2015 Trial Trials Senior Judges’ Symposium

Consensus of Opinion

Facilitators: Dean Fisher and Diane Medlock

Senior Judges Present: Joan Wilkinson, Ron Jenkins, Kelly York, Dean Fisher, Diane Medlock

Review of Past Symposium Consensus Opinions

Discussed subjects covered in past Symposium notes. Important for all Senior Judges to review notes on past symposiums to refresh consensus opinions covered. Several items keep coming up every year.

New Rules:

2.13 Requirements for juniors
2.14.1 When judging starts/stops
4.0 Moving back down in competition
4.4 Re-definition of junior rider requirement to move up in competition
12.1.5 Sending as an obstacle
12.4 Hoof check and lead rope handling.
12.5 Water Crossing-rider’s decision, drink or no drink
12.8 & 13.5 Clarify judging step overs
12.10 Gate handling
12.11.1 Novice riders shall only be required to either pull or drag within any one obstacle.
12.17 Tailing obstacle deleted
13.8.2 Coaching: Both coach and coached be disqualified.

Discussed all new rules.

- Major discussion regarding new rules in 12.4 on whether these rope handling descriptions should apply to all obstacles or just hoof checks. Several opinions and some think these descriptions are in conflict with rule 13.4. Consensus was that this is a muddy issue and should be taken out of the rules. Charlotte Johnson will write a proposed resolution for next year. In the mean time, these descriptions should only be allowed for the hoof check obstacle.

- If a Ride Manager wanted to use the tailing obstacle, would Senior Judges approve it? Consensus was no, do not approve it as the intention of taking it out of the rules was so it would not be a legal obstacle. Dean Fisher will write a resolution for next year making it illegal in the rules.

Issues for Discussion – Consensus or New Rule?

1. What constitutes a “halter”.

Several items were shown via pictures of things riders wanted to use as their halter including several that stipulated “halter” on their packaging. Consensus was that only a
tradition halter will constitute a halter for compliance with our rules. There are several items already approved as halters (halter bridle and leading w/mecate that is hitched correctly). Someone should bring a resolution forward defining a halter if something different is needed.

2. Clarify what 12.1.1.3 means - Horses wearing a Western bridle with a bosal and mecate [under bridle] may be led by the mecate. Different from Appendix A?

No difference from bosal/mecate and how reins are hitched.

3. DQ is being used way too much on obstacles like "ride to the log, do a turn on the forehand and return to here". Folks are getting DQ'd for not turning on the forehand. Should be an off course or horse's response but if they got to the log, turned and got back they did the obstacle?

A big issue and impossible to give a “always” response on the numbers of obstacles we use. Consensus was for Senior Judges to review with obstacle judges thoroughly about the intent of the obstacle and when potential DQ’s may be encountered within the obstacle. In obstacles that only include one element, work with ride manager to make the obstacle have several elements so “turn on the forehand” is not the only object of the obstacle, thus providing a DQ if not performed.

4. How to instruct judges on how to secure the lead rope when hobbling. Can you leave it on the ground or does it need to be secured in some other way. Can it be tied to the hobbles?

Consensus was that anything goes with the lead rope, as the rules do not stipulate. Senior Judges are cautioned to not add “their views” in judging, our role is to go by the rules, not embellish them. Kelly York to write a resolution clarifying what to do with lead rope if necessary.

5. When ground tying, what can be used to tie? (lead rope, reins, neck rope, etc.)

Consensus was that anything goes with the lead rope, reins, neck rope, etc. as the rules do not stipulate. Senior Judges are cautioned to not add “their views” in judging, our role is to go by the rules, not embellish them or make opinion statements.

6. Turning on a hillside. Like downhill/uphill in the instructions, the directions need to be indicated there is a hill, not left to one’s opinion. Obstacle was “dismount and check your horse’s front feet”. Points given for not dismounting on the uphill side…in my opinion it was flat!

Consensus was Senior Judges do a better job of written instructions and if a hill is not evident, don’t try and use it as one.
7. Lead rope around your back or in between you and horse if dismounted and picking opposite hoof (picking off side while stand on near side). Was given points for this because in judge’s opinion it was “unsafe”. Does new rule 12.4 fix in that as long as horse stands quietly it is not “unsafe”?

Consensus was that points for these kinds of things should not be happening as opinions on safety vary widely. Go by the rules. Carlena Kellogg will write a resolution stating lead rope on either side of the body is ok.

8. Following obstacle directions that are in conflict with the rules. Example: Open the gate with a left hand push. By doing it with the left hand it puts your butt pointed down hill where if you used your right hand it would be safe. Refuse to follow directions and get DQ’d or open with right and get off course points?

Consensus that Senior Judges should help with the obstacle directions when improper directions are given. Participants only see what the obstacle is, they don’t hear the conversations between obstacle judge and Senior Judge where an agreement may be reached about it not being a hill.

9. New defined rule of starting as soon as directions read. If I have not asked if I may proceed, are they going to start judging after they read it, and if I hesitated a moment thinking about it, what if I was about to ask if it could be read again or needed to read myself and they have already started judging?

Consensus that riders be asked if they have any questions and for judge to state “you may proceed” should be mandatory. If the answer to the question asked does tell the rider how to do the obstacle, what the rule is or help them perform the obstacle it should be ok to answer. Dean Fisher will write a resolution making the “you may proceed” mandatory.

10. Loading horse in trailer with or without bridle and/or saddle. Emergency vs “end of day”. Left to opinion of the ride manager? What is “proper”?

Consensus was that these type obstacles are “brain games” and have no business in the obstacle. There should not be points given for “in my opinion”, go by the rules. If you want saddle and bridle off, tell them you want them off. In some Senior Judges opinion, loading a horse in a trailer as an obstacle is unsafe, others don’t.

11. Various obstacles-“drag to cone”, “back down ditch to flag”, “walk up the ditch” keep getting points for not dragging “to” cone, points for backing “past” the flag, points for not going far enough up the ditch, three different trail trials this year. (SCE this year was told to walk until nose at the flag).

We’ve discussed this many times and come up with the same consensus, Senior Judges need to stipulate either in the written directions where “to” is (horse, rider, drag obstacle, etc.) or discuss with obstacle judge that “in the vicinity” is ok. If instructions say “nose at the flag” and horse is four feet from the flag with the nose, state that in the comments when giving points.
12. What is the Senior Judge’s responsibility in approving/disapproving un-natural obstacles?

Senior Judges should approve/disapprove. Balloons on a bridge is not natural unless maybe in Golden Gate Park, although some judges felt they still would not approve it.

13. What about using live animals in obstacles?

Consensus was that it would be ok as long as the obstacle is the same for all riders. For example, make sure the animal is in hand, not left in a pen to wander, lie down, stand up, sleep, cry, etc.

14. Open Discussion