

Effective January 1, 2024

**2024 Rules Policies and**  
**Procedures Governing GVHS**  
**Judges and Applicants**

For inclusion in the GVHS Rules governing the licensure of GVHS  
Judges.

A. Rules, Policies and Procedures Governing GVHS Licensed Judges

1. General Rules, Policies and Procedures Governing Currently Licensed GVHS Judges:
  - a. For all GVHS approved shows, judges must be selected from the current approved list of the Gypsy Vanner Horse Society. Upon request, the GVHS office can provide show management the current approved list of judges along with referral to the GVHS website.
  - b. Every licensed judge must be a member in good standing with the GVHS.
  - c. All licensed judges must annually renew their membership with the GVHS, by paying the annual fees.
  - d. Every GVHS judge must adjudicate at least once every five (5) years at an approved GVHS event or show.
  - e. Every GVHS judge must obtain continuing education via the GVHS sponsored judges' seminar once every three (3) years.
  - f. Judges may be required to take Written Show Rules and Regulations tests, as established by the Judges Committee, including upon initial application and annual renewal of license.
  - g. Judges are expected to exemplify a deep understanding of the breed standard as well as good character and moral fitness. Receiving recognition and designation as a licensed GVHS judge is a privilege that is earned through meeting personal education and character-based criteria, including equine expertise, personal character, professional attitude, and a sincere interest in the Gypsy Vanner Horse.
  - h. Solicitation of official judging assignments through social media and other forms of print communication and media is forbidden. Judges may not advertise in any form of electronic and print media their professional services as a GVHS licensed official.
  - i. A judge may not use any form of enticement and/or incentive, financial or otherwise, to solicit appointment as an official judge for any event or competition.
  - j. All licensed judges shall be responsible for understanding and applying the current Show Rules and Regulations during their process of officiating.
  - k. Licensed judges are expected to participate in the "Learner Judge" program, as defined in more detail in Section B(2) below.

1. Judges serve at the will of the GVHS Board of Directors and can be removed for any reason by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

2. Conflicts of Interest Rules Governing Judges.

a. A licensed judge shall not be a competitor/exhibitor, or serve as a show manager or in any other official capacity, at any event or show at which he/she is serving as an official judge.

b. An adjudicating judge of a show cannot judge a horse that the judge has any financial or ownership interest that existed in six months prior to the show.

c. A judge shall not judge a horse which is owned or exhibited by anyone from whom he/she or members of his/her immediate family have paid or received a salary, commission, or any type of remuneration or consideration, directly or indirectly, within six (6) months of the date of the show in question. EXCEPTION: breeding fees, mare care, vet expenses, shipping fees, or any other fees related to breeding.

d. A licensed judge shall not adjudicate at an event or show in which his/her clients, former clients, instructor/coach, trainer, former trainer, former employer, current employer, fellow employee, or former employee are duly entered, until six (6) months has elapsed since the termination of this relationship.

e. A licensed judge shall not adjudicate at an event or show in which his/her family members and/or extended family members are duly entered as competitors.

f. A licensed judge who is officiating at an event or show shall not discuss the sale and/or purchase of horses with any exhibitor during that event or show.

g. A licensed judge who is designated to be officiating at an event or show shall neither converse nor fraternize with exhibitors anywhere on the grounds during the event or show. It is recommended that judges remove themselves from the grounds once their official duties are completed.

h. A licensed judge shall not appear on the grounds more than thirty (30) minutes prior to the official start of the event or show, show unless instructed and/or requested by the Show Manager.

i. A licensed judge shall not visit barns or stables prior to the start of or during a show. It is recommended that judges remove themselves from the grounds once their official duties are completed.

j. A licensed judge who has a signed contractual agreement to officiate at an event or show and fails to appear as scheduled AND fails to notify the event/show management in advance shall be subject to disciplinary action, absent extenuating circumstances.

k. A licensed judge officiating at an event or show shall not observe or monitor practice sessions or warm-up periods with potential exhibitors in an effort to mitigate against bias.

l. A licensed judge shall not use a mobile telephone or other device for texting, calling, or responding to calls while conducting official duties judging. The use of mobile devices for recording times, acting as a stop-watch, is permitted.

m. A licensed judge shall not coach, instruct, or train individuals or their horses while officiating at an event or show.

n. A licensed judge while serving in an official capacity shall dress in a professional appropriate style and manner befitting the event or show.

o. Licensed judges shall conduct themselves in a professional manner toward all competitors, exhibitors, and attendees without favoritism or bias.

3. Judges' Principal Areas of Responsibilities at Events and Shows.

a. A licensed judge shall not determine, by any method, the eligibility of a horse for registration that is participating in the event or show.

b. A licensed judge shall not make comments, compliments, or derogatory remarks, about any horse participating in the event or show.

c. Licensed judges shall not change their personal choices for placing a class once the official placing card is signed and submitted, indicating the conclusion of the judging portion of the class. The judges' placings are final and may not be altered except to correct clerical errors.

d. A licensed judge shall award the total number of placings as represented by the class placing card and shall not arbitrarily assign placings lower than the number of entries in a class.

e. A licensed judge shall excuse from the show ring all horses that display poor behavior, dangerous manners, or that threaten the safety and well-being of exhibitors and/or horses. Failing to do so shall constitute unprofessional conduct by the licensed judge.

f. A licensed judge is responsible for the welfare of all horses competing in the event/show:

i. Horses considered observed as unsound (lame) where there is observed head bobble, observed short striding, and/or observed exaggerated abnormal leg

action shall be removed from the show ring. If there is more than one judge officiating at an event, the majority of the judges shall determine the status of the horse(s), including whether the horse is serviceably sound. Obvious lameness is sufficient grounds for disqualification from a class.

- ii. Horses should be inspected in all classes for whip marks and visible signs of blood in mouth, over bridge of nose (hackamore or lead chain), under the jaw/chin, spur marks adjacent to lower leg/heels and especially in the flanks. Obvious evidence of blood is sufficient grounds for disqualification from a class, regardless of the source or cause.
  - iii. The licensed judge shall note the details of his or her observation including horse number on the official placing card when disqualifying a horse from a class.
  - iv. At this time GVHS does not require a bit or equipment check; however, anytime a judge comes within a reasonable observable range of a horse, he or she is responsible for observing the horse's welfare.
- g. A licensed judge shall not initiate judging until the in-gate is closed and/or the class is considered complete by public announcement, "This is your class."
- h. A licensed judge shall prepare and/or review all patterns to be used during the show, comparing the written description with the illustrated map of the pattern. All modifications to the patterns shall be posted and identified as CORRECTED. The pattern must be posted 2 hours prior to the start of the class.
- i. A licensed judge shall "walk the course" and provide an explanation of the obstacle(s) to the competitors/exhibitors, but shall not advise competitors/exhibitors how to perform the obstacle. If a course designer has supplied the pattern, the licensed judge shall accompany the course designer and competitors/exhibitors during the class walk through the pattern. No horse is permitted to walk-through prior to the class.
- j. A licensed judge shall determine the most appropriate manner for the in-hand presentation of the Gypsy Vanner horses, a method that enhances their image, style, and grace as the unique breed they represent.
- k. A licensed judge may discuss the placing of a horse in a class with an exhibitor of that horse at the conclusion of the show with the Show Manager present during all of the discussions. Scheduling a meeting shall be through the Show Manager. The judge shall request from the exhibitor their full name, horse's exhibit number, class number and title, names of witnesses to discussion, time and date. At the conclusion of the meeting with the exhibitor, the judge should immediately make all notes of importance for future reference, including elapsed time.

4. Suspension and termination of a GVHS Judge:

- a. All formal written, duly signed complaints filed with the GVHS against a judge shall be reviewed by the Judges Committee for possible further action by the Judges Committee. Such action shall include a due process procedure akin to the GVHS Grievance Procedure for the determination of the merits of the complaint.
- b. Any judge suspended by the GVHS for cause will be automatically removed from the list of approved judges, pending determination of the underlying the complaint or issue causing the suspension.
- c. Suspension includes automatic termination of all membership privileges which eliminates the opportunity to participate in all GVHS activities.
- d. Failure to comply with the rules set forth for Licensed Judges in Section 1 above will result in non-renewal of judges' license, absent extenuating circumstances.
- e. Failure to follow the Rules and Regulations and Policies of the GVHS can be grounds for suspension of privileges as a licensed judge with the potential of disciplinary action.

B. Rules Governing Applicants to the GVHS Judges' Program.

1. The process for applicants is as follow: see flowchart titled "GVHS Judges Licensing Process."
2. Applicants must also participate in the Learner Judge Program, the duration of which depends upon the applicant's experience as a prior licensed official. The GVHS Licensed Officials' Committee shall establish policies and procedures for the Learner Judge Program and has sole discretion to evaluate and recommend Learner Judge applications for consideration by the GVHS BOD.
  - a. The purpose of the Learner Judge program is for the applicant judge to work with a more experienced, Licensed Judge to learn the rules and protocol of adjudicating a GVHS event or show. The important part is to instill confidence in the applicant's process for decision making.
  - b. The Learner Judge should work independently of the Licensed Judge, and once the class is complete, with the official placing submitted to show management, a brief discussion between the Learner Judge and the Licensed Judge needs to take place, before the next class enters the show ring. This can be accomplished during the time when placings are being announced and horses exiting the show ring.
  - c. Learner Judges need to conduct themselves in a professional manner, and allow for brief discussions on the class placings. At no time should Learner Judges be conversing

with the Licensed Judge at any other time during the classes. The main responsibility of the Licensed Judge is to serve as an official for the event or show and not be distracted from this task.

d. At the conclusion of this hands-on learning experience, the Licensed Judge is asked for his/her honest, fair appraisal of the Learner Judge's activities and discussions on a form supplied by GVHS. It must be remembered, the development of future judges in a breed is important, but more critically, the GVHS needs to ensure that the Learner Judge is a true "student" of this unique breed.