

## **A Spectator's Guide to Inspections**

The International Sporthorse Registry and Oldenburg Registry North America (ISR/OLD NA) will host one of its over fifty inspections on August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014 at Starr Vaughn Equestrian, Elk Grove, CA.

You may bring your warmblood mare for mare book approval and detailed scoring. Besides that a Mare Performance Test is offered which is also open to geldings.

As all of these inspections it is open to the public and serves as a wonderful location for trainers, riders, prospective buyers and breeders to “learn by watching” and test their own aptitude for evaluating mares and foals. It is invaluable to spend time viewing as many mares and foals as possible to improve the ability to evaluate horses for not only breeding but also for performance.

The ISR/OLDNA is one of the few registries that scores both mares and foals and announces the scores out loud for the benefit of the owners and those in attendance at the inspections. Being able to hear the scoring while the horse is present affords more opportunity to connect the score with what was scored. Breed shows do post scores but occurs after the horse has left the ring and details on the scoring are only available to the owners. Too often a composite score doesn't aide in understanding the strengths and weaknesses the Judge saw and scored for each category for that specific horse.

At most ISR/OLDNA inspections spectators can ask for feed back or clarification from the Judge to better understand why they scored as they did. Spectators should not hesitate to ask the Host if the Judge could provide more clarification or answer specific questions. Unless there are time considerations for the schedule, the Judges are usually more than willing to provide more in-depth information.

### **SCORING RANGE:**

The scoring system ranges from 2 to 10 with the following descriptions: 2-bad, 3-fairly bad, 4-not satisfactory, 5-insufficient, 6-satisfactory, 7-good, 8-very good, 9-excellent, and 10-exceptional.

### **MARE SCORING:**

The scoring for Mares requires that all mares are presented standing sideways to the Judge for the Quality of Conformation scoring. Mares should be standing so that all four legs are visible to the Judge from the side and the mare should be standing with her legs positioned so her weight is evenly distributed over all four legs. The Judge will not only score viewing from the side but will walk around the mare to evaluate the legs and other individual conformation – such as head. The following conformation factors are evaluated – Head, Neck, Shoulder & Saddle Position, Frame & Topline, Forelegs and Hind legs. The total of these six scores is the subtotal for Conformation.

The mare is scored for her breed and mare sex type. Within this score the Judge considers the quality of this mare relative to her individual breeding and if she presents herself as a mare.

When asked to present her gaits the mare is walked clockwise around the smaller triangle with the goal of presenting a correct walk with the mare striding out relaxed and forward. Her shoulder and back should show good swing, as should the hip. The hind footfalls should strike the ground slightly before the front footfalls to show impulsion from behind and her head and neck should be relaxed and stretching forward.

The mare is then trotted in hand clockwise around the larger triangle with the goal of showing the mare's ability to power off her hind-quarters and slightly upward through her topline with a lift

and good swing and extension of the shoulder. This provides the score for Swing and Elasticity of Gaits.

Both the walk and trot provide the scoring for Correctness of Gaits. This shows if the horse is presenting a clean 2 beat trot and 4 beat walk and moving correctly on two tracts, etc.

Finally the mare is scored for her Overall Impression which is the Judge's opinion on how the Mare presented for all of the above scores. It should be noted that four scores are considered slightly more important and for that reason they carry a double weight – i.e. the scores for Breed & Mare Sex Type, Walk, Swing & Elasticity of Gaits and Overall Impression are doubled.

These scores individually and in total should provide a solid basis for considering the individual strengths and weakness of this mare from the standpoint of being used for both breeding and performance. These individual and composite valuations must be considered when selecting stallions to be used for breeding this specific mare. Comparing the individual scores for the mare to a prospective stallion's individual scores provides specific details where the strengths/weakness may be compounded or improved upon.

#### FOAL SCORING:

The same scoring range and process is used for foals with some slight variations. Foals are scored in only three criteria. The first being Conformation, Type and Correctness which evaluates the foal standing with the side facing the Judge. Additionally, the Judge will walk around the foal to evaluate the legs, stance, etc. The Judge is looking at the various physical attributes of the foal with respect to head, neck, legs, etc. as they did for the Mares. This score is doubled in the final score.

The second scoring criteria is Swing, Elasticity and Athletic Ability of Movements. The foal is at liberty and the handler is asked to trot the mare around the large triangle at a slow trot allowing the foal to trot on the inside of the mare. The foals should show a good forward impulsion, upward lift to the gaits and engagement from behind. This score is doubled in the final score.

The third criteria is Overall Impression and Development. Given the age of the foal this can vary depending on how the foal is growing and maturing. Foals can often vary from one day to another so this score can be subjective relative to how they looked on the Inspection day.

As foals can grow and change, any evaluation of a young horse should include viewing the Inspection scores relative to their performance if video is available and subsequent evaluations as they are maturing and growing. They should also be evaluated relative to the scoring received by the Dam and Sire. Most foals are presented at their dam's side and this is an excellent time to compare the foal to the mare and then subsequently research the stallion to see which traits were passed on for this breeding pair.

The Inspection process becomes a significant tool to train one's "eye" and improve abilities which can assist in breeding, training or even horse purchases. This is a free opportunity to spectate and participate by asking questions. Viewing photographs limits the scope of being able to see the mare or foal and how they rate relative to other mares and foals. Score sheets are available at all inspection to facilitate keeping records on individual horses and Hosts are usually able to provide details on the breeding of mares and foals presented. Come out and be your own Judge!

(You may add specific information of your inspection e.g. time schedule, directions, number of horses.)