

Model Horse Show Overview

Purpose

Model Horse Showing provides an opportunity for youth to exhibit their model horses and increase their knowledge and skills in equine shows through the use of showing model horses. Further, it allows youth with a general interest in horses to share their skills about costume and tack making with other equine enthusiasts and to learn about horse anatomy and breeds.

Requirements

You do not have to own a life horse or ride a horse to be able to show model horses. You can show any type of horse. It does not have to be a brand name horse like “Breyer” or “Peter Stone”. You do not have to show the “Traditional” size models either. You can show smaller “Stable Mates” and “Minnie Whinnie” type sized horses and anything in between at 4H shows.

Types of Classes

There are two general divisions for model horse shows: **Performance** and **Halter**

Performance: These classes focus on the horse and the task it is performing. Tack is required for performance class showing. A doll is not required but can add realism to the display. **All performance class entries should have a 3” x 5” index card with a description and/or pattern describing the entry’s performance.** If the model horse is at a trot, the card should indicate something like “trotting at the rail while rising”. The tack has to be specific to the task. A Western Pleasure entry should show a horse with Western Tack and doll. Hunter/Jumper over fence entries should show a horse with appropriate English attire and obstacles. For showing in 4H the youth is encouraged to make their own tack and props.

The horses are judged on the overall set up and confirmation of the horse display: For example: Harness or bridle fit, bit position, saddle fit (too tight, not tight enough), stir up position. If a doll is used the position of the doll in the saddle, stir ups and on the reins are judged. The exhibitors use “sticky” wax to hold bits, reins etc. in place. Glue is not recommended since it destroys the horse’s finish.

Common Performance Classes are: English Performance for horses set up for Hunter/Jumper, Dressage, Saddle Seat etc.. **Western Performance** for horses set up for stock work (cutting, roping), rodeo, reining and trail work as well as traditional Western classes such as pleasure, horsemanship and trail. A typical show bill might include classes such as: Driving, English Pleasure, Saddleseat or Huntseat, Hunter/Jumper Over Fences, Other English Performance, Western Pleasure, Ranch Work, Gymkhana/Speed Event, Other Western Performance, Trail, Showmanship, Tack made by Exhibitor etc.

In addition to the traditional Performance classes, **costume classes** are also very popular performance classes. Some model horses are sold as a set with a Native American theme, Arabian theme etc.. Exhibitors may create their own fantasy or realistic costume to compete in these classes. When creating a costume the movement of a real horse will

have to be kept in mind. For example: is a costume fastened so it will stay put on a life, moving horse? The costume model horse is judged on the conformation as well as the accuracy and craftsmanship of the costume it wears. The costume classes are fun because the exhibitor can be very creative.

Common Costume Classes are: Native Costume, Novelty Costume, Costume made by exhibitor

Halter: These classes evaluate how a model represents the actual breed of horse. The divisions and judging criteria are derived from their real-life counterparts. Although known as "Halter", tack or costumes are not required (check your show bill for exceptions). If the horses are shown with tack it has to be the correct headgear for that breed. Model horses in good condition, with few scratches or rubs are good for halter classes. Blemishes will take the horse down in the placing. Horses that are realistic (in color, conformation, and gait) and demonstrate the correct breed type are ideal because the judges are looking for the accepted ideal conformation for each breed.

The horse may be standing or "moving" but the horse's position needs to be realistic. All horses should have a tag attached to the leg with the horse's breed, name and sex and the exhibitor's name. For 4H shows, stallions may not be shown.

Common Halter Classes are: Western Type at Halter, English Type at Halter, Draft Breed at Halter, Pony Breed at Halter, any Other Breed at Halter. Depending on the type of show there may be more specific breed classes such as Arabians, Clydesdale, Quarter Horse at Halter etc..

Some common descriptions for halter classes are "OF Plastic" or "Original Finish Plastic". This means that the horse is in its original state as produced by companies such as Breyer, or Peter Stone Company. "Artist Resin" or "China/Resin" finishes refer to professionally produced resin or porcelain models. "Custom" finish is a class where customized models can be shown. These models have been modified from their original color, shape etc. by the exhibitor.

How the Show Works

Fees: Most of the time a fee is charged to all participants. The fee includes the space of ½ table for the exhibitor. This table is used by the exhibitor to organize their horses prior to showing in a class. Additional table space can be added for an extra fee.

For most shows a class fee is charged. Often tokens or pieces of paper can be exchanged for the entry fee. The token will be placed next to the exhibit to indicate that the fee was paid. The judge will collect the tokens during the class and returns them to the organizers.

Show Bill: The show organizer distributes a show bill with the order and types of classes for that day. This show bill is available in advance so you can prepare your entries. In most cases the show rules are also attached to the show bill. The rules may specify age or experience level for each class; how many horses a single exhibitor can show in one class etc.. Pre-registration contact information is generally included as well.

Setting up to show: The show organizer starts the show and directs the exhibitors to the tables for setting up their entries for the class. Usually multiple tables are set up in the show hall and exhibitors set up for the classes in the order they are shown on the show bill. During judging of one class on a table, the next class can be set up on the next table. Prior to judging, the judge will let the exhibitors know to check their set up one more time prior to start. Once the judge is working the table, no additional adjustments may be made.

For 4H and youth shows it is common to have skill level or age divisions. Judges at these types of shows often will call the youth to the table after judging and explain their decision and why one exhibit was picked over another. This is a great opportunity to ask questions, listen and learn.

A general rule at Model Horse shows is that other exhibitor's horses may not be touched. Model Horses are valuable and often mean a lot to the owners.

Mostly Model Horse Shows are about having fun, learning something new and meeting a lot of interesting people who LOVE HORSES!