

Point-to-Point Judging

A Brief Outline by
BHA Team Principal Judge
Nick Bostock

Three main tasks for Judging Horse Racing

- 1) Identification
- 2) Judgement
- 3) Evidence



Identification

Prior to the race the Judge must prepare a colours book using the jockeys' silks to identify each horse.

To do this they must list the numbers of the runners in the race and then give a colour code to each runner.

Ideally each code wants to be no more than three or four letters or a symbol so that it is quick & easy to write down at the end of the race.

The codes can be the predominant colour that you are going to see at a distance, or a principal pattern where you have two equal lots of colour.

For known sets of colours you can identify them by the Owner's name, but ideally you still want to be able to abbreviate it to a few letters.

Where two or more sets of colours have the same predominant colour you then need to sub-divide them with what you are going to see as a predominant feature.

This is where you would use body pattern symbols such as a ★ for a star or a □ for a hollow box or you could even see sleeve patterns as being a good identifying feature and then you could use such as **SS** for striped sleeves.

It is always useful to mark down any Grey horses from the racecard in a race as these will also stand out to you.

Then go to the Paddock and mark down any major features that may also assist in identification at a distance including horses with sheepskin nosebands and any with white faces especially running down onto their noses.

Colour Codes and abbreviations

Principal Colours

White	W
Beige	Be
Grey	Gy
Yellow	Y
Gold	Go
Orange	Or
Light Green (Lime)	L
Emerald Green (Green)	Gn
Dark Green (Bottle)	Bo
Pink	Pk
Cerise	Ce
Red	R
Maroon	Mn
Terracotta	Cot
Mauve	Mv
Purple	Pu
Light Blue (Sky)	Sk
Royal Blue (Blue)	Bl
Dark Blue (Navy)	N
Brown	Bn
Black	Bk

Principal Patterns

Halves	½
Quarters	¼
Diabolo	×
Hoops	≡
Stripes	
Chevrons	
Diamonds	
Checks	

Body Patterns

Seams	Sms
Epaulets	Eps
Stripe (Strip)	
Braces	Bra
Hoop (Band)	==
Sash	
Cross Belts (Belts)	
Cross of Lorraine (Cross)	
Spots	Dts
Stars	✱
Diamond	◇
Star (Sun)	☆

Colour Codes and abbreviations Cont.

Aquamarine	Aq	Disc	○
Turquoise	Tq	Inverted Triangle	▽
Silver	Sil	Large Spots	Dice
<u>Colour Combinations</u>		Triple Diamond	Trip
Light Blue & White Ice		Hollow Box	□
Red & White	Raw	<u>Arm Patterns</u>	
White & Yellow	Way	Armlets	A
Red & Yellow	Fire	Hoops on Sleeves	Hos
Blue & White (Everton)	Ev	Striped Sleeves	SS
Pink & Green/Grey	Pig	Chevrons on Sleeves	Cos
Purple & Pink	Pup	Checked Sleeves	Chesl
Blue & Green	Sea	Spots on Sleeves	Sos
Black & Blue	Bruise	Diamonds on Sleeves	Dis
Yellow & Black	Yak		

Judgement

The Judges Stand needs to be on a prolongation of the winning line approximately 20 yards back from the nearside of the course.

The Judge needs to position himself and the tripod and i-pad so that the two winning posts line up on each side of the course and then the leading edge of the posts is the point of Judgement.

It is at this point that they will decide the outcome of each race, bearing in mind that the smallest Official Distance between horses in a Point-to-Point is a Short Head. Otherwise, a Dead Heat.

Prior to Racing commencing the Judge wants to stride back from the winning post, towards the last fence, approximately 15 yards (5 lengths) 30 yards (10 lengths) etc. to have a point of reference for distances.

Smaller distances are easier to Judge as the longer ones can be foreshortened as you are close to the action and at a bad angle to fully see them so a few reference points may help.

Shorter distances can also be checked on the i-pad before announcing them. Once you get to 30 lengths, anything greater can be termed as a Distance for Point-to-Points.

As you watch the race use your colour codes to identify all the runners. It is useful to cross out in you book horses that fall, unseat, etc. or pull up and are out of the race.

As they approach the last fence identify those that are going to be filling at least the first four positions, watching them jump and make their way towards the finish.

Then focus directly on the posts and identify the first four horses as they hit the line with an estimation of the distance between 1st & 2nd and 2nd & 3rd.

Someone (The Judges Assistant?) needs to have activated the i-pad to record the horses crossing the line in slow motion. This needs doing after the last fence but no later than 100 yards from the line.

The Judges Assistant should also write down the first four horses, so that the two of you can compare. It is best if they also write down the distances as the Judge shouts them out.

Then after you have captured really the first five or six finishers on the i-pad turn it off record and compare notes with one another.

Evidence

Now for the first time Point-to-Point Judges have the luxury that we have Under Rules of being able to have a second look, by replaying the slow-motion recording on the i-pad.

I would suggest using it to check that there are no obvious identification errors unless both Judge and Assistant are experienced and confident and on comparing notes have the same first four home.

It is going to be very helpful in determining the shorter distances for you especially up to four lengths or so. After that it will still be more subjective, and your points of reference may be of help.

In the case of a tight finish where distances are less than $\frac{1}{2}$ length or especially if horses are wide apart on the track then consult the i-pad for your evidence.

You can slow it right down so that you can effectively see it frame by frame to help you confirm your result and look for head or short head verdicts.

Because you will have no mirror image and be at a relatively flat angle horses may be obscuring each other. In such cases you will have to make a Judgement based on what you can see or call a Dead Heat.

Once you are satisfied with your Result, radio it through to the Announcer for them to Announce it as a **PROVISIONAL RESULT**. All results are Provisional until the Clerk of Scales has Weighed In at least the first four, and the Stewards are satisfied with the Race. They will then signal for the WEIGHED IN to be called.

In the event of any dispute over the Judges Result, The evidence of the i-pad can be used by the Stewards who will first inquire if someone raises an Objection.

Should the evidence prove categorically that a wrong result has been given the Rules now state that the matter can be referred to the BHA and the result can be changed retrospectively, so that the Record of the Race is correct .

Judging

- Finally, the Role of the Judge is a very important one and is absolutely vital to the functioning of any Race Meeting. Without the right Result there is really no point in having had a race.
- I hope that these notes may be of some assistance to you and that you will feel better supported by having some form of back-up through the i-pad, and through the support of the PPA.
- Should any of you want to have a day Under Rules it can be arranged for you to be with a Professional Judge, however it is very different to Pointing.
- My telephone number is 07771 376380 or email nbostock@britishhorseracing.com should you want any support.

Good Luck with the Season Ahead