Becoming a Licensed USEF Connemara “r” Judge
The American Connemara Pony Society Breed Standard

- Connemaras are a product of their original environment – the rugged coast of west Ireland
- Surefooted, hardy and agile, they possess qualities of great stamina, staying power, and adaptability.
- The Connemara breed is renowned for their versatility and for their tractable, sensible and willing disposition.
- The judge must recognize the influence of the Connemaras’ heritage giving balanced consideration to the effects of larger size on overall conformation.
The distinctly rugged, sturdy physical qualities of the Connemara have evolved over generations of a naturally selective breeding process in the extremely rugged environment of the animal's native land -- the rocky western seacoast of Ireland. The Connemara has developed the conformation and ability to respond to an extremely wide range of work requirements under a variety of conditions. The Connemara is foremost a "using" breed, one which has not been restricted to only one activity or purpose.

The Connemaras' unique temperament and kindly responsiveness to people make them highly valued as companion animals. The Connemara has, above all else, the proven and demonstrated ability to work with, not against, its human partner. Good temperament is a most important breed prerequisite.

Throughout the rest of the world. The Connemara is registered only as a pony (14.2 or under), and only after meeting the breed registry standards after inspection. Only in North America is the Connemara allowed to be registered as a small horse as well as a pony, and the American Connemara Pony Society breed standards are applied in the show ring. It is of utmost importance, then, that the Connemara be judged to maintain the unique characteristics and qualities which make the breed what it is. The judge should recognize the influence of the Connemara's pony heritage, while giving balanced consideration to the effects of larger size on overall conformation.

The Connemara breed characteristics and qualities should be considered foremost, and judging should be to maintain the breed standards. Judging of Connemaras should not be influenced by the features of any other breed. With this general description, the following are standards for judging the American Connemara.

**TEMPERAMENT** - Mannerly and manageable, kind, responsive, possessing good sense and basic intelligence.

**TYPE** - Rugged and sturdy; body compact, deep through the heart, with well-sprung rib cage and broad chest.

**ACTION** - Straight and true both front and rear, with free movement in the shoulders; Connemaras should move underneath themselves, and should be sure-footed, athletic, and clever, covering a lot of ground.

**HEAD** - Kind eye, head well shaped and balanced in proportion to the rest of the body; neck of good length and definition, meeting the shoulder smoothly.

**SHOULders** - Long, well laid back, and with good slope.

**BACK** - Strong and muscular; some length of back is normal in Connemaras, especially in mares.

**HINDQUARTERS** - Well rounded and deep, with good length from the point of the hip through the haunch; should balance the shoulders.

**BONE** - Clean, hard, flat, forearms and gaskins long and muscular, cannons short and very dense.

**JOINTS** - Large and well defined.

**FEET** - Hard, strong.
The Breed Standards

- Connemaras in North America range in size from 13 to over 15 hands.
- Temperament is mannerly, manageable, kind, responsive, possessing good sense and basic intelligence.
- The Connemara “type” includes features such as rugged and sturdy characteristics, a compact body that is deep through the heart girth, a well sprung rib cage, and a broad chest.
• Movement should be straight and true, both front and rear with free movement in the shoulders.
• Connemaras should move underneath themselves, and be surefooted
• Their movement should be athletic, and they should cover a lot of ground
Connemara Heads

- Kind eye
- Head should be well shaped and balanced in proportion to the rest of the body
- A clean throat latch with a neck of good length and definition, which should meet the shoulder smoothly
Shoulders

- Shoulders should be long, with good slope, and the withers should be well laid-back.
- Look for a Connemara with a high point of shoulder with a free elbow, which gives a horse a greater range of motion.
Backs and Hindquarters

- The back should be strong and muscular
- Some length of back is permissible, especially in Connemara mares
- Hindquarters should be well rounded and deep with good length from the point of the hip to the point of the buttocks
- The hindquarters should be in balance with the forehand/front of the Connemara.
Bone, Joints, Feet

- Clean hard, flat bone, proportionately substantial: forearms and gaskins long and muscular, cannons short and very dense
- Joints – large and well defined
- Feet – hard and strong

Illustration of the skeletal system

Look for short cannon bones, and “shield” shaped knees.

A good set of forelegs are not tied in behind the knees
Considering General Impressions

- When you are judging Connemaras, it is important to consider type and conformation in the overall impression of each pony. In this slide, the ponies on the left give a better overall impression due to the combination of type and conformation.
The Connemara on the right has a winning combination of type and correct conformation. Both ponies display type – but one is a better example.

This pony lacks overall balance, as well as correct limbs and substance. This pony is well balanced front to back, and top to bottom, with correct limbs.
The key phrases in the standard for movement are: straight and true, free movers who cover a lot of ground.

All of these examples are good movers – the Connemara should not display excessive knee action, but is expected to be a ground covering, flatter mover. The breed is not a short, choppy mover. On the other hand, extravagance is not expected in their movement, but correctness is highly regarded.
COLOR

- Connemara colors include grey, bay, brown, and buckskin (dun), with some roans and an occasional black, chestnut, or palomino.
- Piebalds and skewbalds are not acceptable for registration as purebreds but are eligible for halfbred registration.
- Blue-eyed cream mares and geldings may be permanently registered, but blue-eyed cream stallions are not allowed.
Be Careful Not to Fall in Love With a Color!

• We all have favorite colors, but color is never as important as conformation and type.
• It is rare to see Connemaras with excessive white markings. There is no “official” limit on white markings. Tall stockings, blaze faces, and four white socks are unusual.
Gene Conformation Pointers

The Forelimb

Parallel Shoulder-Rostral Angle
Ideal Conformation

Ideal General Lateral Profile

“Standing-Under” Lateral Fault

“Camped-Out” Lateral Fault

Ideal General Cranial Profile

Base Narrow Cranial Fault

Base Wide Cranial Fault

Base Narrow: “Toe-In”

Base Narrow: “Toe-Out”

Base Wide: “Toe-In”

Base Wide: “Toe-Out”

“Paddling”

“Piebling”

Area of Stress

Area of Stress
Becoming a Licensed USEF Connemara “r” Judge

REQUIREMENTS

• Applicant must be a Senior USEF member and 21 years of age or older.
• Must Learner Judge Connemara division for a least 2 USEF licensed competitions – under two separate USEF Connemara judges.
• Attend a USEF Connemara Judges’ Clinic and achieve an 85% or better on examination
• Learner Judging in Opportunity or Exhibition classes does not count toward licensing requirements
• Requirements must be fulfilled within a 5 year period preceding application
• Registered and Recorded Connemara judges must attend a Federation judges’ clinic at least once every five years and pass an examination with a score of 85% or better to retain their license.
• A Connemara judge must officiate at least one Federation licensed Connemara division every five years or his/her license will not be automatically renewed.
• No applicant will be considered for promotion unless he has judged at least two Federation licensed Connemara divisions during the past five years.
Learner Judging

• Applicant must apply on the official form provided for a Learner Judge card for EACH individual competition and include the required fee.
• Only 1 Learner Judge allowed in the ring at any one time.
• Must have permission to Learner Judge from the competition manager and official ~ competition manager must sign application.
• The Connemara Judge must complete and mail or fax the Evaluation of the Learner Judge to USEF
• Learner Judge Card Application must be received by USEF at least 14 days prior to the competition
• Approval will be emailed by USEF to the applicant prior to the start of competition along with the evaluation form.
Applying for the License

• Application must be made on the Judge’s Enrollment Application form (online – www.usef.org), accompanied by the required non-refundable fee and list of references.

• Before the application will be considered, 10 evaluation forms must be returned from references.

• Five of those evaluation forms must be recommendations received from USEF licensed officials and/or current USEF Connemara Committee member.
Quick Tips on Being An Effective Judge

- Know USEF rules, class specifications and breed standards.
- Remain objective and professional (attire included) and above all ethical.
- Maintain accurate records and establish a method of scoring that works best for you.
- Communicate with show management about each class and the numbers expected.
- Pay attention to details, horses should win based on correct performance and quality.
- Do NOT use your cell phone, laptop, tablet, or other electronic device and do no smoke while judging, even between classes.
- Learn from experience – Learner judge, have a mentor, as well as your own horse experience.
- Always put the safety of the horse and rider first – Do NOT be afraid to excuse a horse or rider.
- Ask Questions! Be sure to communicate with management about your arrangements before you arrive at the show grounds.
Prior to the Show

- Ask the correct questions when being hired for a competition!
- Date and location of the show
- Type/number of classes to be offered (number of days/number of sessions/time sessions start)
- Show affiliations (USEF, Local Associations, Breed or Discipline Organizations, Etc.)
- Necessary credentials to judge: USEF ‘R’ or ‘r’
- Will this be a Single Judge or Multi-Judge System?
- Will the show be an indoor show or outside in an arena?
- What is the proper attire required?
- What is the fee to be paid to the judge? Who will cover expenses such as airfare/travel, hotel, meals, taxi or car rental, etc?
- Nearest airport to show location and transportation after you arrive.
- Establish who purchases the airplane ticket (you or the show?)
- Request a written contract to protect your interests.
- Establish a date of your availability (how long you will hold the date) before you get the contract.
- When you receive the contract – sign immediately and return
- Request a Prize List and get the name/address of the contact person for the show.
Showing Procedures

• Must be serviceably sound
• May be shown as native ponies or as appropriate to their performance section.

• Braiding and Shoeing are optional
• Connemaras are not to stand in a stretched position
• May not be shown with excessively long toe
• Adults may show ponies unless the class specifications state otherwise
• Stallions may be shown in all performance classes.
• Ladies and children may show stallions unless the prize list stipulates otherwise.
More Showing Procedures ---

• If a class states "purebred only", no halfbred may enter that class.
• A separate class may be offered for halfbreds
• In-hand classes must be held separately for purebred and halfbred Connemaras and classes may not be combined.
• Performance classes must be divided into purebred and halfbred Connemara if there are four or more purebred entries and four or more halfbred entries.
Breeding And In-hand Classes

• CO 104 JUDGING IN-HAND CLASSES
Entries are to be judged on the breed standard as described in CO 102.

Emphasis is placed on breed type, conformation, substance, quality, temperament, and way of going. Transmissible weaknesses and/or unsoundness are to be counted strongly against breeding stock.

• CO 105 SHOWING IN-HAND

To be shown in-hand at walk and trot on the line
Only one attendant per animal allowed in the ring
May be shown in a halter or bridle
Whips not to exceed 48” may be carried
CO107

- Championship and reserve awarded to horses that have placed first or second in qualifying In-Hand class.
- Championship will be awarded to one of the horses which has placed first in a qualifying class.
- The horse which placed second (in the qualifying class) to the horse that won the Championship shall compete with the remaining first place winners for the Reserve Championship.
- Should any first or second place winners in a qualifying class not compete for the Championship, or be disqualified, the horse receiving the next highest ribbon in the qualifying class shall have the option of moving up for the Championship and Reserve only.
Performance Classes
CO 108 HUNTER SECTION

• The rules of the Open Hunter Division (chapter HU) shall apply to all Connemara and Halfbred Connemara hunter classes except
  
• Breed type shall be considered in Conformation classes for Purebreds
• Stallions may be shown in all performance classes (including Ladies and Children classes) unless the prize list stipulates otherwise.
• Adults may show ponies unless class specs state otherwise
• Braiding is optional
• Hunter Hack and Bridle Path Hack are rated classes
• Connemara Green Working Hunter classes are open to any horse in its first or second year of showing which has not shown over fences 2'3” or higher.
• Green horses may not cross enter into Regular Hunter classes. Both Green and Regular Hunters may enter Bridle Path Hack and/or Hunter Hack classes
Common Faults – Hunters over Fences

HU136
Swapping leads before jumps-
  Relaxed casual swap the last stride is not a major mistake
  Severe swap early and diving into a corner could be a major mistake
  Changing leads in a line is a serious mistake
Rubs -
  Light rub in an otherwise good round is not a major mistake
  Hard rub/rail down is a major fault, distance mistakes are a factor
Pace – even pace is ideal
  Extreme speed should be penalized, uneven pace is a fault,
  significant pace changes constitute a major overall fault.
Flying Change – should be relaxed and invisible
  Late changes are a fault, but a step or 2 not considered major
  Cross cantering a turn or in the line is a major mistake
  Counter cantering a turn is a major mistake
Good jumping style is the FIRST priority and should be REWARDED!
The rules of the Jumper Division (Chapter JP) shall apply to all Connemara and Halfbred Connemara jumper classes except:

- Adults may show ponies unless class specs state otherwise
- Stallions may be shown unless prize list states otherwise
- It is recommended to avoid over emphasis of speed jump-offs, that TABLE IV (JP 146) be followed in the Connemara jumper classes.
- Scored on faults, but all ties are broken on the basis of Optimum Time
CO 110 CONNEMARA TRAIL SECTION

• English or Western equipment – May be split between Purebred and Halfbred, Junior/Adult to ride, or at the discretion of the competition management.
• To be shown over and through obstacles
• To be judged on performance 100%
CO 111 DRIVING SECTION

The rules of the Carriage Pleasure Driving Division (Chapter CP) shall apply to all Connemara and Halfbred Connemara driving classes except that stallions may be shown in all classes unless the prize list stipulates otherwise.
CO112 DRESSAGE SECTION

• The rules of the Dressage Division (chapter DR) shall apply to all Connemara and Halfbred Connemara dressage classes
• Adults may show ponies in a Connemara class unless the class specifications state otherwise.
• A licensed Dressage judge must judge Connemara Dressage Classes GR1004.12
A Licensed Competition is not limited to classes listed in the Rule Book. If a special class if offered which is not included in the Rule Book, the prize list must furnish detailed specifications (See GR902.2)

- Costume Class
- Family Class
- Gymkhana Classes
- Leadline Class
- Driven Dressage
- Combined Driving
- Pleasure – English or Western
In the End....

Judging is never easy. Ultimately it is your opinion. An educated opinion is what we hope our Connemara judges bring to the ring.