All American Quarter Horse Congress
Youth Judging Contest 2026

GENERAL RULES:

1. Each state may enter two (2) 4-H teams, two (1) FFA teams, and two (2) Breed Association teams (per breed), with a contest maximum of 35 youth teams. Entries will not be considered accepted until payment has been received. Teams shall consist of at least three (3) members but not more than four (4). When four are entered on a team, the three team members with the three highest scores will make up the team total. The team members shall be selected in a manner determined by the State Extension Service, the State Vocational Agriculture Department or the State Quarter Horse Association. The contestants' eligibility must be approved by an appropriate Leader or Advisor and entry forms filed with the contest chairman by the entry deadline, **September 1st** of the current year.

2. **Contestants and Eligibility:**

    A. Contestants must be members of the club they represent and approved by the appropriate organization for their state.
    B. All contestants must be at least 14 years of age, but not have passed their 19th birthday on January 1st of the current year.
    C. Youth contestants <u>are</u> eligible to compete in this contest in subsequent years as long as they are permitted to by the organization they are representing. Please note that eligibility for this contest is different from other national youth judging contests. It is the responsibility of the coach, contestants, organization representatives to ensure compliance with this and other national youth judging contests.
    D. Contestants may not have participated in an official, post-secondary Horse Judging contest, nor have been in training in preparation for a post-secondary Horse Judging contest.

3. While the contest is in progress, there will be no communication between contestants or between a contestant and anyone else except as directed by the chairman or his representatives. Cell phones and other communication devices are not allowed. Failure to abide by this regulation may result in disqualification of the contestant.

4. Contestants may use clipboards, notebooks, plain paper, official AQHA score sheets and the AQHA Official Handbook of Rules and Regulations as long as these items are clean and free of marks. Contestants may not have in their possession horse judging manuals, texts or lists of terms. Failure to abide by this rule will result in disqualification of the contestant.

5. **Classes:** Approximately twelve classes of four individuals in each class shall be judged. There shall be approximately four halter classes and approximately eight performance classes. If suitable horses are available, the halter classes (halter or performance halter) will consist of stallion, gelding, and mare classes. The performance classes will follow AQHA Novice Rules and will be selected from: Showmanship, Western Pleasure, Reining, Western Riding, Hunter Under Saddle, Hunter Hack, Western Horsemanship, Trail, Ranch Pleasure, Ranch Riding, and Hunt Seat Equitation.

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6. **Time:** Fifteen minutes will be allowed for contestants to place all non-reasons classes. Those classes in which oral reasons are to be given will be judged in a period of seventeen minutes.

7. **Card Placing:** The contestant will hand to the group leader the card bearing his placing of the ring as soon as time is up for the class. A judging card turned in after the time is up for the class and all of the cards for that class have been collected will be scored a zero.

8. **Oral Reasons:** Shall be given upon classes in each of the above mentioned groups. Two sets of reasons shall be given on halter classes and two sets of reasons on the performance classes. The contestants shall be notified at the time of placing whether or not reasons will be required on the class being judged. Reasons shall be given orally before the judge or judges and for this purpose, private rooms shall be provided. Two minutes will be permitted for oral reasons on each class. Reasons that exceed the two-minute limit will be penalized.

9. **Final Standing:** This shall be based both upon the placings and oral reasons. Fifty points shall constitute a perfect score for oral reasons. In classes where no reasons are required, the placing only will be considered.

10. **Group Leader:** An individual shall be placed in charge of contestants as they judge the various classes, to observe the contestants to see that the animals are properly shown and moved, to answer questions which do not pertain to the actual placing or instruction regarding the animals in the contest, and to collect placing cards at the end of each class.

11. **Judges:** Judges will be provided for each class in the contest.

12. **Awards:** The final results of the contest will be made available and awards will be presented on the morning following the contest. The time and place will be announced by the chairman.

13. **Entry Fee and Deadline:** Entry is due by **September 1st** of the current year and no entries will be accepted after October 1st of the current year.

13. **Judging Clinic:** A judging clinic is held each year prior to the contest on the Congress show grounds. Please refer to the schedule on the website (http://horse.osu.edu) for the location and time of this clinic each year.