



PASO FINO HORSE ASSOCIATION

JUDGES CURRICULUM HANDBOOK

PREPARED BY

THE JUDGES AND STEWARDS COMMITTEE

2015



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1. Purpose of this Handbook

The purpose of this Judges Curriculum Handbook is to provide continuing education to the Paso Fino Horse Association (PFHA) Judges. Its intent is to standardize the judging of the Paso Fino Horse. The information contained within lays the foundation for making solid decisions based on the Paso Fino breed standard and the PFHA rules. A successful Judge is one that has great knowledge of our PFHA cornerstones, the gait and our rules and knows how to apply them in the show ring.

2. Use of the Sounding Board:

A. The Board Validates the Decision

Judges should not use the sounding board as the “sole” determining criteria for judging ANY class. To that point, in PFHA’s three largest class divisions, the board is only given 10% in the judging scale. That means 90% of the class should be fixed or settled in the judge’s mind by the time the horses go down the sounding board.

The rail work is the time for judges to really do their comparisons and formulate their decisions. A judge that is incapable of making decisions without the use of the sounding board is not judging within the PFHA rules. Period.

The board is simply a tool to help validate what the judge has already ascertained from the rail work. It’s imperative our judges are secure and knowledgeable enough to judge any class as though the sounding board does not exist.

To reiterate, the rail work of the horse takes priority over the sounding board.

B. Classes in which the Board is Used

Horses must traverse the sounding board in the following classes

- Paso Fino
- Paso Performance
- Paso Pleasure

The judges may use the sounding board as a test in the following classes

- Horsemanship
- Gold/Silver Medal



The sounding board is optional in the following classes

- Bella Forma
- Western Pleasure
- Country Pleasure
- May be used as an obstacle in the Trail class

3. Judging the Bella Forma Classes

A. Authors

Elizabeth Kleiber

Bobby Yunits

B. Conformation

All major breed disciplines, including all 11 USEF breed disciplines, have a conformation division. Some breeds have a halter, in-hand or model class. In our breed, we call it Bella Forma (good form). Several breeds include conformation as a consideration in the performance classes as well. Many Warmblood horse associations require breeding stock to pass strict breed standards, including conformation and performance tests, in order to be considered viable breeding stock. In other words if a stallion or mare does not pass breed standard testing, its offspring are ineligible for registration.

As we look around the horse industry we can see our fellow horse breeders and owners putting significant emphasis on the conformation. It may be one of the few elements we all have in common – using conformation standards to ensure the beauty and functionality of our breeds. These standards include an evaluation of the physical structure and movement of the horse.

Every breed uses standard conformation guidelines along with breed specific characteristic standards. Breed characteristics, also known as a breed standard, distinguish horse breeds from one another. The Paso Fino breed standard is stated in our rulebook on pages 2 -4; Article II of the Constitution under Section 1.A through L. This is the ideal Paso Fino we as judges seek to reward in the show ring.

C. Purpose of the Bella Forma Class

The purpose of the Bella Forma class is to set the standard for our breed type. "Form to function" is not just a catch phrase. It has meaning as it pertains to the longevity and riding capability of a horse. Undesirable conformation can limit the horse's ability to perform. In 1998



the National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) conducted a study to evaluate the economic cost of lameness, colic, and equine protozoal myeloencephalitis (EPM) to the U.S. equine industry. The data collected showed lameness to be two to three times more likely to occur and cost 6 times more than colic. Cost estimates for lameness in the US horse industry were \$678 million. Lameness in horses is a serious expense and risk. Helping our breed avoid conformation-associated lameness should be our priority.

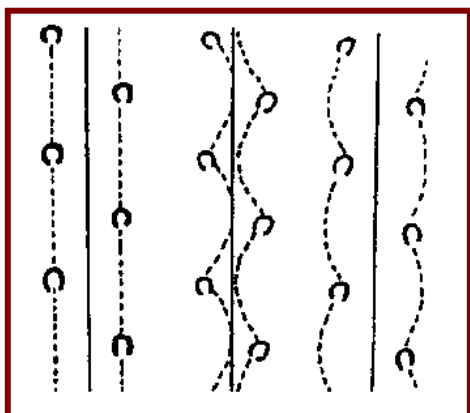
We want the Paso Fino to be structurally sound, balanced, beautiful and smooth. It needs to look and move like a Paso Fino. This is one of the few classes in which each horse is judged one at a time. Judges evaluate individual horses both in motion and standing still.

As we think about the Bella Forma division we must consider the two major class elements, conformation and gait, in the proper balance according to the rules. The judge must weigh the conformation of the horse at 60% and gait at a lesser 30% in this particular class. Gait is absolutely a requirement for a horse to be eligible for class placement. Horses that do not gait shall be disqualified. The third smaller element of consideration is the final 10% for appearance, grooming and manners.

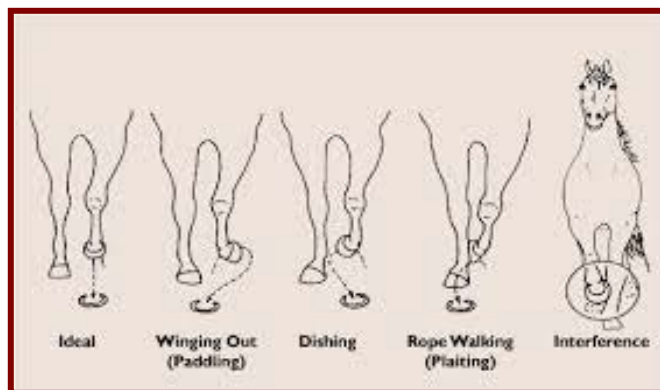
D. Gait

The gait of the Bella Forma horse needs to be assessed for quality, balance and tracking as the horse enters the ring and travels to the lineup. Judges need to look for even 4 beat gait, cadence, balance, and symmetry, in addition to looking at conformation of the horse in motion.

Is the horse smooth, elegant and attractive as it moves? Is the horse exhibiting naturalness and gait? Does the horse track straight in the front and rear? When viewing the horse from the front take note of the flight of the front feet. Ideally all 4 feet will travel directly forward without deviating to either side. Also ideally the legs viewed from the front or rear will be aligned laterally. In other words, when viewing from the front, only the front legs should be seen as the hind legs will be obscured showing total lateral limb alignment. A horse that is base wide in front and narrow in the rear will give the judge full view of all four legs from the front and rear.



Tracking straight Winging in Paddling



Source: myhorseuniversity.com

Source: www.fallight.com

There is **no preference** given to fino or corto in this class. Either form of gait is acceptable. Judge the fino and corto gait following the standards of gait described on page 4 of the breed standard listed in the PFHA constitution under ART II. Sec 1.L. Horses shown on 2 lines should not be given preference over those shown on a single line either.

As the judge watches each horse enter the ring keep in mind that gait assessment is less than a 1/3 of the overall impression of the horse.

The majority of the judge's consideration lies in the conformation portion of the class. Nearly two thirds of the overall assessment of the horse is based on the conformation evaluation.

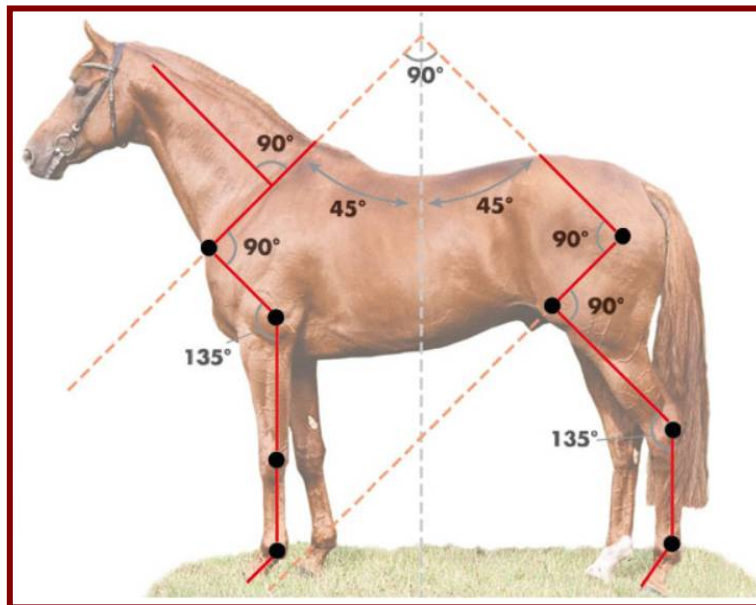
Each horse needs to be assessed in a routine manner. Judges need to view each animal from at least 4 perspectives (front, rear and each side).



E.Side View

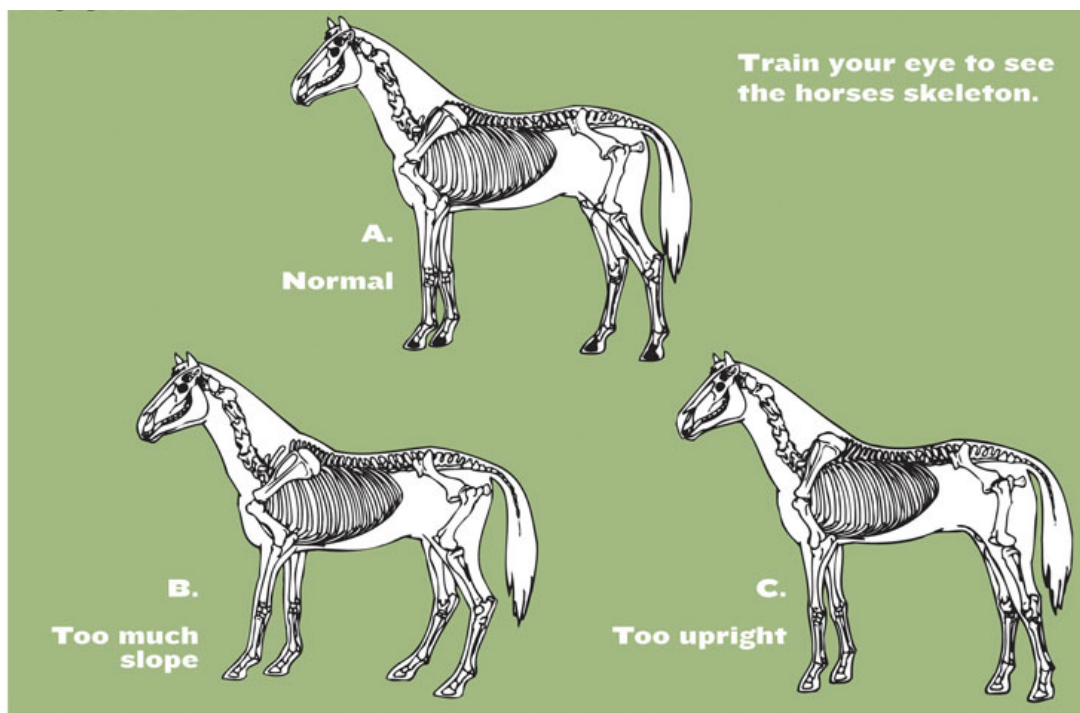
When viewing the animal from the side, assess the overall balance and proportions. Look for and notice unbalanced or disproportionate areas, keeping in mind the conformation standard in the rulebook.

Horses that look heavy in the neck or front end will be putting more weight on their front legs and increase the possibility for lameness due to stress. In addition, a horse with a heavy front will have to work harder for balance and true collection. A horse with a low or short neck will have a harder time getting into a collected frame. Note if the horse's head is too large or small, if the neck is the proper length and thickness, and how the neck is set and connects to the body. These are some examples to consider when evaluating overall balance.



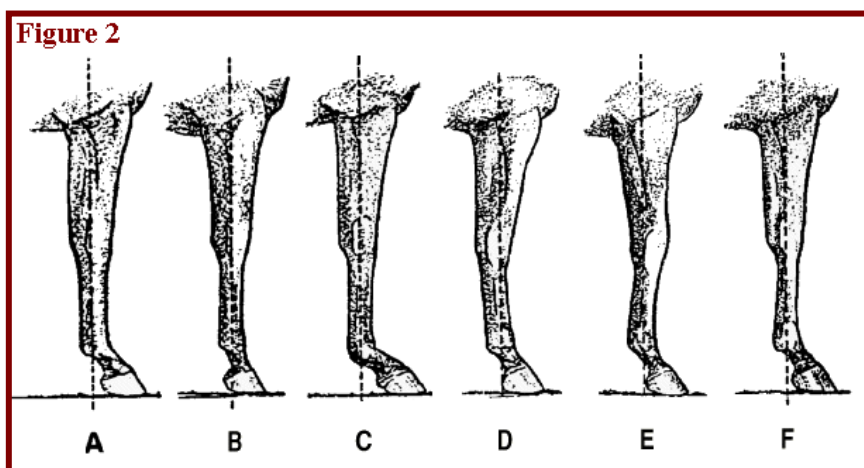
Source: www.acegroup.com.au

Angles of shoulders, pasterns and hind legs should be noted from the side view. 45-degree angles are ideal for shoulders and front pasterns to allow for maximum flexibility and strength. More sloping shoulders and pasterns may seem to add more smoothness, but will also potentially cause lameness from lack of support, where steeper angles limit range of motion and smoothness as well as adding the propensity of impact type lameness or blemishes such as splints and wind puffs.



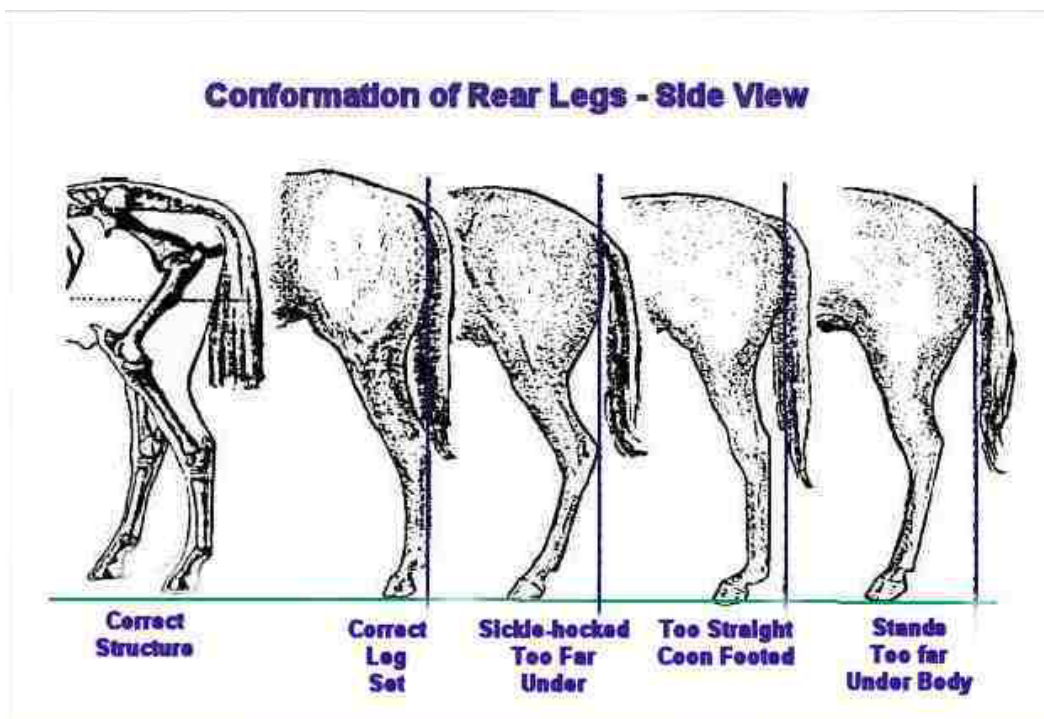
Source: americashorsedaily.com

Attention should be given to the placement of the knee joint as well as the pastern angle. The best way to assess leg conformation is to use plumb lines.



A. Ideal knee and pastern, B. Steep pastern, C. Sloping pastern, D. Upright, short pastern and calf knee, E. buck knee, F. Tied in below the knee

Source: Gaitedhorse.net



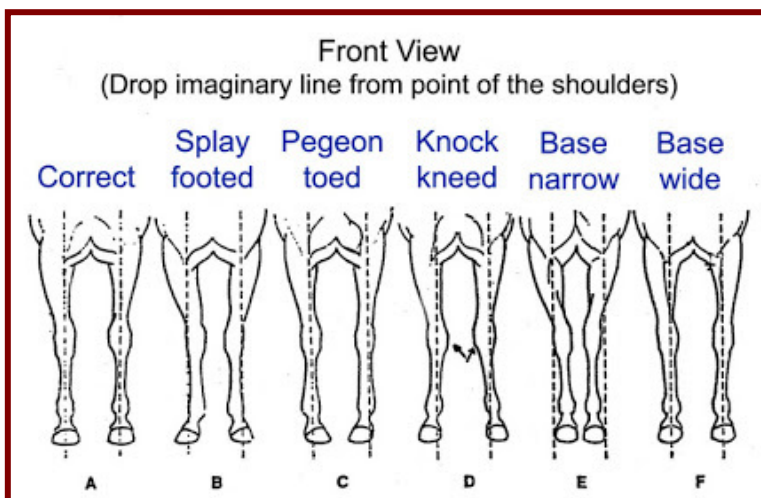
Source: canterne.org

Blemishes, like bowed tendons and curb, can be seen from the side view. Horses should be penalized heavily for transmissible faults such as calf or buck knees, and sickle hocks.



F. Front View

Viewing the front of the horse is the time to assess the head, ears, bite and the chest and front legs. Note the size and clarity of the eye, proper size/shape and angle of the ears, attractiveness of the head and proper alignment of the teeth. Take note of the straightness of the legs, the placement and shape of the knees and feet as well as the breadth of the chest. This is where you will see conformation faults like toe-in or toe out, bench or offset knees, base wide or narrow, as well as blemishes like splints, ringbone or side bone.



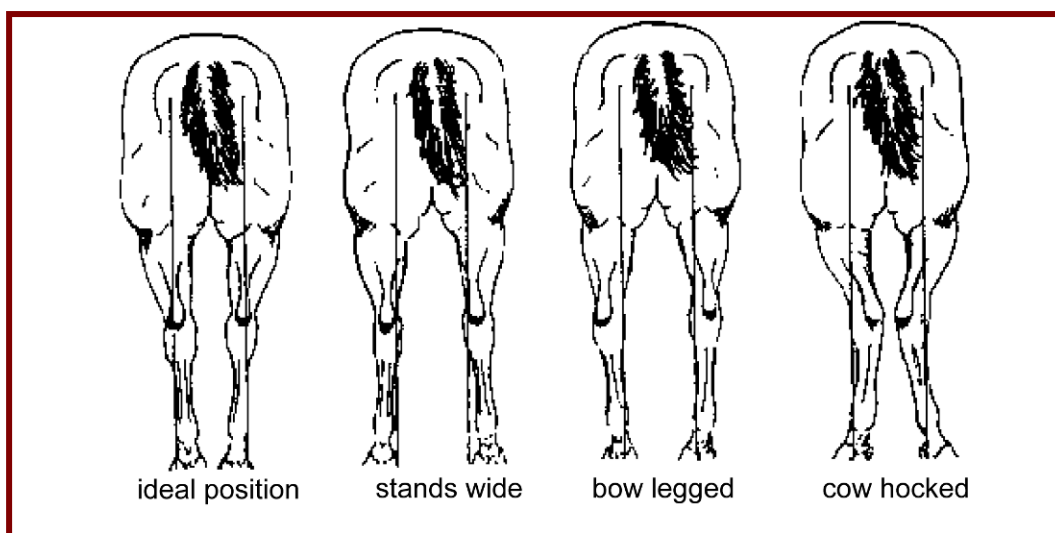
Source: pixgood.com

Proper front leg conformation is very important to all horses since the front legs carry the majority of the horse's weight. Blemishes on a horse's legs such as splints or wind puffs should be penalized.



G. Rear View

Viewing the horse from the rear will allow the judge to see alignment issues with the hips, hocks and feet. Here you will see cow hocks or bowlegs, rafter hips or high tail set. Notice blemishes like capped hocks, bog or bone spavins and the alignment of the spine from tail to ears. Here a fallen crest is noticeable if not seen from the front or side. Note that both testicles of a stallion are dropped when you are in this area.



Source: equinerescue.wordpress.com

H. Score Given

After completing the assessment of the conformation of the horse, assign a score that will represent 60% of the overall evaluation of the horse.

Finally assess the horse's turnout, grooming, manners and attitude for the final 10% of the score. This includes how well the horse is presented, the horse's behavior and overall cleanliness.

Add up your 30% gait score, 60% conformation score and 10% turnout score to get the overall score for each horse. Make note of conformation/gait/turnout positives and negatives for each horse should you need to refer to them later.

The sounding board or another pass around the ring may be used if there is a tie in scoring or if a judge needs to re-evaluate gait and tracking.



SAMPLE SCORE CARD

GAIT ASSESSMENT

Even 4 beat gait	5 pts. Max
Front Tracking	5 pts. Max
Rear Tracking	5 pts. Max
Symmetry	5 pts. Max
Balance	5 pts. Max
Overall impression of the horse in motion	5 pts. Max

Total Gait score

30 pts. Max

CONFORMATION ASSESSMENT

SIDE VIEWS

Overall balance and proportions	5 pts. Max
Correctness of front legs	5 pts. Max
Correctness of hind legs	5 pts. Max
Correctness of shoulder and hip	5 pts. Max
Correctness of topline	5 pts. Max
Correctness of underline	5 pts. Max
Blemishes (subtract points)	

FRONT VIEW

Head, ears, eyes and bite	5 pts. Max
Chest	5 pts. Max
Front legs, alignment, straightness, and joints	5 pts. Max
Blemishes (subtract points)	



REAR VIEW

(Testicles of stallions)	
Hips and tail set	5 pts. Max
Alignment of spine	5 pts. Max
Rear legs, alignment, straightness, and joints	5 pts. Max
Blemishes (subtract points)	

Total Conformation Score

60 pts. Max

APPEARANCE ASSESSMENT

Grooming	2 pts. Max
Turnout	2 pts. Max
Handling	2 pts. Max
Manners	2 pts. Max
Cleanliness	2 pts. Max

Total Appearance Score

10 pts. Max

Final score = Gait (Max 30 pts.) + Conformation (Max 60 pts.) + Appearance (Max 10 pts.)



I. Sources and Other Conformation Articles:

NAHMS study full article

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/nahms/equine/downloads/equine98/Equine98_isEconCost.pdf search on <http://usdasearch.usda.gov/search?utf8=%3F&affiliate=usda-aphis&query=cost+of+lameness&commit=Search>)

<http://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.cfm?number=B1400> - article on conformation judging

http://www.equisearch.com/article/conformationclinic_070704 - test your eye on conformation judging techniques for Qtr horses

Arabian score sheets for in hand - <http://www.arabianhorses.org/competitions/j-s/docs/ArabianSSMasterScoreSheet.pdf>

<http://www.arabianhorses.org/competitions/j-s/docs/IndividualScoreSheet.pdf>

<http://www.arabianhorses.org/competitions/j-s/forms/SportHorseInHandIndividual.pdf>

<http://www.thehorse.com/articles/26216/horse-conformation-conundrums>

<http://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.cfm?number=B1400>

<http://gaitedhorses.net/ConformationLesson/index.shtml>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Equine_conformation



4. Judging the Classic Fino Horse

A. Authors

Carmen Cepero

Robin Ratliff

(Thank you to Javier Suarez for his valuable input)

B. Goal of the Sub Committee

The goal of the Classic Paso Fino Sub Committee is to address various areas in which our Classic Fino Horse is judged.

The Classic Fino Horse is born with a gait that **is unique to the breed**, and his attitude seems to transmit to the observer that this horse knows his gait is a very special gift that must be executed with style and pride. **The Paso Fino is the only gaited horse that can execute a gait of this magnitude. The gait is totally natural, movements are smooth, rhythmic, purposeful, straight, balanced in flexion and synchronous front to rear. The result is unequaled comfort and smoothness for the rider.**

C. Mechanics of the Classic Fino Horse

The mechanics of a Classic Fino horse are ultimately going to determine the quality of its gait and the horse's ability to maintain this very controlled and disciplined movement. The best way to determine the kind of mechanics that will allow the horse to drive correctly, is to judge from the back-end forward. It is critical in this class! The hocks should move fluidly which will allow the horse to strike the ground correctly. Proper formation of the hind legs is paramount to achieve flexibility. Because the hock takes a great deal of strain, correct conformation is essential if the horse is to have a sound and productive working life. Even though the front end does not provide the drive, it should not impede the forward movement and the front legs should not "shuffle" along. The horse should have symmetry back to front and the shoulder and knees should have flexibility equal to the back end. Flexibility of the pastern in all four legs is also necessary.

In short, propulsion, drive, and power from the back-end forward, critically right mechanics, complete symmetry of movement combined with quickness of footfall, are the "bullet points" in judging the Classic Fino Horse.



D. The Gait

The gait, as in all our divisions, is the deciding factor. It is an evenly spaced 4-beat lateral gait with each foot contacting the ground independently in a regular sequence at precise intervals, creating a rapid unbroken rhythm.

When executed perfectly, the four hoof beats are absolutely even in both cadence and impact. The forward speed is very slow, the footfall is extremely rapid while the steps and the extensions are exceedingly short, and to be executed fully collected.

The neck is gracefully arched, medium in length and set at an angle to allow high carriage and breaking at the poll. Because all equines carry 60-70 percent of their weight in the front end, Fino horses that are too heavy in the front end may have a tendency to break down under hard work because of the repetition of the footfall. The mid-section is moderate in length with a well-sprung rib cage, which will help **the center of gravity to give the balance that it is much needed**. The back should be strong and muscled. The croup is slightly sloping with rounded hips and broad loins. The tail is carried gracefully when the horse is in motion. Legs should be straight, with refined bones, and strong, well-defined tendons. Hooves are well rounded, proportionate in size, and do not show excessive heel.

The Classic Fino horse should not appear to be moving like he is on top of a barrel. In other words, even though he is fully collected, his four legs should not be in the middle under his stomach while moving. A horse that moves like this does not look natural and possibly is being collected in an artificial manner. This could lead to a horse crossing over in front and/or being too wide in the back end while moving.

In all areas of equine evaluation, there are no absolutes. There may be a horse that does not “fit” the mold for Classic Fino. But, because of his own physical attributes and core spirit, brio and determination, is a brilliant performer and should be judged based on his merits.

E. Judging

When moving on the Rail: The Classic Paso Fino Horse during the competition **should perform the Classic Fino Gait at all times** unless a halt is requested.

Halt: The halt is designed to show how a horse moves forward after it has stopped. Does it scramble to get moving again? Does it start out in a clear 4-beat gait? These are important criteria to look for once the horse starts moving again. It is not specifically done to show



manners of the horse. The horse should certainly come to a complete stop and stand parallel to the rail so you can determine how the horse moves once it comes to a halt.

When performing the Figure Eight (8): The Classic Fino Horse should maintain the rhythm of the gait, balance, flexibility (legs, head and neck), agility, and the mechanics, the hind legs are the engine. The tightest figure eight is not always the most correct figure eight. The back-end should stay under the horse and not swing out as the horse turns. Horses that either hitch through the turn or turn without any flexibility through the body should be penalized.

When executing the back: The Classic Fino Horse should back in straight line and not slide their feet backwards. There should be an actual “lift” of the legs. The execution of the backward movement should be performed by moving in diagonal pairs. Ultimately, the horse should give to the bit easily and back with very little pressure on the reins.

When traversing the sounding board: The Classic Fino Horse should maintain the rhythm and sustain the gait. The horse should work in the center of the board. **The Sounding Board is used to confirm and qualify what the horse was doing on the rail. The sounding board should not take precedence over the rail work. While the horses are on the sounding board, tune out the crowd, be stalwart in your decision, and have reasons for your placements if necessary.**

F. Optional Tests

Circle: The Classic Fino Horse should maintain the rhythm of the gait and turn with its entire body. Flexibility should be very obvious and easy to distinguish by observing that the horse turns his entire body.

Parallel: The Classic Fino Horse should maintain the axis of forward movement or tracking which should be in straight line where the footfall on the hind legs meets the line of footfall of the forelegs.

Serpentine: The Classic Fino Horse should maintain the rhythm of the gait, the same mechanics as when the horse is moving in a straight line.



5. Judging the Performance Horse

A. Authors

Charles Minter, Jr.

Cindy Griffeth

B. Overall appearance

The overall appearance of the Performance horse should be one of style and spirit. The horse should demonstrate power and brilliance combined with willingness, obedience and good manners. In all gaits the horse should be animated, collected, smooth, fluid and precise with balance and execution. Special attention should be given to brilliance, form, smoothness and rhythmic consistency. Attention should be paid to good conformation, especially those conformation traits that pertain to soundness and longevity. A performance horse is an athlete. Any conformational defects that could cause the horse to break down or become unsound should be noted and penalized.

C. Walk

The walk should be evenly spaced, brisk and animated. It should be executed with collection, style and brilliance. Any tendency to short stride, move in the diagonal, side step or fight the bit should be penalized. The horse should maintain good head position and hind end collection.

D. Corto

The corto should be performed with moderate forward speed and extension. The horse should be well collected, fully balanced, smooth, supple, animated and brilliant. One should look for symmetry in flexion and extension and the horse should demonstrate pride, style, elegance and enthusiasm along with good manners and ready response. The horse should show true collection working well off its hind end. The head position should be high with a break at the poll being the highest point. Headset alone does not provide for true collection and any tendency to become behind the bit or heavy on the front is undesirable. Execution and style should be rewarded. The horse should show tremendous flexion in all four limbs and should show symmetry from front to back with equal lift. The overall look should be one of controlled power and brilliance. Style, balance, execution and cadence should be valued over quickness. Preference should not be given to a horse with slower forward speed in the corto. Instead priority should be given to execution, symmetry of movement and style while maintaining balance, collection and the four beat cadence.



E.Largo

The largo should be evenly spaced, smooth, balanced, collected, bold and animated with rapid forward motion. The horse must move out willingly and also show willingness to reduce speed on command. A DEFINITE change of speed must be observed while extending the horse from corto to largo maintaining collection and proper mechanics at all times. A good guide is that the largo should be twice as fast as the corto. The horse must show extension, not just quicker footfall. In order to extend, the horse may be allowed a slight change of headset from the head position of the collected corto. Any tendency to lose drive, become heavy on the forehead, lose form, cadence and especially smoothness is to be penalized. Extension and flexion must be harmonious with no tendency to become light in the front or strung out behind. Preference will be given to horses that show extension and good speed while maintaining frame, balance and cadence. All transitions must be performed evenly and smoothly and the even four-beat gait must be maintained. Loss of form, cadence or smoothness due to excessive speed shall be penalized. However, this does not mean that the horse should not show good speed in the largo while maintaining good form, balance and true collection working off the hind end.

F.Sounding Board

When judging the sounding board at the corto one should observe precise four-beat cadence. The horse should strike the board solidly with all four limbs. There should be no tendency to shuffle, nor should the horse hit harder on the front or the hind. Symmetry and balance should have priority over quickness.

G. Figure Eight

The figure eight should consist of two equal circles joined in the middle performed at the corto. The horse should show balance and good form while at all times maintaining the even four-beat gait. The horse should show good flexibility, bending through the entire body. At the center of the eight the horse should move from one bend to straight position and smoothly into the other bend. Form, balance and good flexion should be given priority over the size of the circles and each circle should be the same size. The horse should always drive from the rear and any tendency to lose balance, throw the shoulder to the inside or swing wide in the hind end should be penalized. At all times the horse should show symmetry back to front along with good mechanics.



H. Serpentine

The serpentine is performed at the corto. The horse should show willingness, responsiveness and good manners while at all times maintaining the even four-beat gait. The horse should begin by following a straight line to a 180 degree turn in one direction, follow back along a straight line and then to a 180 degree turn in the other direction. In each turn, the horse should maintain balance bending through the entire body. Smoothness should be observed when transitioning from one turn to the straight and then back to the other turn. Good head position should be maintained at all times and any tendency to fight the bit should be penalized. The horse should not throw the shoulder to the inside nor should it swing wide in the hind end. The pattern should be evenly spaced with all turns the same distance. At all times the horse should show symmetry back to front along with good mechanics.



6. Judging the Pleasure Horse

A. Authors

Rick Meyer

Rick Shaffer

B. Overall Look of a Pleasure Horse

The pleasure horse should give the appearance that it is a pleasure to ride. The smoothness of the horse should be maintained through the different speeds of the gait: Walk, Corto and Largo. Smoothness should transfer to the rider, giving the appearance that the rider is floating on the horse. The pleasure horse should not look like a fino horse and its movement should be ground covering. Horses that are very quick and very short in corto and largo should be penalized in this division. Manners are very important in the Pleasure division; the horse's over-all attitude should be very willing and obedient. The rider should be able to be control the horse with very light contact on the headgear or bridle. Any indication that the horse is pulling and the reins are tight should be penalized.

This class demonstrates the more relaxed manner of movement of the Paso Fino Horse. Collection is mild. Horses always need to be working from their haunches up through their front end, in frame, with light contact on the bit and/or head-gear. For this reason, manners and obedience of the horse are particularly important and any indication of bad manners shall be heavily penalized. The horse should be controlled with minimal restraint, light rein contact and the rider should appear to be enjoying him/herself. Gait transitions should be made in a smooth, relaxed, and willing manner but need to be made within 3-4 strides from one speed to the next. The horse's attitude should be calm, pleasant, and cooperative. A horse that fights the bit, flattens its ears, or swishes its tail excessively shall be penalized.

C. Flat Walk

The flat walk is a true evenly spaced four (4) beat, flat footed and smooth gait, executed with mild collection. (The horse's head and neck should be slightly lower and the rider should have slack in the reins. The frame of the horse is natural and relaxed.) The horse should stay in that natural and relaxed frame until the next gait is executed.

Poor walk- lacking consistency in forward motion, rushing, no cadence, pacing, rough to ride, horses head behind vertical.



Average walk -strong 4 beat foot fall, cadenced, no rushing, head at or in front of vertical, comfortable to ride.

Good Walk - strong 4 beat stride, cadenced, relaxed, moving freely, head in front of or at vertical, comfortable to ride, and horse is alert and interested.

D. Paso Corto

The paso corto is a smooth, steady, unbroken, evenly spaced four beat lateral gait, rhythmically executed with moderate extension and mild collection. The paso corto is executed with the same action in the front legs as with the back legs and the horse will be working from his haunches up through his front end in a balanced frame. Forward speed is ground covering but unhurried. Movement should be fluid, willing, relaxed, balanced, and free moving. The horse's head carriage is natural and relaxed. The horse's frame is also natural and relaxed. Smoothness from this gait should transfer to the rider and the rider's upper body should have no up and down movement. This speed of gait should be able to be maintained for long periods of time without becoming winded.

Poor Corto – cannot perform the 4 beat gait consistently, hitching or erratic movements with one leg, usually in the rear. Hind legs are out behind, rough top line.

Average Corto - performs the 4 beat gait with distinct footfalls, displays good symmetry in motion, can maintain mild collection easily, face is just at or in front of vertical, little to no top line motion.

Good Corto – performs the 4 beat gait with absolute consistency and self-carriage, length of stride is the same in front and rear legs, ride is smooth, speed is brisk but unhurried, and horses face is at or just in front of vertical. Horse is alert and attentive, appears effortless and is not labored.

E. Paso Largo

The paso largo is a smooth, evenly spaced, four-beat lateral gait. It should be fluid and rapid, showing no tendency to labor or become "strung out". Collection is mild. The horse should be working from his haunches up through his front end in a balanced frame. Both extension and rapidness of cadence are increased over the Paso Corto and a **definite change of speed** must be observed. A good guide is that the largo should be twice as fast as the corto. The evenly spaced four-beat gait cadence must be maintained at all times. Loss of cadence, form, or smoothness due to excessive speed shall be penalized, but extension and speed in the gait shall be



rewarded, if maintained in frame. Again, smoothness should be transferred from the horse to the rider, with no up and down movement to the rider.

Poor Largo – shows very little change of speed from corto, cannot perform the 4 beat gait consistently, gets strung out behind, mixes gaits, shows tendency to canter, loss of symmetry in motion.

Average Largo – shows change of speed while still performing the 4 beat gait, croup remains smooth and ride is not rough, maintains frame, length of stride is the same on all 4 legs. Horse's face is just at or in front of vertical.

Good Largo – shows good change of speed (a good guide is that the largo should be twice as fast as the corto), performs the 4 beat gait precisely, stays in frame and does not get strung out. Shows symmetry in length of stride front to back as well as lift in knees and hocks. Croup is smooth, as is the ride. Shows no roughness, demonstrates self-carriage with head just at or in front of vertical, without falling behind the vertical. Horse is alert, attentive and does not appear to be laboring.

F. The Back

The horse will be required to flat Walk, Paso Corto, Paso Largo, line up and Back. The back should be straight, calm. The horse should give at the poll and back on the diagonal 5-7 steps. The execution of the backward movement should be performed by moving in diagonal pairs. Refusal to back disqualifies horse from placement.

G. The Frame of the Horse

The frame of the horse is the overall picture of the horse from the start of the class until the end of the class. There are several different styles of horses but all will have a frame best suited to their conformation. That frame should be maintained throughout the class.



7. Judging the Country Pleasure Horse

A. Authors

Robin Ratliff

B. Purpose of the Country Pleasure Class

The Country Pleasure class was established to show Paso Fino horses at their most relaxed state. This class is only open to amateurs and horses cannot have been in professional training for at least 30 days before the show. Because of these rules, this class has the potential to draw newer members into our show arena.

Country Pleasure is a great entry level class. It is the class most new riders identify with and would feel the most welcome trying to test their show skills.

C. Overall Look of the Country Pleasure Horse

Horse must demonstrate flawless manners. The horse must be absolutely agreeable to the commands and direction of the rider. This excerpt is directly from the rule book and the Class Description for Country Pleasure.

We recommend judges read the Country Pleasure Class Qualifying Gaits, Class Description and Procedures. There is very little we can add that would give any better direction for this class.



8. Judging Specialty Classes

A. Authors

Helen Frost

Jose Colon

B. Background:

In the United States the American Quarter Horse is the model for, and has defined, the Western style of riding. The American Thoroughbred Horse is the model for, and has defined, the English style of riding. These two styles of riding use quite different tack and are ridden with different seats.

In an effort to grow in popularity and appeal to the greatest number of people, a specific breed of horse will be shown in both styles of tack. For example, the Quarter Horse is shown in the English tack. The Arabian horse, the Morgan horse, the Saddlebred horse, etc., all have classes in their own shows where the horses are shown in both the Western and English tack. This is done in an effort to show the versatility of the breed as well as to bring excitement and interest to the shows. The different breeds bring their own personal expression to the classes, however an effort is always made to hold true to the definition of the particular class as given by its breed of origin. For example, a Western Pleasure class is always done at a slower pace than an English Pleasure class, which moves forward at a faster pace. When judging these classes in the different breeds, an effort is made to place the horses based on how well they lend themselves to the style and attitude of the class they are performing. For example, a horse performing in a Western Pleasure class might be of average to smaller height with a strong build, lower head carriage and a calm, easy way of going. A horse performing in an English Pleasure class might be an average to taller horse, with more leg length and forward way of going, and a higher head carriage. Both display collection appropriate to their style. Judges need to have a basic understanding of what these classes look like when being performed by the original breed that defined them, so that they can judge according to the classic attitude and form of the class.

Before there was a Paso Fino breed registry, there was a small club of Paso Fino owners living mostly in Florida. They would get together from time to time to ride together and have shows. The shows were very small, maybe 20 horses in the whole show. There were no Performance classes, only Pleasure and Fino. They would showcase their Paso Fino horses at exhibitions and participate in local shows. They found that the American people admired them gaiting but were



bored with just seeing them on the rail. The Paso Fino horses could canter and jump and do trail beautifully so they started entering those classes at the local shows.

The Versatility class was eventually added to the breed shows. This added interest to the shows and appealed to the American people. Sometime later the Western Pleasure, Trail, Driving, and Costume classes followed.

The challenge ahead of us lies in developing the versatility and usability of the breed we love while not losing the perfection and clarity of gait, which no other gaited breed can aspire to. This challenge falls heavily on the talent of our trainers, the perseverance and thoughtfulness of our breeders, and the integrity and education of our judges.

The perimeters of the classes to show case versatility are well defined. Other breeds have been perfecting them for many decades. The Paso Fino breed needs to establish itself among these competitors and demonstrate what it has been proclaimed to be able to do. The Paso Fino breed is noble and brilliant and has all the ability needed to master these classes.

C. Gaits in All the Specialty Classes

This is a description of the gaits as would apply in all the specialty classes:

1) Walk

Poor walk- lacking consistency in forward motion, rushing, no cadence, pacing, rough to ride, horse's head behind vertical.

Average walk – has a strong 4 beat foot fall, cadenced, no rushing, horse's head at or in front of vertical, comfortable to ride.

Good Walk – strong 4 beat stride, cadenced, relaxed, moving freely, horse's head in front of or at vertical, comfortable to ride, and horse is alert and interested.

2) Corto

Poor Corto – cannot perform the 4 beat gait consistently, hitching or erratic movements with one leg, usually in the rear. Hind legs out behind, rough top line.

Average Corto - performs the 4 beat gait with distinct footfalls, displays good symmetry in motion, can maintain mild collection easily, face is just at or in front of vertical, little to no top line motion.



Good Corto – performs the 4 beat gait with absolute consistency and self-carriage, length of stride is the same in front and rear legs, ride is smooth, speed is brisk but unhurried, horse's face is at or just in front of vertical. Horse is alert and attentive, appears effortless and is not labored.

3) Largo

Poor Largo – shows very little change of speed from corto, cannot perform the 4 beat gait consistently, gets strung out behind, mixes gaits, shows tendency to canter, loss of symmetry in motion.

Average Largo – shows change of speed while still performing the 4 beat gait, croup remains smooth and ride is not rough. Is able to maintain frame, length of stride is the same on all 4 legs. Horse's face is just at or in front of vertical.

Good Largo – shows good change of speed, a good guide is that the largo should be twice as fast as the corto, Performs the 4 beat gait precisely, stays in frame and does not get strung out. Shows symmetry in length of stride front to back as well as lift in knees and hocks. Croup is smooth as is the ride. Shows no roughness, demonstrates self-carriage with head just at or in front of vertical, does not fall behind the vertical, horse is alert and attentive and does not appear to be laboring.

4) Lope

Poor lope – hard to discern consistent 3 beat gait, rushing or running, heavy on the forehand, out behind, no frame, head behind vertical

Average lope – consistent stride, easily discernable 3 beat gait, forward but unhurried. Legs have a good length of stride, not short and choppy, should appear easy to ride and sit.

Good Lope – distinct 3 beat gait, consistent frame, no rushing, performs in self-carriage, horse is alert and attentive, straight on both leads, consistent from one side to the other, relaxed way of going, does not appear to labor, head carriage is just in front of or at vertical, no head bobbing, smooth transitions up to and down from the lope. Appears easy to ride.

5) Canter

Poor canter – hard to discern consistent 3 beat gait, rushing or running, heavy on the forehand, out behind, no frame, head behind vertical



Average Canter – could be more ground covering than lope, consistent stride, and easily discernable 3 beat gait, forward but unhurried. Legs have a good length of stride, not short and choppy, should appear easy to ride,

Good Canter – could be more ground covering than lope, performed with self-carriage, no rushing or running, distinct 3 beat gait, straight on both leads, consistent, head is in front of or at vertical, horse does not appear to labor, should appear easy to ride.

9. Judging the Versatility Class:

This class was the first specialty class proposed. The Paso Fino is ridden in English tack in this class. This class demonstrates the traditional gaits of Corto and Largo. It goes on to ask for a Canter on the correct lead for the direction that the horse is traveling with a walk before and after the canter. This happens in both directions. Then to further demonstrate the ability of the horse it is asked to back in a straight line, execute a figure eight at the Corto, and then take a jump that is no higher than 2 feet from the Canter.

This class was originally designed for a performance horse in full Paso Fino costume. This has changed and the class is now shown in pleasure costume. The corto is ridden with mild collection and no mention of any kind of collection is made about the largo at all. The canter is to be ridden with collection. In an effort to bring some type of continuity to this class the English hunter class could be a model. In this class the horse is a very smooth, evenly strided horse that is able to maintain its frame and cadence throughout the rail work, the approach to the jump, the jump itself, the canter strides after the jump and the transition down to the walk. The head position is natural to the horse with mild collection. The overall appearance and style of the horse and rider is smooth, effortless and flowing. The horse must display a willingness to respond to the directions of the rider without resistance. Special attention is given to the style of the horse and rider. In the Paso Fino breed this class was originally designed for a more collected horse, the performance horse; however, the degree of collection in a performance horse does not lend itself as well to jumping as does a less collected horse. The pleasure style horse tends to have milder frame and collection enabling the horse to be ridden in the same frame throughout the class.

10. Judging the Western Pleasure Class

This class requires the Paso Fino to be shown in Western tack. The rider is in Western costume, and the class requirements are those of a traditional stock horse Western Pleasure class. Instead of a Jog Trot the Paso Corto is called for, followed by the Walk, then the Lope, Walk,



reverse and repeat. A straight back up is called for in the lineup. The execution of the backward movement should be performed by moving in diagonal pairs. The western style pleasure horse must be the ultimate pleasure horse, creating confidence and security in its rider because of its dependable, courageous attitude and easy way of going. It must be completely confident in what it is asked to do and perform with a deliberate, steady stride that appears to be able to go on as long as the rider wishes. The horse can demonstrate no sudden, excitable movements and when the walk is called for it must settle into a comfortable downward transition to flat walk. At the judges request the exhibitors may be asked to perform from 5 different tests that are stated in the rulebook.

This class is designed after a traditional stock horse western pleasure class. The tests at the end of the class however are not traditional, but definitely add interest to the class.

A. Items to Consider when Judging Western Pleasure

The following quote is taken from the AQHA rulebook and is intended for the judging of the Western Pleasure class. The principles are very good and can be applied to judging horses in any breed.

We can apply it to the Paso Fino breed and replace jog and lope with corto, largo and fino.

“There will be an order of priority for evaluating western gaits. This hierarchy of consideration must be adhered to by judges and will be a great aid to exhibitors for how their horses should be presented. Following are the requirements in order of importance.

SHW330.4.1 Correctness-Concerning correctness, which is the most important element of the hierarchy, judges must assess if the exhibitor has performed each gait correctly as defined during all or the majority of all of the class in order to have a correct or positive evaluation. For western gaits, this includes a four-beat walk, two-beat jog and three-beat lope. The distinctness of the designated cadence for the gait being performed is essential.

SHW330.4.2 Quality-Concerning quality, which is the second most important element in the hierarchy, and can only, be considered positively if the gait performance has complied with the first element of correctness. When evaluating the pleasing characteristics of a gait, among many considerations, judges must consider overall gracefulness, relaxed expression, topline, softness of movement, consistency and length of stride of the designated gait.



SHW330.4.3 Degree of Difficulty-Concerning degree of difficulty, this is the least important and last element of the hierarchy. This element must only be considered if the requirement for correctness has been met and combination of correctness and quality allow the performance to be considered for placement. Difficulty is greatly influenced by exhibiting a pleasure horse at a pace and speed that allows for correctness and best quality of a gait for that individual. A performance of a walk that is ground covering and free flowing has a high degree of difficulty. A jog or lope that is performed with a slow rhythm without sacrificing correctness or quality has a high degree of difficulty. Slowness that sacrifices correctness or negatively impacts quality shall be considered incorrect and a poor performance at best. “

11. Judging the Paso Trail Class

This class is designed in the same format as the traditional stock horse trail class. The tack and attire may be either western or English. No rail work is required. A pattern of the class course through the obstacles is posted ahead of time for all to see. The class is performed with one horse in the arena at a time.

The following information is taken directly from the AQHA rulebook about the trail class.

“SHW461. TRAIL. This class will be judged on the performance of the horse over obstacles, with emphasis on manners, response to the rider and quality of movement. Credit will be given to horses negotiating the obstacles with style and some degree of speed, providing correctness is not sacrificed. Horses should receive credit for showing attentiveness to the obstacles and the capability of picking their own way through the course when obstacles warrant it, and willingly responding to the rider’s cues on more difficult obstacles. Horses shall be penalized for any unnecessary delay while approaching or negotiating the obstacles. “

Before the class is ridden the exhibitors and the judge walk the course. At this time the judge should let the riders know what they are looking for at each obstacle. Not only how to move from one obstacle to the other. The judge should be able to tell the riders what will be plus points to their scores and what will be minus points. As stated above emphasis is placed on manners and willing response to the rider as well as quality of movement. The pattern and how the obstacles are to be negotiated will be posted well in advance for the exhibitors to study.



12. Judging the Paso Costume Class

Many breeds of horses offer this class, which gives a way to recall and teach the history of the breed as well as add fun and interest to the show. An effort should be made to show that the costume relates to a time or actual situation that pertains to the history of the Paso Fino Breed. In this way the class becomes educational as well as entertaining. Special appreciation should be awarded to an entry that obviously has done their “homework”, and researched their costume and is able to relate it to the Paso Fino Breed. Appropriateness and eye appeal are very important. The horse must be able to show consistent gait.

13. Judging the Paso Pleasure Driving Class

This class is used to show the versatility of the Paso Fino breed. This class looks for a stylish horse that moves in the 4 beat gait consistently and is extremely reliable. A horse that is shown driving should respond without question to the directions given, and be able to move forward with speed in the largo and settle to and walk quietly. Safety and control are highly desirable. The horse should be well groomed and the harness clean. The corto and largo should have definite symmetry with no tendency to trot, pace, or canter. Transitions should be fluid and confident both upward and downward. The horse should be alert and interested as well as content and happy in its work.

The horse is to be shown in light driving harness and bridle (blinkers, overcheck and overcheck-bit are optional) and hitched to a two, or four-wheel vehicle suitable to the horse. Sulkies will not be allowed. Attire for the driver will be as prescribed in the Paso Pleasure class.



14. Judging Equitation

A. Authors

Helen Frost

Jose M. Colon

* Special thanks to Sharon Londoño for her input.

B. Definitions

Web Definition: Equitation - The art or practice of riding a horse correctly. Equitation often refer to a rider's position while mounted, and encompasses a rider's ability to ride correctly and with **effective aids**. In horse show competition, the rider, rather than the horse, is evaluated. The performance of the horse is not judged per se, but a poorly performing horse is considered to reflect the ability of the rider. In good equitation, the rider is always in **balance** with the horse, maintains a **correct position** in every gait, movement, or over a fence, and possesses a commanding, but relaxed presence, while able to direct the horse with nearly invisible aids.

PFHA Rule Book: Based on our rulebook, the Paso Equitation **seat** enhances the particular and special **style, grace, rhythm** and **oneness** of horse and rider. **The class is to be judged 100% on equitation.** The rider's position in motion should be **natural, coordinated** and graceful. The rider should remain almost motionless at all gaits. Results as shown by the performance of the horse are not to be considered more important than the method used in obtaining them.

C. Brief History

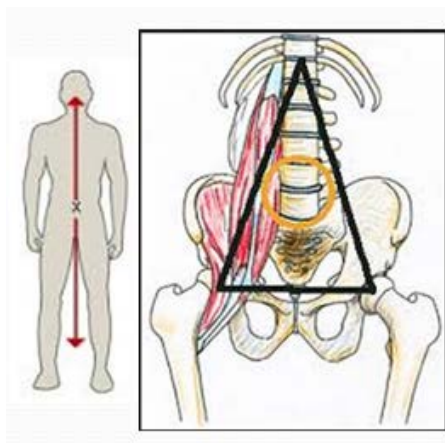
Evidence is found in China that shows that the Chinese were riding horses as early as 4000 BC.

Also, as early as 1400 BC it was recognized that a horse should undergo a systematic method of training. Xenophon, a general and horse master from ancient Greece, wrote one of the oldest known texts on horsemanship around 350 BC. He laid down rules governing the training of a horse as well as training the rider. Throughout the human history, the horse has been used in warfare and the equitation principles have been important in these regard. So the earliest forms of equitation come primarily from the military. Most of the general principles of equitation were developed thousands of years ago.



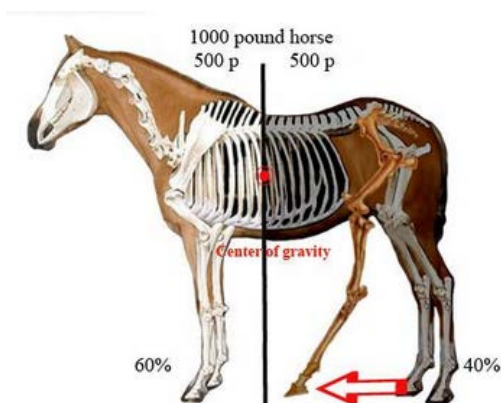
D. A Rider's Center of Balance

The center of gravity of the rider is the balancing, equilibrium or pivoting point of the body. It is the point where the sum of all the forces and force movements acting on the body is zero. All the weight of the body may be considered to be concentrated at this point and about this point all the parts exactly balance. The human's body center of gravity is right above the pelvis. Shifting the position of the pelvis will have an effect on the distribution of weight. In equitation, it is important to understand the center of gravity as it will have an effect on the horse while in movement. The image below illustrates the rider's center of balance:



E. A Horse's Center of Balance

The weight of a horse is concentrated at its center of gravity. For a horse to move efficiently and gracefully, it must be in good balance and permitted to have a posture that maintains the center of gravity. The image below illustrates the horse's center of balance.





F. Riding Aids

In good equitation, a rider must not interfere with the horse's balance, center of gravity and movement. He/ she should be part of it and in coordination. The rider recognizes how to tactfully help the horse maintain the center of balance and find that posture where the movement becomes supple. Using effective aids, the rider can influence horse movement without interfering with a good balance. The wrong aids or rider posture can cause the horse to compensate and lose the natural balance of movement. These aids include the legs, weight, seat, voice and hands. Light aids are needed when you ride balanced. Sometimes only a change in the weight or contact of your seat is sufficient.

G. Areas evaluated

The Paso Fino Horse Equitation is judged 100% on the equitation of the rider. Results as shown by the performance of the horse are not to be considered more important than the method used in obtaining them. The following areas are to be evaluated:

- Basic Position
- Legs and Feet
- Back Position
- Arms and Hands Position
- Head Position
- Position in Motion



H. Position in Motion

Description

The rider's position in motion should be natural, coordinated and graceful.

The rider should remain almost motionless at all gaits.

From the side, a straight line should be able to be drawn perpendicular to the ground through the rider's head, shoulder and ankle.

The rider's toe should never be more forward than his knee, thereby keeping his center of balance directly above his feet and ankles.

The rider's upper arms should fall naturally from the shoulders toward the hip bones and should be flexible, never clutched to the body, extend forward or spread way from the body.

The rider should appear to have a natural flow downward into the saddle and show no side-to-side movement of upper body.

At all gaits, the rider should remain in the center of the saddle and not slip back on the cantle.

Convey the impression of effective and complete control at all times, showing both the horses and the rider to the rider's best advantage.

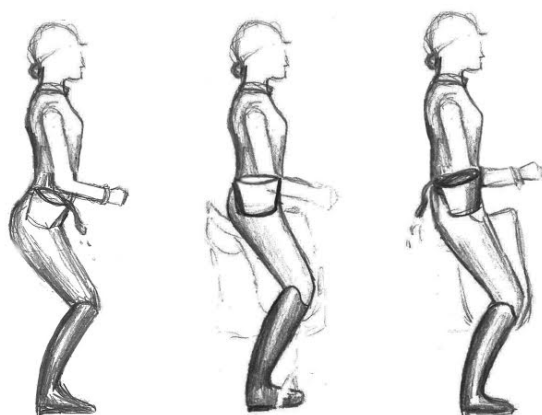
A complete picture of the whole is of major importance.

Xenophon, a general and horse master from ancient Greece, wrote one of the oldest known texts on horsemanship. His writings about the art of horsemanship indicate that the basic position of a rider has more in common with standing upright with the legs slightly bent than with sitting on a chair.



I. The Seat

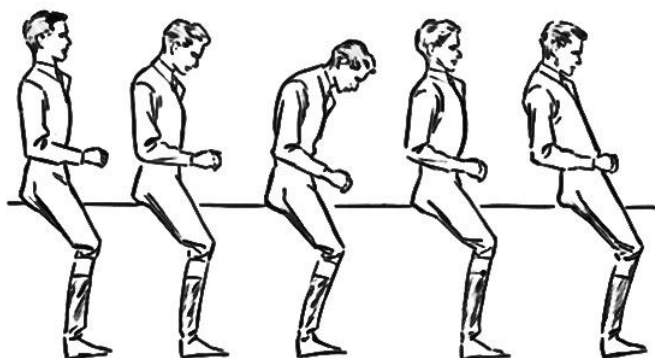
A good seat is very important in equitation. It influences the balance of the horse and rider. When there is a good seat, the rider appears to have a natural flow downward into the saddle so that the torso, pelvis and legs are balanced and symmetrical. The body of the rider should never interfere with the movement and balance of the horse, but it should promote a good performance. The rider should be centered on the saddle and aligned with the horse's dorsal line. The seat must appear natural and comfortable at all times, highlighting the union with the horse. The seat should never appear rigid or tense. No matter where the horse moves or how it moves, your seat should always remain in the same place, on the horse.





J. Back Position

The rider's back should be straight, but not tense or stiff. The position of the back must look natural and it should not be arched, leaning forward or backward. The rider's shoulders should be square, but not tense or stiff. From behind, the rider's back should be aligned with the horse's dorsal line. This allows the weight of the rider to be distributed equally over the horse. If the rider's weight is not centered over the horse, this can cause the horse to compensate by twisting its body beneath the rider.



1) Reward the Following

- Natural look.
- Centered with the horse dorsal line.
- Back squared and straight.
- Upper body is high and tall with collarbone open.
- Very little to no arch in the back.
- Rider's weight is over the center of rider's gravity so that rider's pelvis is not curled back and down or forward and down.
- Hip joint is open allowing the leg to hang down as if standing on the ground.

2) Penalize the Following

- Very rigid and unnatural looking.
- Slouching in saddle.
- Leaning forward or backwards.
- Arched back.
- Not centered on the horse's back.



K. Head Position

The head should be held erect/ straight with the chin up. The rider's eyes should look forward at all times in the direction of travel so as to maintain full control of the horse while in motion. The head is important in the balance of the body. Therefore, putting your head down affects the overall balance on the horse. When evaluating the head position, consider the following:

1) Reward the Following

- Chin up in a natural position so that the eyes can look straight ahead.
- No tilting to either side.

2) Penalize the Following

- Rigidity and unnatural look.
- Looking down with chin on chest.
- Chin up (not parallel to a straight line)
- Head tilted.

L. Arms and Hand Position

The arms should hang naturally with the elbows not extending forward, backward or outward beyond a perpendicular line even with the rider's shoulders. The rider's hands should be held in an easy position, neither perpendicular nor horizontal to the saddle, and should show sympathy, adaptability and control. The height of the rider's hands above the horse's withers is determined by the head carriage of the individual horse. Extremely high or low hand positions are improper. The rider's hands should not pass over or behind the pommel of saddle. The rider shall make every effort to achieve as straight a line as possible from the elbow through the forearm, hand and rein to the bit. Hands and wrists should be flexible and not held extremely separated. The reins shall be held in one of the following manners:

- The reins should be held by one rein in each hand entering at the bottom below the little finger and extending upward with the bight (excess) of the rein hanging on the off (right) side of the horse.

The rein must pass directly from the bit, between the little and third fingers, with the thumb being placed on top. It is important that the third finger holds the edges of the rein in the joints nearest the palm and that the fingers are closed



securely, but without tension. Right (excess) of the rein should be on the off (right) side.



1) Reward the Following

- Naturalness and “softness” of the hands on the rein.
- Arms hang down easily from shoulder neither reaching forward nor extending behind body.
- Reins held correctly in a firm grip without showing tension or white knuckles.

2) Penalize the Following

- Arms and hands too high - cannot make a straight line from elbow through wrist, along rein to horse’s mouth.
- Arms and hands too low and wide. Line to horse’s mouth is broken by hands being too low.
- The rider’s hands should not pass over or behind the pommel of saddle.
- Hands and wrists not flexible and held extremely separated.

M. Leg and Feet Position

The rider’s leg should hang naturally with a slight bend at the knee. The rider’s lower leg should be under the rider’s body and not flared outward. Flaring of the lower leg shall be penalized. The rider’s feet should be parallel with the horse’s body with the heels slightly lowered (approximately one inch). The ball of the rider’s foot should rest directly over the stirrup iron with even pressure on the entire iron with heel, hip and point of shoulder in line. The rider’s foot position should be natural, neither extremely in nor out.



1) Reward the Following

- Legs hang down from the hip without being thrust forward.
- Knee is slightly bent.
- Riders toe does not protrude beyond knee.
- Foot is in a natural position with the ball of the foot on the stirrup.
- Ankle is slightly bent in allowing the leg to be used in the pattern work.

2) Penalize the Following

- Flaring of the lower leg.
- Lower leg too far back.
- Lower leg pushed forward.
- Toes pointing down.
- Toes pointing outward.

N. Procedures

- Participants shall enter the ring to the right at a Paso Corto and circle the arena in a counterclockwise manner until asked to reverse or change gait.
- The sequence of the gait will be Paso Corto, Paso Largo, walk, reverse and repeat.
- The reverse will be executed toward the center of the ring.
- A halt will be called at least once during the Paso Corto.



- Entries will execute the above class requirements and, in addition, judges are encouraged to call for at least two (2) of the tests, of the top contestants. Each of the tests is to be performed individually.

O. Tests

- Ride without stirrups at a Paso Corto
- Back his or her horse smoothly and under control. The execution of the backward movement should be performed by moving in diagonal pairs.
- Dismount and mount.
- Perform a figure eight (8) at the Paso Corto. The rider shall always turn and face the judge unless otherwise instructed.
- Move the horse from Paso Largo to walk on a quiet rein;
- Answer questions on parts of the horse and tack.

P. Ride without stirrups at Paso Corto

Evaluate:

- Rider's seat appears to be steady and controlled.
- Rider should be well balanced on the saddle.
- Little or no upward movement on the saddle.
- Rider maintains proper equitation position in motion.

Q. Back Horse

Evaluate:

- Shows evidence of being aware of what is behind them by turning the head and looking over the shoulder with no loss of balance to the seat.
- Rider uses the appropriate aids to back the horse.
- The horse should back readily and easily with no visible pull motion from the rider's hands. The execution of the backward movement should be performed by moving in diagonal pairs.
- Rider should have a relaxed natural seat.

R. Dismount and Remount

Evaluate:

- To dismount, the rider may either step down or slide down.
- To remount, the rider shall check the curb chain and girth and adjust them if necessary.



- The rider shall gather the reins in his or her left hand with gentle pressure.
- The rider shall stand diagonally facing the front of the horse.
- The rider shall place his or her left hand in front of the horse's withers without holding the mane, turn the stirrup toward the rider with his or her right hand and place his or her left foot in the stirrup.
- The rider shall place his or her right hand either on the far side of the saddle at the waist or on the front arch (pommel), and spring lightly up, straightening both knees.
- The rider shall ease into the saddle and place his or her right foot in the stirrup without looking down.

S. Figure 8

Evaluate:

- The rider shall always turn and face the judge unless otherwise instructed.
- Rider's use of effective aids while performing the circles and turns.
- Head and shoulders should turn to lead the horse in a line of travel but not fall out of the line of balance.
- Upper body remains over rider's center of gravity and may twist smoothly but does not lean.
- The horse should appear to take the rider around through the pattern, not vice versa.

T. Paso Largo to Walk on a Quiet Rein

Evaluate:

- Rider's ability to issue the transition command smoothly.
- Rider maintains proper equitation posture through the test.
- The horse should perform the transition easily.
- The rider does not lift from the saddle on the transition from Largo to Walk.

U. Other Factors when Evaluating Equitation

Consider the following skills during evaluation:

- Sense, awareness and control of the horse.
- Naturalness and "softness" of the hands on the rein
- Rider's ability to use subtle, yet effective aids
- Focus, confidence, control and self-assuredness while handling the horse
- Relaxed, natural, and correct posture and seat



- Poise, grace and elegance
- Good sportsmanship and courtesy in the ring.
- A rider with a pleasant, happy look on their face will give an overall better impression than one who is frowning.
- Take into consideration if the attire is fitted to the rider with precision. Also if the saddle actually fits the rider, (the seat is the correct size for the rider).

V. Photos Review

This section will be used to present illustrations for Equitation.

W. References

- PFHA Rule Book (September 1, 2014)
- <http://www.pasofinojudges.org/index.php/en/resources/rules.html>
- <http://www.tomasinitrainingcenter.com/cd-graphics>
- <http://www.ridingart.com/balance.htm>
- <http://www.thejoyofhorses.com/apr00/the-truth-about-classical-riding.htm>
- <http://www.equiworld.net/uk/training/features/sylvialoch1.htm>
- <http://www.ridemagazine.com/author/Michele-Morseth>
- <http://www.ridemagazine.com/horse/article/weight-seat-aids-your-kinesthetic-sense-and-horse-performance-part-2-3>
- http://www.equisearch.com/horses_riding_training/english/dressage/longeing_primer_040808/
- <http://www.tcct.za.q.ne.jp/bpbsn202/page061.html>



15. Judging the Trocha Horse

A. Authors

Helen Frost

Jose M. Colon

B. Definitions:

The Spanish word “trocha” translates to a shortcut through a narrow trail or path. As it relates to gaits, the definition of Trocha is varied. Some of the definitions include:

PFHA Judges Card: Is the typical way of movement, considered a gait, for some horses which is measured in a rhythmical and harmonious tempo but in four uneven beats, identified by the four beats when the sequence of the cycle is performed. Its sounds follows a 1-1-1-1 rhythm.

International Rule Book: The international rulebook defines the Trocha as a four unequal beats gait identified by the sound tras-tras-tras-tras of the extremities at the completion of a cycle of movement.

Raul Estrada Londoño in his book “Chalaneria Colombiana” defines trocha as a diagonal four beat gait where the front extremity hits the ground (beat) before the diagonal hind leg.

Dr. Manuel Verajano in his publication El Mito de la Diagonales (The Myth about Diagonals) defines trocha as a diagonal gait in between “Paso” and the trot that a trocha horse executes at an incredible speed. Each “tras” sound corresponds to the diagonal pair.

C. Brief History:

The Trocha horse was developed in Colombia. These horses have origins from the horses brought by the Spanish Conquistadors to America. In 1525, Rodrigo de Bastidas brought his men and horses to Colombia and founded Santa Marta. They started to breed these horses as the city was built and the needs for transportation and farm work increased. Around 1536, Gonzalo Jimenez moved from Santa Marta to what is now Bogota taking men and horses with him. Two other explorers also arrived in the area, Nicolas de Federman from Venezuela and Sebastian de Belcalzar from Peru. It is believed that from the horses these men brought, the process of developing the country’s horses was initiated. The “Trocha” horses were said to be good to move around the country over tougher terrain. The piston like movement was ideal for this. Historians believe that the process of consciously breeding for these horses started in the



19th century but it was not until the 20th century when Trocha horses of exceptional qualities were noted.

Through this process of conscious breeding, El Arco was born on August 7, 1965. El Arco was bred out of the famous sire Don Danilo x La Flecha. He is considered to be the foundation sire that defined the modern Trocha horse. He was a horse with lots of brio, energy and could execute the Trocha gait at a great speed. As a sire, El Arco was able to transmit the Trocha horse traits consistently to his offspring. Many of his offspring won the title of “Fuera de Concurso” or Champion of Champions in Colombia. He died on July 4, 1995 at almost 30 years of age.

El Arco



Don Danilo x La Flecha
Born on August 7, 1965

D. Trocha: A Lateral or Diagonal Gait

Over the years there has been a debate as to whether Trocha is a lateral or diagonal gait. Dr. Rolando Colón Nebot, a retired PFHA Senior Certified and International Judge, and an



Orthopedic Surgeon has done extensive research on the Trocha horse and the mechanics of its movement. He has also published two books on the subject. He bases his study on the following principles:

- Any analysis of the horse's movement must start with a hind leg. That is how the movement forward starts.
- To define a gait as diagonal or lateral, one must consider the sequence of each beat and the time period between one beat and the next.
- This means that the hind leg movement forward is followed a front leg that either touches ground simultaneously or a different time.
- Based on the principles of locomotion, under no circumstances can the analysis of movement start with a front leg.

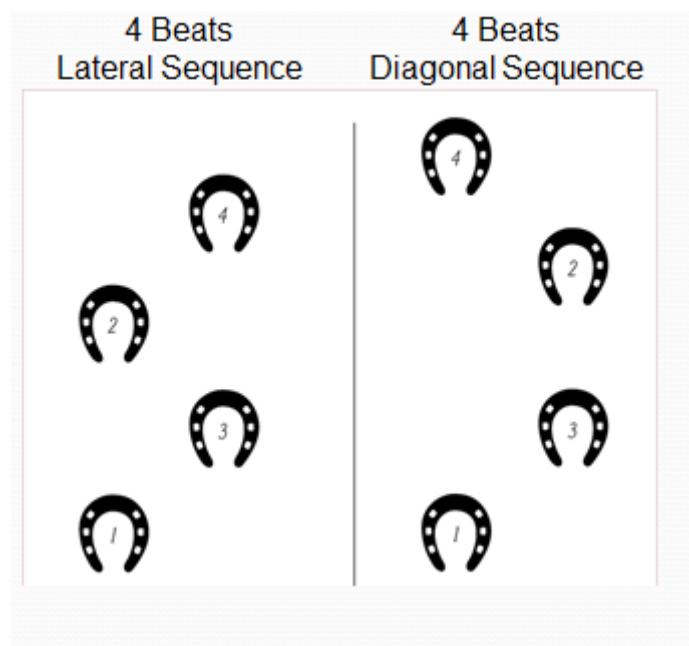
These principles of equine locomotion have been defined over centuries and are well documented in the publication "Animal in Motions by Eadweard Muybridge in 1887 and by Luis de Ascasubi in "El Caballo de Paso y su Equitacion" in 1968.

As mentioned above, to define a gait as diagonal or lateral, one must consider the sequence of each beat and the time period between one beat and the next as follows:

- **Lateral:** If the extremity that touches ground following the hind leg that started the movement is a front leg of the same side, the gait is considered lateral.
- **Diagonal:** If the extremity that touches ground following the hind leg that started the movement is the front leg of the diagonal/ opposite side, the gait is considered diagonal.



The example below summarizes what could be considered a four beat lateral sequence and a four beat diagonal sequence:

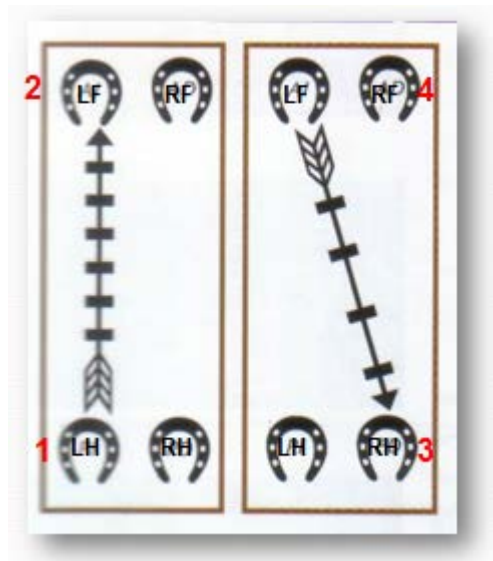


In reviewing data and frame by frame video from a multitude of Trocha horses, Dr. Colon Nebot documents the sequence of motion for Trocha starting with the left hind leg as follows:

- Left Hind Leg (LH)
- Left Front Leg (LF)
- Right Hind Leg (RH)
- Right Front Leg (RF)



The sequence above corresponds to the sequence of a four beat lateral gait. Refer to the image below:



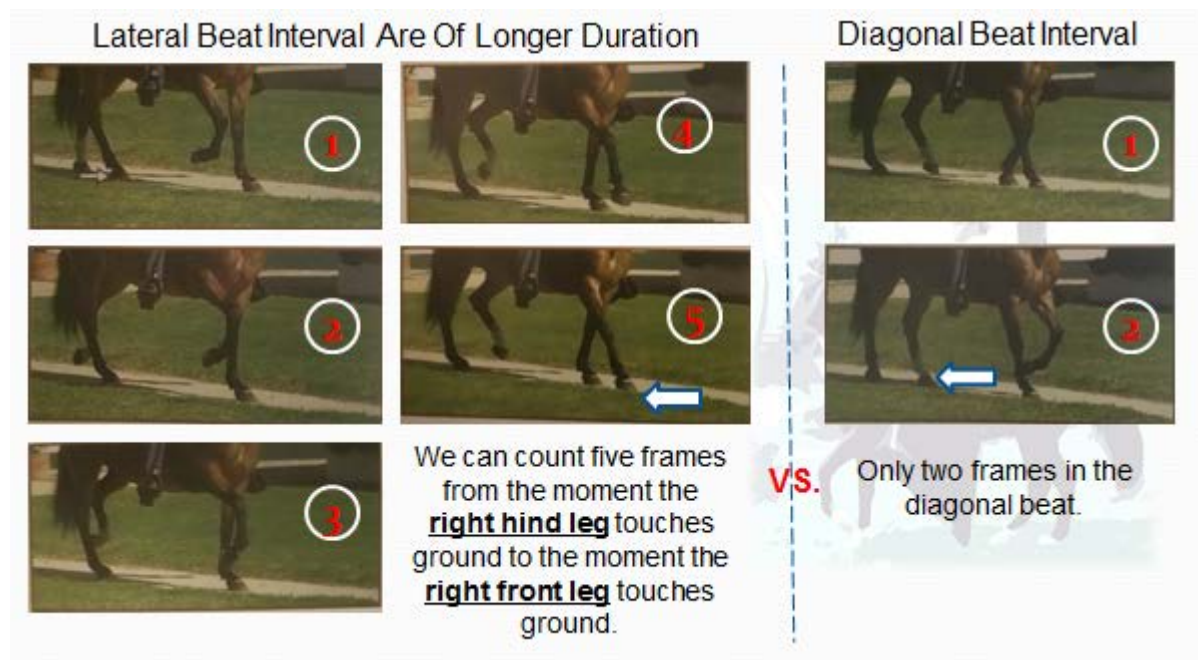
In addition, as it is represented graphically in the image above, in the Trocha gait sequence the time interval between the lateral beats is longer than the interval between the diagonal beats.

Some books that define Trocha as a diagonal gait, initiate the sequence of beats starting with a front leg. This representation does not follow the basic principles of motion. Based on the principles of motion, this would indicate that the horse is moving backwards.



E. Trocha Beat Intervals

As it was mentioned above, the Trocha gait has uneven intervals between lateral and diagonal beats. The following example presents a frame by frame review of this:



In conclusion, the periods of support are of longer duration in the lateral movement than on the diagonal movement. As it is represented in the example above, it took five frames to represent the interval between the moment the right hind leg touches the ground until the right front leg touches the ground. It only took two frames for the left hind leg to touch the ground after the front right touched the ground.

After reviewing the theory on the sequence and the time intervals of each beat of a horse executing Trocha, we can revise the definition of Trocha as follows:

“Trocha is a four beat, unevenly spaced lateral gait where the time intervals between the lateral beats are longer than the time intervals between the diagonal beats.”



F.Characteristics of the Trocha Horse

A Trocha horse has high brio and high energy with a very powerful gait. A medium elevation of the extremities while executing the gait is preferred. This allows for a high frequency of beats as well as a more powerful beat when the hoof touches the ground. The movement of the hock is elastic and very powerful. There is a “piston” like movement of the extremities. The Trocha horse is well collected while executing the gait and there is a high frequency of beats (speed) during movement.



G. Judging Percentages

The following are the judging percentages for the Trocha class:

Category	Evaluation Percentages
Execution and Naturalness of the Gait	75%
Appearance and Way of Going	15%
Manners	10%
Total	100%



H. Procedures

In order to evaluate the parameters above, the rules present specific procedures that provide the opportunity for the horses to exhibit their skills and qualities.

- Enter the ring to the right at Trocha and circle the arena until instructed to reverse. Horses must work both directions.
- The reverse will be done towards the center of the ring in an area that does not exceed ten feet, returning to the rail in the opposite direction.
- Horse may be asked to travel over the sounding board.
- Horses will be asked to line-up.
- After the line-up horses will perform the mandatory test:
 - Figure Eight
 - Halt and Back
 - Sounding Board in both directions

Each test performed by the horse can be used to evaluate various factors.

I. Figure Eight

Each horse shall perform two figure eights around the poles in both directions for a total of four figure eights finishing in the middle of the two poles facing the middle of the ring or judges.

During this test the following should be evaluated:

- Ability to maintain the rhythm of the gait, balance, flexibility (legs, head and neck), execution and agility.
- Ability to maintain the same level of energy and willingness while performing the circles without constant or rude stimulation by the rider.

J. Halt and Back

At the completion of the figure eight, each horse shall halt in between the two poles and back a minimum of four steps and a maximum of six steps. During this test the following should be evaluated:

- Ability to back in a straight line, without fighting the bit or moving its head excessively.
- The execution of the backward movement should be performed by moving in diagonal pairs.
- The horse should not rear up while backing up and should be penalized for bad manners.



K. Sounding Board

Each horse should traverse the sounding board in both directions. During this test the following should be evaluated:

- Cadence and speed of the Trocha gait.
- Ability to maintain gait throughout the sounding board.
- Straight tracking.

L. Optional Tests

The following test can be performed as additional work offs for finalists.

- Figure Eight.
- Halt and Proceed.
- Reverses.
- Horses in Parallel.
- Circles.



M. Photos Review

This section will be used to add some illustrations of Trocha horses and their execution.

N. References

- 1) El Caballo de Trocha, Dr. Rolando Colón Nebot, 2013
- 2) El Caballo de Paso: Estudio Ilustrado de su Aires, Dr. Rolando Colón Nebot, 2008
- 3) Chalaneria Colombiana, Raúl Estrada Londoño, 2005
- 4) El Caballo Colombiano: Cinco Siglos de Historia, 2006
- 5) PFHA Rule Book (September 1, 2014)