

JUDGES AND COMPETITORS GUIDE TO SIDE SADDLE HUNTER CLASSES

Riders must insure that their side saddle has either a roller bar with a safety stirrup attached or a quick release stirrup mechanism to insure that their foot does not get caught in case of a fall. Riders are NOT permitted to ride unless these are fitted to their side saddle.

1. TURNOUT

Correct turnout is governed by the age of the rider and the type of headwear worn. In keeping with the traditions of side saddle, no “bling” should be worn by either rider or horse at any time.

1.1 Adult Wearing a Bowler

- The side saddle habit should be of a restrained hue with long black boots. OR
- Tweed or discreet check habit (eg. Prince of Wales) worn with long boots. If brown boots are worn, it should be with a brown bowler and black boots with a black bowler (never mixed). Garter straps for boot is optional, but if worn should be of the correct length for the riders leg and the buckle on the centre of the knee, attached by a button or loop.
- A blunt spur or spur band should be worn on the ankle counter (seam) of the boot. The straps to fit boot neatly.
- The hem of the habit should be parallel to the ground and the bottom of the hem should be approximately one hands width above the left counter (seam) of the boot. The right toe should never show under any circumstance. The habit should be made of sufficiently weighted material to prevent the apron blowing around in the wind.
- The hem of the jacket should not touch the back of the horse and ideally should be just clear of the back of the saddle.
- Breeches should be a similar colour to, or the same as the habit. Light coloured breeches (if worn) must not show at any time.
- The bowler hat should be a safety bowler and worn with an unwrinkled matching coloured veil (eg. Brown veil with brown bowler) that does not show above the brim of the hat. The back of the veil is to be fastened centrally in the brim of the bowler either in a V shape of meeting centrally, or crossed over the bun. The veil can be rolled or cut and re threaded to fit the wearer if

too large. The brim of the hat should be parallel to the ground and just above the eyebrows.

- The hair should be worn in a bun (real or false) no bigger than the size of a small doughnut, and the bun should be high enough to touch the underside of the brim of the hat. This is optional when an Australian Standard Safety Hat is worn. Hair should be held tidily, with no wisps, in fine mesh hairnets of the same colour of the hair.
- A shirt (either plain or discreetly striped) with snugly fitting collar and tie, the tie securely fastened with a plain tie-pin.
- Waistcoats should not be brightly coloured (eg. red, blue, green).
- Brown or tan leather gloves (never black) or string backed gloves of similar hue to be worn.
- No Hunt buttons, floral buttonholes, earrings or visible jewellery should be worn at any time. Make up should be very light (if worn).
- A whip or rigid cane, not more than one metre in length will be carried, and must be of sufficient length to be used as the right leg aid. Dressage whips (if used, not to exceed one meter) should be of the leather covered type and the end-tassel should not be a bright colour.
- Where a rider chooses to wear a helmet to current Australian Safety Standards, the same guidelines apply minus the veil. Back Protectors may be worn.

Picture: Petra Marz by All Creatures Photography.

1.2 Adult Wearing a Silk Hat

A silk hat should only be worn after **Midday**.

- The side saddle habit should be the same as previously outlined with long black boots.
- A hunting tie or stock made of unpatterned cotton, cotton mix or silk, worn over a collarless shirt and tied, if shaped as for hunting or if four fold as for showing, both ways pinned with a plain stock-pin or hunting tie-pin horizontally through THE KNOT.



- Garter straps, spur, veil, bun, breeches, waistcoat, whip, jewellery as previously outlined.
- Gloves of dark brown or tan leather or cream chamois leather.
- A ladies silk hat (the height of the crown should measure between 120mm (4.75") and 133mm (5.25")), depending on the height of the wearer.

1.3 Junior Rider Aged under 17 years

Guidelines as previously stated except:

- Helmet to current Australian Safety Standard to be worn.
- Spurs or spur bands are not compulsory.
- Hair ribbons (if worn) to be plain black, brown or navy and the hair (however worn) should be exceptionally neat and tidy.
- Whip is not to exceed 76cm in length (when riding a pony not exceeding 14hh) or one meter (when riding a Galloway/horse) and of the sufficient length to be used as a right leg aid.
- In case of small children, black or brown jodhpur boots are acceptable regardless of colour of habit. Plain gaiters may be worn, but not half-chaps.

2. HORSE

2.1 The Saddle

The fit of the side saddle is of the utmost importance. Care must be taken that the saddle does not press on the horse's spine and that it is straight and centred. The saddle should fit the horse correctly at the front and does not impede on the freedom of the shoulder. The saddle must be safe for the rider and it must not be painful or damaging for the horse.

- The saddle should have a quick release stirrup mechanism or a roller with a safety stirrup system, and a girth and balance strap that are fitted correctly. The stirrup iron must be 2cm wider than the widest part of the rider's boot.
- Numnahs and shaped saddle cloths (if worn) should be well fitted and unobtrusive matching the colour of the saddle, eg. brown saddle brown numnah/saddle cloth. White numnahs/saddle cloths can only be used for dressage.
- Saddle linen should be correctly whitened (lightly applied and should have no flaking or excess whitener left) or if left not whitened, should have no marks or stains visible. Clean serge lining is permitted.

- A leather girth with central loop should be worn if a full length balance strap is fitted. A leather balance girth which is full length or attached to the girth should be used.
- Martingales, boots or bandages are not permitted for showing and flat work. However, boots must be worn for all jumping phases.
- Cruppers may be used on ponies, but must be correctly fitted.



Picture: Petra Marz by Ultimate Images UK

2.2 The Bridle

The bridle should fit correctly and should be appropriate to the rest of the turnout.

- A plain browband and noseband together with plain, plaited or laced reins of a length so as not to catch on the rider's knee or right toe to be worn.
- If the rider is wearing a silk hat, a double bridle or Pelham with double reins must be used.

3. THE CLASS AND WORKOUT

The judging criteria should be the same as for a standard astride class. The emphasis should however be placed on smooth paces and impeccable manners. The horse should have a good shoulder and appear to be a smooth ride consequently not jolting the rider. The judge should look for a horse which will give a comfortable and safe ride.

The judge should look for an effortless, long, free ground covering walk. The trot should be scopey yet smooth. The canter should appear comfortable for the rider to sit to. If a gallop is required, this should be immediate and ground covering with the horse obedient to the rider.

4. THE RIDER

- A good rider should appear straight and supple and when viewed from the rear, should appear to be the same as if astride except for the position of the legs.
- The weight should be evenly distributed with the rider's hips and shoulders square to the front.
- The rider must be supple, the body free from any tension or stiffness so as not to interfere with the horse's way of going. The arms should follow the natural line of the body. The hands should be held either in the lap or either side of the top knee.
- The rider should not be stiff backed or bump about in the saddle, she should sit centrally at all times.
- The overall picture should be one of poise and elegance.