

To Line Up or Not To Line Up... That is the question

By Keri Minden-LeForce

The ApHC Board of Directors has often pondered the question: how should we present awards at the National and World Championship Appaloosa Shows? Several times, after exploring the benefits and drawbacks of various options, the majority of board members have voted to eliminate lining up the top 10 under each of the judges in favor of recognizing the top 16 finalists in each class. That decision has been reversed each time after negative reaction from members.

This time around, the board is providing to members the information available to them during their decision-making process in an effort to encourage input so that they can finalize the issue. If you show at the National and World Shows, you are encouraged to review this information and then contact your representative on the board of directors to offer input.

Current options under consideration are:

1. Line up the top 10 under each of the judges and give awards to the final top 10 in the class.
2. Give finalist ribbons to those placing 11–16 overall in the class and awards to the top 10 without lining up the horses under each of the judges.

Arguments for and against

For purposes of debate, let's review some of the arguments for and against each option.

Accountability: Some feel that lining up the entries under each individual judge holds the judges accountable for their placings. Discussion has been going on for years about whether this is an effective way to ensure accountability or if we need to address the deeper issues that may exist. The process of carding qualified judges has improved over the years through our membership in the Color Breed Council (CBC), the organization that hosts the annual international judges' seminar. CBC's mission is two-fold - to design a process that empowers member associations with the tools needed to select qualified judges and to provide the latest information on disciplines to keep carded judges up-to-date on current trends.

The next step in the process was to hire respected judge and clinician Joe Carter of St. George, Ontario, Canada to serve as a judge's monitor/advisor during the National and World Shows. As of 2006, his task is to work with judges to make sure that rules are understood and applied in the show ring, mentor, evaluate performance and let them know when something's wrong.

Each morning before the show starts, Joe meets with the judges to go over the day's schedule, review videos and discuss rules and issues that may arise. By the show's end, they'll have watched hours of tapes looking at movement, penalties, patterns, etc. Most judges who've already been involved in the process will verify that they learn a lot from Joe and each other. Since each judge comes to the event with varying years of experience and knowledge concerning different disciplines, a greater understanding of objectives is achieved along with uniform application of the rules.

Beyond that, Joe monitors class placings, reviews score sheets and cards, compares each judge's placings against his own impressions, and works to ensure that judges are following the rules, all while encouraging them to express their own opinions. This helps judges feel supported during what most will say is a nerve-wracking experience. And it has created a system where exhibitors can feel that even if they don't agree with the final placings, judges are accountable for their choices and rules are being applied.

Recognition: A feeling among some exhibitors is that lining up the top 10 exhibitors under each of the judges offers recognition to people who won't make it into the final placings and is therefore needed. The debate among Directors regarding recognition is really a question of who is more deserving of acknowledgment—the person who shows up in the top 10 on one card, or the person who places higher overall in the class. Take a look at the following examples. As a reminder, anyone with 21 points or more will be in the top 10 on the card and the total column reflects our scoring policy of dropping the high and low scores for each exhibitors and adding the remaining three scores together to determine the overall ranking for the class.

1.....120	3.....91
2.....105	4.....78
5.....66	8.....36
6.....55	9.....28
7.....45	10.....21

Chart 1

This example was taken from a hunt seat equitation class at a previous World Show. Under the line-up system, #170 would have shown up 9th in the line-up under one judge. However, #774 actually placed higher in the class overall but wasn't recognized under the top 10 line-up system.

Hunt Seat Equitation Final

Placed	Entry #	Judges:					Total
		1	2	3	4	5	
1	806	66	105	120	120	78	303
2	850	105	120	66	78	105	288
3	928	120	66	6	66	120	252
4	960	91	91	36	105	55	237
5	999	78	10	105	28	91	197
6	157	45	78	78	15	45	168
7	665	36	55	91	36	66	157
8	417	55	15	45	91	36	136
9	560	21	3	21	45	21	63
10	562	6	0	28	55	10	44
11	232	10	45	1	21	6	37
12	923	28	28	3	0	3	34
13	548	15	0	55	0	15	30
14	422	3	21	15	3	0	21
15	446	0	36	10	0	0	10
16	774	0	6	0	6	0	6
17	557	1	1	0	10	1	3
18	170	0	0	0	0	28	0
18	220	0	0	0	1	0	0

Chart 2

This example was taken from a western pleasure class at a previous World Show. Under the line-up system, #111 and #860 would have each appeared in a top 10 lineup under one judge. On the top side of the cut-off line, #269 would not have been recognized under any of the judges but placed higher in the overall standings than either of the other two exhibitors who appeared in a line-up.

Western Pleasure Final

Placed	Entry #	Judges:					Total
		1	2	3	4	5	
1	850	120	105	120	105	78	330
2	599	105	91	78	120	55	274
3	261	45	15	105	66	120	216
4	890	10	120	0	45	105	160
5	185	91	28	91	0	21	140
6	539	66	55	55	21	0	131
7	163	6	78	36	55	36	127
8	1030	78	6	10	78	28	116
9	292	36	36	0	28	66	100
10	651	55	0	21	6	91	82
11	610	3	45	28	91	0	76
12	291	15	3	0	36	45	54
13	602	28	66	3	15	10	53
14	1018	21	10	15	0	0	25
15	269	0	0	6	10	15	16
16	566	0	21	0	3	0	3
17	320	0	0	1	0	6	1
17	111	0	1	66	0	0	1
17	860	0	0	45	0	1	1
20	1026	1	0	0	0	0	0
21	1032	0	0	0	0	3	0
21	156	0	0	0	1	0	0

These situations can be found in a majority of placed classes, where those placing higher overall were not recognized while those placing under one judge made it into a line-up. The board has grappled with this issue when trying to decide who should be recognized.

Class results are always available in the ApHC information booth shortly after the conclusion of each class so exhibitors can still see where they placed. They're also published the next day in the show newsletter the *National Network*, and posted on the ApHC web site each night. In this digital age, there are many ways to find where each entrant placed in the class.

Showmanship may be the exception to the rule because it is more subjective than other classes, with points given or taken for style and in which the judge's personal preferences have a bigger role in determining the end result. There is also more room for disagreement in large classes like youth classes at the World Youth Show with 50-plus entries in each class.

At the 2007 National Show a new system where the majority of showmanship classes will be judged in "cuts" with top entries from each cut advancing to a finals round of 16 exhibitors will be tested. This will impact the decision in a number of ways. Consider the following two examples:

Chart 3

This class had 22 entries. Three of those placing lower than 16 would have shown up in a top 10 line-up.

Novice Showmanship Final

Placed	Entry #	Judges:					Total
		1	2	3	4	5	
1	439	120	120	91	0	105	316
2	730	78	78	78	0	66	222
3	191	36	45	1	105	120	186
4	210	45	105	105	28	21	178
5	149	28	91	66	45	45	156
6	157	91	55	21	1	78	154
7	952	105	66	3	78	0	147
8	336	66	3	55	15	91	136
9	537	15	10	120	91	10	116
10	817	55	6	45	36	0	87
11	229	0	28	28	3	55	59
12	646	6	36	10	10	28	48
13	631	10	0	15	66	0	25
14	938	21	0	0	120	1	22
15	847	0	15	6	55	0	21
16	423	0	21	0	0	15	15
17	446	1	1	36	6	6	13
18	194	0	0	0	21	3	3
19	518	3	0	0	0	0	0
20	919	0	0	0	0	36	0

Chart 4

These results are from a showmanship class at the 2003 World Show that included an elimination round and a finals round of the top 16 from the preliminary round. In this class, none of the finalists would have been affected adversely by either system. Everyone would have been in a top 10 line-up, and all would be recognized under the top 16 system as well.

Showmanship at Halter Final

Placed	Entry #	Judges:					Total
		1	2	3	4	5	
1	336	78	66	120	120	66	264
2	612	28	6	91	105	120	224
3	604	120	36	78	45	91	214
4	257	105	120	15	36	36	177
5	830	15	91	66	66	21	153
6	372	0	28	55	78	55	138
7	481	66	0	45	21	78	132
8	776	36	15	36	55	105	127
9	913	45	55	21	6	45	111
10	318	91	78	6	3	0	87
11	911	10	45	105	28	6	83
12	414	55	21	10	10	10	41
13	910	21	105	3	15	3	39
14	220	6	3	28	1	15	24
15	309	1	10	0	0	28	11
16	1122	3	1	1	91	1	5

In the debate concerning which process provides more “recognition”, under the top 10 line-up system, each exhibitor is called out by number to take their place in line. Under the top 16 system, exhibitors would be recognized by name, have their horse’s name announced, and receive a ribbon as a finalist.

Finally, if 16 finalists are recognized, no single person would be left on the rail if they didn’t show up in the top 10 on any card. No one wants to be left standing during the finals and an advantage of changing the system is that no one would have to be.

Excitement: Lastly, there is discussion over which is more exciting—seeing the line-ups and figuring out the winners, or the suspense of not knowing as the countdown continues toward the top entrant. Some say there’s nothing like watching the lines form to generate excitement. Others say the suspense of not knowing holds the spectators in their seats and gets hearts pounding as they await the crowning of a National or World Champion.

Please contact your director, by e-mail, phone or fax with your input. This is your invitation to let us know how you feel! Feel free to contact the ApHC Performance Department as well. We’ll talk it over with you and take note of your comments.

ApHC directors are listed here: <http://www.appaloosa.com/association/bod.htm>. Or, call the ApHC office at (208) 882-5578 ext. 300.