

## **The Arabian English Performance Association Yearling In Hand Futurity Class Specifications.**

First and foremost, this class is an aptitude evaluation held expressly to evaluate and rank yearlings for the specific purpose of being English riding horses. It is not to be confused with a regular Halter class that is judged on traditional Arabian type. A yearling shown in the traditional “halter style” will be at a distinct disadvantage to the yearling exhibited in the manner that best displays his natural upright carriage, motion, and expression. The yearling that most conforms to the following descriptions of motion, carriage, English conformation, correctness of leg and hoof, Arabian English type and expression, will be the winner.

### **Front leg motion**

The ideal front leg motion of the in hand yearling should be typified by the forearm raising high in the air, with plenty of freedom displayed by a prominent and loose moving shoulder. The yearling should show excellent flexion of all joints in the leg, with the leg forming a fluid curl from his hoof, pastern, ankle, and cannon bone into the upraised knee at the peak of his stride. At that moment the knee should extend well in front of the point of shoulder, demonstrating a free shoulder. The movement should simultaneously be lofty, bouncy, light and airy. The quality of this motion is defined by the height, fluidity, and slow, rolling cadence.

Any loss of the quality of motion is undesirable. For example, quick or frantic motion should be scored lower than slow and lofty motion of the same knee height. Stiff movement or movement with the leg extended straight at the peak of the stride is also undesirable.

### **Hind leg motion**

The hindquarters are the propulsive “unit” of the horse, and as such, propel the horse over the ground. For a prospective English horse, a powerful and dynamic hindquarter is essential for the engagement necessary to produce the uphill carriage that is the signature of the quality Arabian English Style horse.

The ideal hind leg motion of the in hand yearling is presented with a well-engaged hindquarter and legs that deliver strong, perfectly timed strides. The stride will be elastic in nature with great flexion of all of the

joints. The push off shall be strong with a forward push and an upward lift. The return of the stride will demonstrate deliberate, extremely flexed hock and stifle motion, causing the rear cannon to reach high as it moves forward, well underneath the horse, with the fetlock flexed, and the hoof held as if to “cup” or grab the dirt in order to maximize the impending push off.

Undesirable motion includes, weak motion displaying little flexion, and leg movement lacking enough of a return to reposition the hind leg under the horse, causing the horse to constantly be out behind himself. As well, hind legs that simply move up and down, with no forward push, are less desirable.

### Carriage

Carriage defines whether the horse is more suitable for vertical work or horizontal work. Conformation has a direct impact on the carriage of a horse, but beyond conformation, carriage is the expression of the emotional identity of the horse.

The ideal carriage of the in hand yearling English style Arabian is tall, upright, bouncy, and confident. For example, an upright horse carries itself in a high-headed fashion, and a bouncy horse carries itself off of the ground.

For perspective, consider a horizontal rectangle, a square, and a vertical rectangle.

The horse whose natural carriage organizes his over all conformation in the manner best depicted by the horizontal rectangle is a horse more suited for the pleasure rider, or hunter division.

The horse whose natural carriage causes his overall frame to best fit in a square is a very balanced individual. This horse has show potential, and could be compatible for any division from Western to English.

The horse whose balanced conformation would fit in a square, or a slightly vertical deviation of the square, **but whose carriage causes his frame to fit in a vertical rectangle** is the epitome of the English style carriage.

### Front Leg conformation

The ideal front leg conformation of the in hand yearling is as follows:

The front leg should be long, relative to the overall length of the horse, causing the total balance to be more vertical than horizontal. Ideally, the forearm should be considerably longer than the cannon bone, and the pastern should be relatively long and sloping. The knee should be flat and

clean and should face straight forward and not be rotated. Likewise, the cannon bone should be clean and face forward and not be rotated.

When dealing with the front leg, there are many deviations from straight, starting with cannon bones rotated out or in from the knee. The cannon may be offset left or right, relative to the middle of the knee. The cannon may be positioned in “calf knee” creating a concave line when viewed from the side, or, be in the reverse position of a “buck knee”. From the judge’s perspective, the deviations causing the most negatively profound effect on the soundness of the horse shall be considered the most serious. Calf knees contribute to suspensory injuries. Extreme splay footedness causes undue stress on sesmoidian ligaments, and pigeon toed conformation leads to a breakdown of the collateral ligaments and arthritis in the outsides of the major joints.

The most benign deviations are offset cannons and bench knees.

### **Hoof Conformation**

Hoof conformation in the shod yearling may be difficult to ascertain. A well-conformed hoof would be relatively wide with an angle that creates a correct hoof pastern axis. The walls of the hoof should be of good quality.

The biggest fault would be the obvious club foot.

### **Hind Leg conformation**

Hind leg form to function is difficult to describe without writing a text on biomechanics. A large part of evaluating the construction of the hind leg must necessarily come from the observation of how it actually performs in motion. Up to a point, long bones coupled with greater angulation of the hind limb (Z shaped) make it easier to bring the hocks and hind hooves forward with each stride. This enables the collection needed to excel as an English Performance Horse. As the horse stands square behind, the cannon should be perpendicular to the ground and in a perfect line from the point of the buttocks. While standing square, a horse that stands under himself, or stands out behind himself, is not balanced. When the horse is standing square, it is easy to determine the angulation of the hind leg by noticing the open or closed nature of the angles formed.

The slightly over angulated hind leg, while taking more strength and energy to use will produce the most pleasing motion. Additionally, a short hind cannon is of particular importance to the production of strong, efficient, hind limb motion. A long hind cannon is undesirable.

### Arabian English conformation

- Arabian English conformation requires a more vertically built horse with a long slender upright neck, (which is “hingy” or well curved at the poll) coming high out of a well laid back shoulder.
- The back should be short and well coupled into a powerful hindquarter with a long and sloping hip, and a slightly sloping croup.
- A flat top line is not desirable.
- A long forearm and a relatively short front cannon bone leading into a slightly longer, sloping pastern is desirable.
- The hind leg should include low set hocks and a short hind cannon bone.
- The balance of the horse should be even at the withers and at the top of the croup, and never “butt high”.

Any deviations that inhibit the horse from achieving an uphill collected frame that produces fluid, round motion are highly undesirable. Specifically, short front pasterns, and long hind cannons are not to be tolerated.

### Arabian English Type and Expression

Arabians have been noted for their beauty worldwide for centuries. Our mission is to recognize and reward beautiful Arabian horses with the potential for excellence in the Saddle Seat divisions. Arabian English type describes a horse that is distinctly Arabian in **some** of the classic descriptions of type. Included are large eyes, a dished profile to the face, small tippy ears, a small muzzle, a relatively short back, and excellent tail carriage. Arabian English type would deviate from classical type in that a slightly longer head is acceptable if it shows refinement and the jowl is less pronounced than what is considered classical. An excessively large jowl will inhibit flexion at the poll.

Another deviation from the Gladys Brown Edwards model of Arabian type is the top line, which, is not encouraged to be flat. The tabletop topline can include a rotated pelvis, which inhibits deep engagement of the hind leg. (In this example, the sacrum would not have enough angulation and would be too flat).

A hallmark of classical Arabian type and Arabian English type is a high tailset. High straight tail carriage is highly desirable and wry or low-set tails are less desirable.

Arabian type, which includes large expressive eyes, large flaring nostrils, small tippy ears, and excellent tail carriage, goes hand in hand with the category of expression.

Expression is totally concerned with the emotional nature of the horse. It's more than just the icing on the cake; it's the thrill, the joy, and the life of the experience. An in hand yearling that enters the arena visibly "puffed up" with his ears pricked forward, head held high, and tail flagged is one of the most engaging sights any horseperson involved with the division will ever see. As the horse enters in an excited state, the picture is worth more than a thousand words on how his excitement causes him to animate and express himself.

Is this horse vertical? Or is he forward headed? Does he show great freedom of motion, with strength and balance? Or is he stiff with no range of motion or desire? Is he confident? Would he rather trot than canter? Is this horse an elegant example of refinement? Or is he awkward and bulky? The answers are all there to see.