

In Hand/ Groundwork Competitions



These competitions are a little different to what everyone might be used to and so we thought it would be useful to outline what we are looking for and how we will score your entry.

Overall equi-ability ethos is to create Power In Harmony and this is our goal with everything we do. We will be looking for human/horse connection and ease of communication throughout the exercise and the highest scores will be awarded to the partners who can make transitions and movements successfully and clearly with the least physical intervention. So we will mark down for harsh or constant contact for example.

For the paces we would be looking for the horse to be monitoring the energy of the handler and matching it. For the movements we would be looking for the human and horse to have a language or signals that they both clearly understand – again with as little physical contact as possible.

For clarification, when there is “no contact on lead rope” our definition is that the only pressure on the horse’s nose is the weight of the lead rope and nothing extra from the hands of the handler. The link between the halter and the handler’s hand is a relaxed loop.

So some example scores

| Halting | |
|---|----|
| Horse halts squarely and as soon as handler does with no additional steps and with no contact at all on lead rope | 10 |
| Horse halts a few seconds after the human but with little lead rope contact – or takes some steps after halting | 8 |
| Horse halts a number of seconds after the handler and needs to feel some lead rope contact before doing so | 6 |
| Horse halts but with strong lead rope contact and doesn’t stand for long without moving feet and /or moves some distance ahead of handler | 4 |
| Horse does not halt | 2 |

| Transition from walk to forward walk | |
|--|----|
| Horse matches handler's energy as soon as it increases and with no contact at all on lead rope. Handler position remains just in front of horse's shoulder at all times. Obvious change of momentum. | 10 |
| Horse is a few seconds after the human but with little or no lead rope contact – or handler gets a little ahead. Obvious change of momentum. | 8 |
| Horse changes pace a number of seconds after the handler and needs to feel some lead rope contact before doing so – handler position gets ahead of the horse. Change of momentum is less defined. | 6 |
| Horse changes pace but with strong lead rope contact and with some delay, or moves some distance ahead of handler. Change of momentum is not at all clear. | 4 |
| Horse does not change pace | 2 |

We apply the same approach for a transition from forward walk to slow walk etc

| Moving hind-quarters around ¼ turn | |
|---|----|
| Horse stands until asked to move. When asked the horse moves hind feet around without walking forward or backwards and stops when asked. No contact on lead rope or directly on horse | 10 |
| Horse stands until asked to move. When asked to move there may be a gentle contact on the lead rope OR a single step forwards or backwards OR a delay in movement. Movement may happen in two stages rather than one fluid one. | 8 |
| Two of these happen - Horse moves when asked to stand, medium contact on the lead rope, steps forwards or backwards, a delay in movement or confusion from horse. | 6 |
| Horse moves hind-quarters but only after a number of "asks" and with strong lead rope contact OR strong contact direct onto horse. Communication unclear from handler. | 4 |
| Horse does not move hind-quarters around | 2 |