

# HORSE JUDGING

Horse Judging trains young people in decision-making skills related to equine selection. 4-H members learn:

- How to evaluate the conformation of different types and breeds of horses.
- How to evaluate the performance of different types and breeds of horses.
- How to defend their placings through the delivery of oral reasons.

**Publication(s):** Tennessee 4-H Horse Judging Guide:  
<https://utia.tennessee.edu/publications/wp-content/uploads/sites/269/2023/10/PB1828.pdf>

Oklahoma's Horse Judging Manual:  
<https://extension.okstate.edu/programs/horse/4h-events/site-files/documents/judging-manual-2015.pdf>

Kentucky's Horse Judging Manual:  
<http://www.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/asc/asc118/asc118.pdf>

Washington's Horse Judging Manual:  
<https://www.montana.edu/extension/flathead/documents/4-h/horse/WA%20Horse%20Judging%20Competition%20Manual.pdf>

Various breed associations, such as the American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA), are excellent contacts for resources and training materials.

Practice Judging Cards can be found on the [Eastern Region website](#).

**Eligibility:** See the Judging Team Eligibility Table located in the Region Related section under Judging Teams.

## General Rules:

A team will consist of three to four members, with the top three scores being combined to make up the team score. The team members will evaluate the conformation and/or performance of a variety of equine breeds. Examples include: Quarter Horse Mares, Stock Horse Geldings, Conformation Hunters, Walking Horse Conformation, etc. Examples of performance classes are: Western Pleasure, Hunter Under Saddle, Hunter Hack, Plantation Pleasure, Reining, etc. A class will consist of four horses. **Senior High contestants will be required to give 2 sets of oral reasons.** Junior or Junior High contestants may participate in a reasons contest as well.

## Regional Contests:

The Eastern Region Horse Judging Contest is usually held in April.

**State Contest:**

The State Contest will take place in conjunction with the TN 4-H Horse Championships in Shelbyville in June. The top four placing Senior High teams from the Regional Contests will qualify for this contest.

**Southern Regional Contest:**

The top two placing teams in the State Contest receive an automatic berth in the Southern Regional 4-H Horse Championships contest, traditionally held the first week of August. The location of the contest rotates among the 13 Southern Region states.

**National Contest or Tour:**

The top placing Senior High team will earn an automatic berth in the Eastern National Horse Judging contest, held in Louisville, Kentucky. This contest is held in November.