Stock Horse Pleasure

From the Texas 4-H Horse Show Rules and Regulations

This class serves to measure the ability of the horse to be functional and a pleasure to ride while being used as a means of conveyance from one task to another. This horse should be well-broke, relaxed, quiet, soft, and cadenced at all gaits. The horse should be ridden on a relatively loose rein with light contact and without requiring undue restraint. Excessively long, floppy reins will not be given extra credit. The horse should be responsive to the rider and make all required transitions smoothly, timely, and correctly. The horse should be soft in the bridle and yield to contact.

Horses shall be shown individually at the walk, trot, and lope in both directions. The walk, trot, and lope will be extended in one direction only. Markers set up in the arena will designate gait changes. The pleasure course shall be set to make approximately one pass of the arena in each direction. The pattern may be started either in the left or right direction. The order of gaits shall be:

1) extended walk,
2) trot,
3) extended trot,
4) lope,
5) stop and reverse,
6) walk,
7) lope,
8) extended lope,
9) trot, and
10) stop and back.

Description of Ideal Pleasure Gaits

The ideal pleasure horse will have a level head carriage at each gait – neither too high nor too low.

**Walk** – The walk should be straight, square, flat footed, relaxed, and should move out freely with horse looking ahead.

**Extended Walk** – The extended walk should be straight, square, flat footed, relaxed, and should move out freely with horse looking ahead. It should show more length of stride than the ordinary walk.

**Trot** – This gait should be a square two-beat diagonal trot. The trot should be steady, soft, and slow enough for riding long distances. Trots which are too fast, rough and hard to sit should be penalized. Excessively slow and uncadenced trots should also be penalized.

**Extended Trot** – The extended trot should show a definite lengthening of stride from the regular trot with the same cadence, which will cause an increase in speed. This trot should be level, flat, and steady with the appearance that the horse could hold this gait for an extended distance. The method riders chose to ride the extended trot is optional. It is acceptable to either post at the trot, sit, or stand in the stirrups, while holding the saddle horn, at the extended trot only.

**Lope** – This gait should be a three-beat gait that is collected, cadenced, straight and steady, and is comfortable to ride.
Stop (from both lope and trot) – The horse should be in the correct stopping position – both hocks engaged and stopping on the hindquarters.

Reverse – A horse should turn briskly and flat with front feet on the ground and holding an inside rear pivot foot.

Extended Lope – This gait should be an obvious lengthening of stride from the previous lope, be at the same cadence and cause an increase in speed. The gait needs to be steady, quiet, and holding the increased speed while being under complete control.

Scoring Stock Horse Pleasure
Judging should be based on quality of movement, mannerisms, disposition, and responsiveness to the rider. Part of the evaluation of this class is on smoothness of transitions. All transitions should be smooth with willingness and responsiveness to the rider’s cues. Note that the rules allow for a horse to be taken back (collected) a bit from the extended trot as the horse moves into the lope. The transition from the extended lope down to the trot is very difficult to achieve; however, a good stock horse should be able to make this transition smoothly and easily, with calmness and a good attitude.

Stock Horse Pleasure will be scored from 0 to infinity with 70 denoting average. The individual maneuvers are scored in ½ point increments from a low of -1½ to a high of + 1½, with a score of 0 denoting a maneuver that is correct with no degree of difficulty.

Penalties:
1. One point penalties
   a. Over-bridled (per maneuver)
   b. Out of frame
   c. Too slow
   d. Gaping mouth
   e. Break of gait at walk or trot for two strides or less
2. 3 point penalties
   a. Wrong lead
   b. Draped reins
   c. Break of gait at lope
   d. Break of gait at walk or trot for more than two strides
3. 5 point penalties
   a. Spurring in front of cinch
   b. Blatant disobedience
   c. Use of either hand to instill fear or praise
   d. Use of two hands (per maneuver)
   e. More than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (per maneuver)
4. Off Pattern (OP) cannot place above others who complete pattern correctly
   a. Breaking pattern (including never performing designated gait or lead)
   b. Repeated disobedience
   c. Leaving working area before pattern is complete
5. Disqualification (DQ)
   a. Lameness
   b. Abuse
   c. Illegal equipment
   d. Disrespect or misconduct
   e. Fall of horse or rider