

Lipizzan Evaluations

In 1986, the first North American Lipizzan evaluation was held in Michigan at an independent location and was hosted by a regional organization – the Midwest Lipizzan Association. Dr. Jaromir Oulehla, then director of the Spanish Riding School and Piber studfarm, judged the show and the horses came from all over the country to be evaluated. The judging form used at that 1986 show encompasses the same criteria on which European Lipizzans are evaluated; it is also the same form used in evaluating Lipizzans today.

Understanding the Scoring System

Lipizzan breed evaluations have been held in the United States since 1986. The following categories appear on the score sheet with a perfect horse – regardless of sex – stallion, mare or gelding – receiving 100%. The following chart explains what is evaluated as well as a comparison of identical scores for a stallion and gelding.

Description	Maximum Points	Notes	Sample Scoring	
			Stallion	Gelding
1) Conformation				
a) Head/Neck	10	<i>Conformation score equals total confirmation score divided by 2 with a possible score of 30</i>	8	8
b) Shoulder/Withers	10		8	8
c) Front Legs	10		7	7
d) Back/Loins	10		8	8
e) Hind Legs	10		7	7
f) Frame/Top Line	<u>10</u>		<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>
	60 / 2 = 30		46 / 2 = 23	46 / 2 = 23
2) Breed Type (excludes foals & geldings)				
a) Breed and Type	10	<i>Total for type divided by 2 with a possible score of 10</i>	8	0
b) Masculinity/Femininity	<u>10</u>		<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>
	20 / 2 = 10		16 / 2 = 8	0 / 2 = 0
3) Correctness of Gaits				
a) Walk in hand	10	<i>Total for gaits with a possible score of 30</i>	7	7
b) Trot in hand and free	10		8	8
c) Canter free	<u>10</u>		<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>
	30		23	23
4) Impulsion and Elasticity	10	<i>Total of 4, 5, 6 with a possible score of 30</i>	8	8
5) Temperament/Obedience	10		7	7
6) Overall Impression	<u>10</u>		<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>
	30		23	23
Total Points	100%		77/100 = 77%	69/90 = 77%

Now, an explanation as to why foals and geldings are not scored in section 2 Breed/Type and Masculinity/Femininity. The first evaluation for foals as well as geldings, is for educational purposes and to certify the breeding abilities of their sires and dams. Foal and gelding scores are totaled and then divided by 90, rather than 100, to produce the correct percentage. Gelding scoring is handled the same as foals for the reason that a very nice gelding could receive the same score as a very nice stallion or mare, but is not considered a breeding horse. Take a look at the scoring for a stallion and gelding in the above chart, and you will see that if every score,

other than Breed Type, was identical, the horses would score the same percentage when calculated properly.

In European studfarms, horses under the age of three and a half are evaluated at several points in their development. Likewise, in the United States evaluations, all evaluation certificates on foals and young horses are marked preliminary. Foals and youngsters two and under should be re-evaluated after age three to obtain their final approval. Sometimes very promising foals do not mature well and vice versa. Preliminary scores received by foals, young horses under the age of two, and geldings are so noted on the evaluation certificate.

Showing Horses In-Hand and at Liberty

It is important to turn the horses at liberty in order to properly evaluate the trot and canter. There are few professional handlers in the United States. Not every person owning a horse is sufficiently fit to show it to its best advantage and in most case, short people do not display a horse to a better advantage than a taller handler. For this reason, it has been established by previous evaluations that the horses be shown in-hand at liberty to give the horse the most fair judging – “judge the horse’s trot, not the handler’s trot”. With the assistance of several arena helpers, horses can be set free to “strut their stuff” and then reclaimed by its handler.

Why Evaluate Your Horse?

In the evaluations held around the country from 1986 to the present, nearly every horse has passed. The purpose of evaluation is to eliminate probable genetic faults such as really crooked legs. Of the few horses not passing inspection, one horse was not approved because of a serious pigmentation problem which can lead to serious health issues. Another horse was seriously oversized (17 hands) and while not approved for Lipizzan breeding, the animal was approved for sport horse improvement.

When to Stop Evaluating Your Horse and Offspring

The evaluation process is a continuous process. Once a horse is approved for breeding, does not mean that you should breed indiscriminately. Obviously, you breed to the very best you can – to another stallion or mare that will compliment the traits of your own horse. Naturally you will find that your horse crosses particularly well with one body type of horse or another. However, if you are going to be serious about breeding, your newly approved horse must produce well and those offspring must also be approved. It is a constant education and review process.

Good Marks, Bad Marks

Horses scoring between 60 and 70 may be breed and their foals evaluated. If those horses produce well, the owner should continue to breed them; if not, the animals should be used as riding or driving horses. Also, as mentioned before, foals and youngsters two and under need to be re-evaluated after age three to receive their final certification. LANA records all marks in their database; however, acceptance into the ALBA records is based on the rule that a horse receiving a score less than 60, or any single score of 5 or less, should not be bred.

Evaluation of the Not-So-Classical Lipizzan

First and foremost, the primary purpose of LANA is to register horses, irregardless of its body type. Some members prefer the baroque, classical type; other prefer the more modern, competition type. According to the judging criteria established thus far, it is the view that the classical, baroque Lipizzan is the epitome of the Lipizzan breed. Therefore, the farther a horse deviates from the classical, the lower the score will be in the area of section 2 (Breed and Type) which has a total possible of ten points. If the horse deviates from the characteristic of a generally good performance horse in section 1 (Conformation) or section 3 (Correctness of Gaits), obviously the score will also be lowered in those areas. Unless a horse is so unLipizzanlike that it receives a score of 5 in section 2, it will be approved provided everything else is of good quality. Consider that a horse received a score of 6 on breed type and a score of 7 on masculinity/femininity, it would still be possible for the horse to receive a total evaluation score of 96.5 if all of the other scores were the maximum number (not likely, but possible).

Recording the Scores

When LANA was formed in 1992, a separate Breeders Commission was established in its Rules and Regulations and a place for recording scores was placed in the database. However, LANA Directors deliberately stepped back from moving forward with its Breeders Commission due to the formation of the American Lipizzan Breeders Association. Since LANA was the result of the merging of two of the three then existing registries, it was felt that there was no need to further fraction the Lipizzan breed in the United States by establishing another Breeding Commission within the Registry. Unification of the Lipizzan breed has always been a goal of LANA, and as long as ALBA follows the same criteria as that which forms the basis of origin of LANA, no other Breeders Commission will be activated within the organization although LANA will maintain the evaluation scores for horses registered within the organization when provided a copy of the evaluation sheet. Also, LANA may organize and host evaluations at different locations around the country and the scores entered into the LANA database and provided to ALBA for their records.