

The Highland Pony Society



Founded 1923

Patron: His Majesty The King

Rules for Highland Pony Society Panel Judges

General Rules

1. Judges must be aware that the purpose of judging is to place ponies in the classes at which they are officiating in order of merit subject to breed requirements, conformation and soundness*. (*See Health & Safety and Animal Welfare)
2. Judges must remember that they are judging Highland Pony Breed classes and therefore the importance of breed type, as emphasised in the breed description, must be their priority.
3. A judge must be fully conversant with all judging and showing guidelines*.
Before judging a qualifier, judges must be familiar with the rules using separate rule books as appropriate.
(*See the HPS website for HPS Showing Rules and Recommendations)
4. If a judge has sufficient grounds to believe the judging and/or showing guidelines are being breached then the judge must ask the rider/handler to remove the pony from the ring (e.g., false hair, falsification of markings on a pony, use of make-up etc). The incident must be reported to the show concerned and to the HPS as soon as possible.
5. A judge must take appropriate action against an exhibit whose performance is enhanced or potentially enhanced by artificial aids or outside assistance. Plastic bags, excessive and abnormal use of whips, noise producing objects are all considered to be artificial aids. Offending competitors may be dismissed from the class. The incident must be reported to the HPS Office.
6. A judge must always check the show schedule to ensure they are able to judge the classes requested. If unable to fulfil judging duties, they should contact the show secretary well in advance of the show.
7. The Society has secured insurance for Highland Pony Society Panel Judges who are officiating at HPS affiliated shows. Judges must conduct themselves in a safe manner and must ensure appropriate, up to standard attire is worn.

Eligibility

1. All judges must be current members of The Highland Pony Society.
2. A judge must attend a Highland Pony Society Seminar/Study Day a minimum of once every five years for Continual Professional Development. Failure to attend, may result in removal from the panel subject to Council's approval.
3. A judge must stand down from the panel and inform the HPS if they are not medically, physically or mentally fit to judge, including any temporary illness or injury. Judges must only officiate when they are physically able to move safely within the ring, react promptly to horses, and carry out all judging tasks without aids or equipment that could compromise safety. Where a condition may affect judging capability, the judge must notify the show and The Highland Pony Society Office so an appropriate risk assessment can be undertaken.

*The Secretary, Garbh Allt House, Maidenplain Place, Aberuthven, Perthshire, PH3 1EL
Tel: 01764 664000. Email: info@highlandponysociety.com*

Company Limited by Guarantee: Company No: SC 154683 | Registered Charity No. SC013562

The Highland Pony Society



Founded 1923

Patron: His Majesty The King

4. A judge must complete and return the Annual Judges' Questionnaire within the given time frame.
5. Judges are permitted to judge a maximum of 2 medal shows per year as long as they are not for the same discipline (ie 2 out of In-Hand, Ridden, Dressage, Working Hunter and Working Harness but **not 2 of the same discipline**)
6. B Panel Judges must not accept appointments to judge Medal Shows.
** See Page 5 for List of Medal Shows for 2026**
7. A judge must not accept invitations to judge the same type of classes at an HPS affiliated show within a local area more than once during a season, where a local area is defined as a **25 mile radius**, as the crow flies, from the showgrounds concerned.
8. A judge **must not accept more than four HPS affiliated judging appointments** in any one year.

Judges' Conduct

1. When officiating, judges are ambassadors of The Highland Pony Society and conduct of judges reflects on the Society.
2. A judge must arrive in adequate time, normally at least 30 minutes prior to the expected start time of their classes, unless otherwise stipulated, and report to the Show Secretary.
3. All judges must be smartly and appropriately dressed according to the weather. Casual clothing is inappropriate and blue denim is not acceptable.
4. Judges must not refer to the show catalogue prior to, or during, judging. They may refer to the show schedule.
5. All judges must conduct themselves in a professional, courteous and considerate manner throughout and after their judging appointment.
6. Mobile phones must be switched off, or on silent, while judging.
7. Judges must not share their views or opinions on any animals, exhibitors or other judges via any form of social media.

Judges' Impartiality

1. A judge must be 100% unbiased and fair, evenly allocating their attention to each pony before them.
2. A judge should not call any exhibitor by their name in the ring and should always remain impartial during judging and not be over familiar.
3. When a judge officiates in HPS affiliated classes at a show, he/she or his/her immediate family must not compete or exhibit in that section.
4. A judge must not accept hospitality from exhibitors e.g., staying with an exhibitor prior to the show.
5. A judge must not knowingly judge:
 - any pony bred by him/her or any member of their immediate family, employer, partner or business partner.

*The Secretary, Garbh Allt House, Maidenplain Place, Aberuthven, Perthshire, PH3 1EL
Tel: 01764 664000. Email: info@highlandponysociety.com*

Company Limited by Guarantee: Company No: SC 154683 | Registered Charity No. SC013562

The Highland Pony Society



Founded 1923

Patron: His Majesty The King

- a pony previously owned, produced, leased, sold by him/her or had any financial involvement with any member of their immediate family, employer, partner, or business partner. Stud fees and associated costs are not included but livery is.
6. A judge must not judge a rider or handler who has ridden, produced, or shown in hand for them in the previous or current showing seasons, unless agreed by the show. Please note that group teach ins (4 or more riders) and demos are exempt.
 7. Should the umpire judge in an overall championship have a conflict of interest in one of the ponies, the umpire must stand down and a further suitable disinterested replacement found.

Judging

1. Judges should either accept or decline an invitation to judge within two weeks of an invitation. If unable to fulfil a previously accepted appointment, the judge should write or call the show secretary as promptly as possible and try to find a replacement.
2. Before judging, judges must familiarise themselves with the ring and inform their steward where they wish ponies to line up, change the rein etc and ensure rosettes, qualification cards etc are all accessible for awarding at the end of the class.
3. Judges may be accompanied in the ring only by a person or persons appointed by the show, or by one of the Society's probationer judges.
Probationing with experienced judges is an essential way to ensure that novice judges are aware of judging practices, including the importance of prioritising breed type. Probationary Shows are allocated to Judges and Probationers by Council.
4. When in hand judges are to judge ridden classes, they should check with the show secretary that, where possible, a capable rider will be available. They are encouraged to take ridden panel probationers as their rider.
5. Ponies in novice classes should not be ridden by the judge, except in a Championship.
6. Judges should not adjust any items of tack on exhibits during the class. Any issues may be advised to the exhibitor, either directly or through a steward.
7. Where mark sheets are used, changes should not be made. If the steward has for example misheard and written the wrong score on the mark sheet, then the score may be corrected and initialled by both the steward and judge.
8. Judges, or their probationer, must present rosettes unless a sponsor is present. Please check with your steward for potential sponsors.
9. It is the judge's right to withhold rosettes if they feel entries are of insufficient merit.
10. In the event judges cannot agree in a championship class, the umpire judge invited may judge the animals involved in the disagreement.

Health & Safety and Animal Welfare

1. If, in the opinion of the judge, any pony entered for the class is unsound, the judge may, at their discretion, suggest the exhibitor withdraws the pony from the class or it may be subject to lower marking.

*The Secretary, Garbh Allt House, Maidenplain Place, Aberuthven, Perthshire, PH3 1EL
Tel: 01764 664000. Email: info@highlandponysociety.com*

Company Limited by Guarantee: Company No: SC 154683 | Registered Charity No. SC013562

The Highland Pony Society



Founded 1923

Patron: His Majesty The King

2. Judges should familiarise themselves with the requirements of Health and Safety regulations and their responsibilities beforehand.
3. A judge must report any health & safety incidents/issues with competitors that occur whilst judging and ensure any relevant forms are completed for the show records.
4. For Health and Safety reasons, judges may prefer not to touch ponies. However, if they do, it is at their own risk and they should be aware of the possibility of cross contamination.
5. In the event of a ride judge falling from an exhibit, they must not remount the exhibit in that class, the pony must be asked to leave the ring and will not be allowed to compete further in that class. In the event of a judge falling from an exhibit it is the judges' discretion as to whether they feel fit to continue judging. Should the judge not be fit to continue riding, a replacement judge may be found, or competitors will be asked to do an individual show. The organisers retain the right to override a decision should they think the judge is unfit to continue.
6. In the event of a competitor falling from an exhibit, they must not remount the exhibit in that class. The pony must be asked to leave the ring.
7. Judges must request any competitor whose pony appears to be a danger to others to leave the ring.
8. Judges must ensure, particularly in classes including stallions, that ponies are lined up in a position which allows maximum space and minimum danger to competitors.

Ring Discipline

1. A class is CLOSED for judging and ponies will not be allowed to enter the ring:
 - IN-HAND – when the last pony has completed its individual trot in the initial stages of the class.
 - RIDDEN – when the class is instructed to proceed forward to trot.
 - WHP – 5 minutes after the last pony has jumped.
2. Once a class has commenced, there can be no substitution of rider or handler without the judge's permission.
3. Competitors are not allowed to leave or withdraw from the ring of any class in progress without permission from the judge.
4. If an exhibitor leaves the ring for any reason, they must not re-enter without permission from the judge.
5. No person other than the judge and the ring team is permitted to alter the course during working hunter classes.
6. Consideration must always be shown to all riders and competitors and a degree of flexibility exercised at very small shows.
7. A judge's decision is final. The class ends when the judge instructs the steward to dismiss the class.

*The Secretary, Garbh Allt House, Maidenplain Place, Aberuthven, Perthshire, PH3 1EL
Tel: 01764 664000. Email: info@highlandponysociety.com*

Company Limited by Guarantee: Company No: SC 154683 | Registered Charity No. SC013562

The Highland Pony Society



Founded 1923

Patron: His Majesty The King

Medal Shows 2026

Gold Medals:

The Highland Pony Society Breed Show In-Hand
The Highland Pony Society Breed Show Ridden

Silver Medals:

Scone Palace International Horse Trials, Native Pony Show – In Hand Champion
Scone Palace International Horse Trials, Native Pony Show – Ridden Champion
Scottish Game Fair, Scone Palace – Working Pony Class
The Highland Pony Society Breed Show Working Hunter
The Highland Pony Society Breed Show Dressage
The Royal Highland Show In Hand
The Royal Highland Show Ridden

Bronze Medals:

Aberdeen Highland Pony Show run by NESHPEs
Black Isle Show
Border Highlands
Central Scotland Highland Pony Club Autumn Show
Great Yorkshire Show – In Hand Champion
HPEC Spring Show
Perth Show
The Royal Highland Show – opposite sex to the In Hand Champion
Malvern Highland Pony Show
Windsor Horse Show
Performance Awards – Scotland
Performance Awards – England & Wales
In Hand Awards – UK
Youngstock Champion – Scotland
Youngstock Champion – England & Wales

*The Secretary, Garbh Allt House, Maidenplain Place, Aberuthven, Perthshire, PH3 1EL
Tel: 01764 664000. Email: info@highlandponysociety.com*

Company Limited by Guarantee: Company No: SC 154683 | Registered Charity No. SC013562