

## **IPHF Judges Committee: 2008 US National Show FEEDBACK FROM THE CENTER RING**

As a member of the Judges Committee and Director of Competition (ring master) for the 2008 IPHF US National Show, I would like to share with you a few of the things that I experienced during this competition. The following discusses some of the areas we addressed during the competition, and some of the things we will be working on in the future.

**Judging:** First and foremost, we have to thank the 5 judges who made this inaugural show for IPHF a huge success. They are:

Sharon Londono  
Jaime Benavidez  
Mauricio Camacho  
Dr. Rolando Colon-Nebot  
Diego González

A new judging system was introduced to you and to the judges mentioned above. This Olympic style, 5 judge format, throws the high and low scores out and adds the middle three. Each placement had a numerical value based on a total score calculated from adding the **three middle scores**. We are still getting positive phone calls, and people at the show were telling us, how nice this system was.

As the system was being implemented, there was a team of internationally recognized judges continuously monitoring the system in order to identify discrepancies that might be inherent in the methods used for judging. No system is above the need for constructive criticism and problem solving. One example of this was the identification of the need in the Pleasure and Performance divisions to be sure that the “myth” of the sounding board making the final decision on placements was not perpetuated by our system. Rick Meyer, a distinguished judge from the US pointed out this need, and it was addressed during this competition in that after horses had fulfilled the basic requirements of the class they were not asked to perform on the sounding board **as a final defining maneuver for placement**.

Also we had a scenario where in the case of a tie; the high and low numbers that originally got thrown out, came back into play to break the tie. We learned this was part of the system on Thursday night at the judges meeting. But at that meeting we could not predict a realistic outcome of the influence of those scores being reintegrated into the overall scores. We only had one situation where that occurred during the competition and it was during Class 67.

The judges committee, and the judges at the show, enjoyed the system greatly but we will be adjusting the system so that it will tell us when there is a tie but will not automatically resolve the tie numerically. Then the judges may take those horses and work them by using more of the tests available within the class rules, and actually judge the horses to declare a winner. We recognize that ties may need to be broken by judging additional maneuvers.

**IPHF’s judges committee will be working on creating the 5 judge system to fit the needs of our breed. The IPHF Judges Committee does not want ties broken by a number, or an addition of points given to each placement, as this point system did. The IPHF Judges Committee and the judges present at our show want the horses to earn their placement.**

**Big Screen:** An innovative idea brought by our Board of Directors to have real time judging was AWESOME. Unfortunately, we did not have the ability to create a technological way to link the software for the palm pilots that the judges use, so that after the system calculates the results, the computer would automatically send the results to the screen. Our screen technician was at the opposite end of the arena manually inputting the information from the judge's individual score card. After three 14 plus hour days, and with two classes to go in our show, our technician made an input error that showed the second place horse, technically having the points to win first place. The owners of that horse immediately came to the judges' stand/score keepers section for clarification of the placements. After members of the judges committee showed him the actual judges' cards, the horse owner understood that it was a human error and accepted our apologies for this misfortune.

**In the future, IPHF will be working on that technology, so that the judges' results go directly from the computer of the score keeper to the big screen.**

IPHF has available in our rules two other judging systems. They are: the conferring 2 judge system and the F1-F2 format commonly used at the PFHA Nationals. We hope to have all three judging formats available for IPHF Affiliates to use when hosting their competitions. These systems all have the potential for refinement so that they may achieve the judging goals established by the IPHF.

**The Serpentine:** Javier Suarez, one of our most expert showmen in the Paso Fino industry, was the innovator of the serpentine that made the show even more exciting. Dr. Colon Nebot, upon seeing the pattern put to use, commented: **"In the years since I have been judging, this was the best serpentine I've had a chance to use. It guided, and forced the horses to stay within the same boundaries. This made it easier for the judges to compare all of the horses' abilities and judge them on the same playing field."**

**Prepista (Check in area):** The process of prepista was great for three reasons: it allowed IPHF to know that the horses were sound prior to entering competition, that they had the proper tack and attire, and that the horses were there on time.

**Explanations:** The judges being able to explain the classes, since there was only one placement, made the results of the competition much more educational and clear to the public. People were so excited to not only see the results of the judging, but to have the details of what separated one horse from another communicated clearly at the time of placement. Details that are usually seen from ground level only, or that occurred in intervals of seconds during competition, like a horse loosing the cadence of the gait, had clarity when this very public form of communication occurs in the ring.

**IPHF judges committee is currently continuing to establish a few other ideas to enhance the quality of our shows and the definition of our divisions by setting some new standards. We will be testing some of them this winter.**

**Carlos Tobon  
IPHF Judges Committee**