



Judging

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Judging the cutting horse competition

The National Cutting Horse Association Judging Department is committed to providing well-trained judges for all NCHA-sanctioned cutting horse contests. Those NCHA members wishing to become judges must complete a rigorous training program and subsequent refresher clinics on the proper interpretation and application of the rules for judging cutting horse events in order to be considered a certified NCHA judge.

Certified judges are rated A, AA, AAA or AAAA, with the latter being the highest category. These ratings depend upon the number of events an individual has judged, evaluations of the individuals judging performance at judging clinics and scores received on bi-annual written tests. However, the real proving ground for any judge is in the contest arena.

The NCHA Judging Department makes the most of today's technology. Video is used to monitor all NCHA-approved events. A videotaped contest can be reviewed immediately following the contest by the judges to determine if a mistake was made in the application of a penalty, and the score may then be adjusted to reflect a final, more appropriate score.

Competition from the Judges Point of View

Cutting, like skating or gymnastics, is judged by a panel of NCHA-certified judges who rate the horse's performance in points. Each judge's point rating may range from 60 - 80.

In the contest arena, the art of the cutting horse comes alive in a classic test of intelligence, training, breeding and skill. In competition, the cutting horse and rider must work together as a team in demonstrating their cattle handling skills. The contest begins as the pair approaches the herd. The horse and rider have two and a-half minutes to complete their work.

Major penalties include:

- horse quitting a cow;
- losing a cow;
- changing cattle after specific commitment;
- failure to separate a single animal after leaving the herd;
- horse turning tail to a cow; horse falling to the ground.

Credit on a run can be earned by a number of variables, such as:

- excellence in herd work;
- skill in driving and setting up a cow;
- deftly handling a difficult situation;
- showing courage in confronting a difficult situation.

For more information concerning the rules used to judge NCHA-sanctioned events, please consult the NCHA Case Book and/or the [NCHA Rulebook](#) or contact the [NCHA Judging Department](#) at (817) 244-6188.

Closing

Hopefully many of your questions about getting started in cutting have been answered. Your trainer, local affiliate, or NCHA office staff are excellent sources of information.

It's easy at first to be intimidated by more experienced riders. But the key to successful cutting is to be true to your own goals and your own schedule. And remember to have fun!





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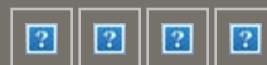
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