooms the equine they brought. All members have 30 minutes to groom their assigned horse. The horse must always be under control. Judges will score members on safety, teamwork and method of grooming. Following the grooming, the squad has 15 minutes to practice showing the horse. All members may assist but only one will complete the showmanship class, while another member will take a multiple choice written exam. Placings and danishes are awarded at each contest. The top Senior squad at The Evergreen State Fair will represent Snohomish County at The Washington State Fair in Puyallup.

### Eligibility:

1. This contest is open to juniors, intermediates and seniors.
2. A squad will be composed of three members. Members may be from one club or mixed from other clubs within the Horse program.
  - **Senior**-All three squad members are seniors.
  - **Regular**-One or more members have earned a blue Danish in a previous Groom Squad Contest
  - **Novice**-No member has received earned a blue Danish in a Groom Squad contest.

### General Rules:

1. Each squad will provide one gentle, healthy, ungroomed horse or pony with hooves in good shape. This horse will be assigned and used by another squad. Each animal must be accompanied by a Release Form signed by the equines owner.
2. Each squad member is required to wear a **helmet** during the contest for safety.
3. Each squad must furnish all grooming equipment and supplies.
4. Handlers will be used as silent posts for *regular* and *novice* squads only. They are to be on the same side of equine as working members at all times.

### BASIS OF JUDGING: 100 points possible

1. **Written Exam:** 20 points possible  
Resources for questions: PNW Contest Guide (PNW574) and 4-H Horse Project Manual (PNW587).  
Examples of exam questions:
  - What color skin does a gray horse have?  
A. Pink                      B. Black                      C. White
  - Which type of colic occurs when there is a blockage in the intestines?  
A. Displacement      B. Tympanic              C. Impaction
  - How many incisor teeth does a mature horse have?  
A. 10                      B. 12                      C. 24
2. **Equipment:** 5 points possible  
Squad should have at least the minimum equipment suggested. There is no limit to amount of equipment allowed, but extra equipment will not necessarily receive more points. All equipment should be clean and in good useable condition. Do not borrow from or loan equipment to other squads. Prior to the contest, a groom squad official will check all equipment. All equipment points will be deducted if illegal equipment is found. Dirty and/or illegal grooming tools will be removed from the competition area.  
  
**MINIMUM SUGGESTED:**
  - ✓ Clean 4'x4' tarp, towel, blanket or pad to lay equipment on
  - ✓ 2 Curry combs (rubber, plastic)
  - ✓ 1 soft bristle brush
  - ✓ 1 hard bristle brush
  - ✓ Mane and tail comb or brush
  - ✓ Groom rags – dry, with no grooming aids added
  - ✓ Hoof pick
  - ✓ Clean bucket – all water used must be contained in a bucket

**ADDITIONAL ALLOWED:**

- ✓ Show halter and lead
- ✓ Grooming gloves

**NOT ALLOWED:**

- × Electric equipment
- × Commercial products (soap, hoof black, mane and tail whitener, show sheen, chalk, oil, etc.)
- × Razor blades or any items containing razor blades
- × Scissors
- × Bot Knife
- × Spray Containers
- × Any grooming tool with metal “teeth” or edge

**3. Grooming:** 10 points possible

Points awarded on the method the squad demonstrated to clean and “slick off” the horse for show.

Use tools correctly, and in correct sequence on the body:

- a. Curry combs - Use in a circular motion to lift dirt, flicking motion to remove dirt. Never use on ears, or on legs below knees or hocks, or on mane and tail.
- b. Hard brushes and Soft brushes - Use short, brisk, flipping motion to remove dirt.
- c. Mane and tail comb or brush - Start brushing at bottom of hair and work up towards roots. Never start at the top.
- d. Rags - For use on head and finishing touches on coat.
- e. Hands - Use for adding bloom to coat and removing excess hair.
- f. Hoof pick - Use on hooves from heel to toe to remove dirt and rocks.

**4. Safety:** 35 points possible

Points awarded for properly following the rules of safety for working around a horse.

- All members of the squad must wear boots.
- Never stand or work in the “**Danger Zone**” which is directly in front and directly behind the horse (see Danger Zone diagram).
- All squad members will work on the same side of the horse.
- Never kneel or sit near the horse. When grooming legs, squat down so you can move quickly away if the horse moves. Never have all squad members squatting at the same time.
- When crossing behind horse either cross out of range of hind legs or pass close with a hand on the horse.
- Never cross under lead rope between handler and horse.
- Work quietly. Any abuse or harsh treatment of the horse will result in disqualification of the squad.

**5. Teamwork:** 15 points possible

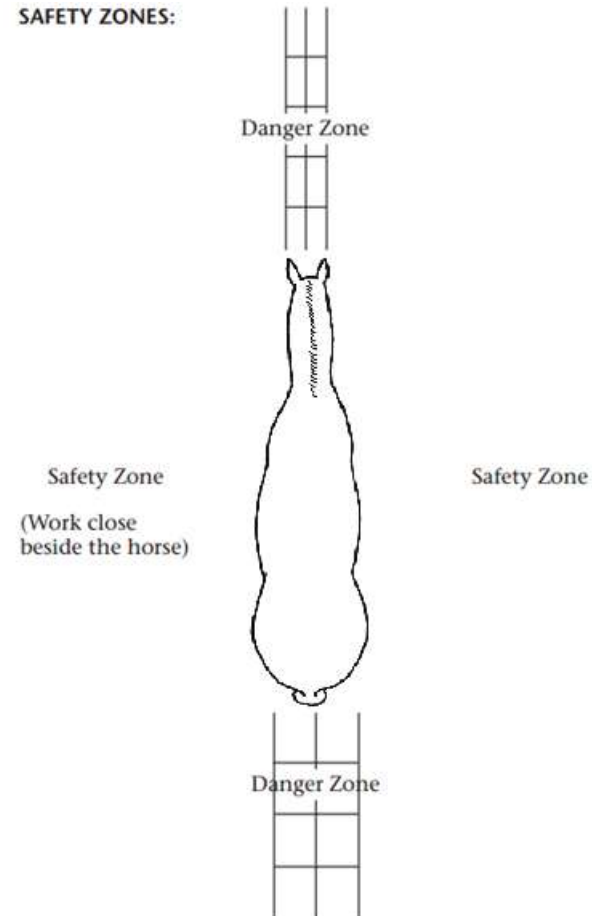
Based on how well the squad is organized. Each member should have his/her own task/s to perform, all members participate equally, and if total job is finished in the allotted time.

- Space out to work. Never cluster around one area.
- Be pleasant to fellow squad members.
- Do not talk with handle, other squads, friends and/or parents in audience. Excessive talking within a squad may be marked down.

• **Showmanship:** 15 points possible

One squad member is judged on personal appearance and ability to present the horse their squad has groomed. This will be judged as an actual 4-H showmanship class. Refer to “Showmanship” in the PNW Contest Guide.

**SAFETY ZONES:**



**WASHINGTON STATE FAIR QUALIFIERS:** Please review the Washington State Groom Squad Rules C1114E located on the ListServ and/or <https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2076/2014/06/WA-State-4-H-Groom-Squad-Rules.pdf?x14598>