

# The Basics of the JTP (JUDGES TRAINING PROGRAM)

M. TERSTEGGE, HMO MID-CAL REGION

Seasonal Sessions

Rally Training

HM Retreat

## Seasonal Sessions

The seasonal sessions begin with the Spring JTP. I schedule this after the Annual Meeting, when I usually find out any changes in rules, and before any rallies. The Fall JTP is scheduled about three weeks after kids return to school. When my region's rally schedule is not too heavy, I try to schedule a Summer JTP, preferably at a regional activity, such as D or C Camp.

The sessions are run from 9am to 12 noon, with lunch following. There is no charge for the session or the lunch. Generally, we have about a dozen or so attendees, and lunch is not very expensive to put on. It is an item that I have listed in my Regional HM Program Budget, which is reviewed by the Regional Council & DCs each year at our Regional Meeting.

The JTP should be limited in number of attendees in order to make sure that everyone hears, sees, and is able to participate in what is going on. I limit attendance to 20 attendees, and have at least 3 instructors, including myself.

The format of the sessions is to be as hands-on as possible, with emphasis on the jobs that each level of judges will be expected to do. A typical agenda includes:

1. **Introductions** (15 min) Try to make it fun!
2. **Rule Changes/review** (15 min) Go into more depth in the small groups.
3. **Character Builders** (30 min) This is time I use to talk about conflict resolution, attitude, etc. When I can, I try to have someone (great to use a PC adult) who is a counselor come to work with us.
4. **Small Groups** (2 hours)
  - a. Tier 1 (people who've never been to a JTP before)
    - i. Qualities of an HMJ/What to expect at rally/What your job is at rally
    - ii. Rally Schedule
    - iii. Barns
    - iv. 1<sup>st</sup> Checks
    - v. Required Equipment (most important things here are the Equine 1<sup>st</sup> Aid kit and the grooming kit)

- b. Tier 2 (2<sup>nd</sup> time attendees)
  - i. Formal Inspections
  - ii. Safety Checks
  - iii. Turn-Backs
  - iv. Self Evals/Competitor Evals/HMO Eval/Chief Eval
- c. Tier 3 (3<sup>rd</sup> time or more attendees)
  - i. Running a briefing
  - ii. Bandaging or Longeing
  - iii. Goals
  - iv. Provisional Program
  - v. Teaching

5. **Lunch** (30 min to 1 hr) Time for bonding & recruiting for specific rallies.

## **Rally Training** *(JTP Flow Chart has detailed explanation of ratings)*

Rally Training is conducted by peer judges. We operate on the “see one, do one, teach one” model. New Trainees (NT) work with judges who are J1 or higher at first. Usually, by the end of the first day, NTs are knowledgeable & confident enough to pair up with another NT and do Barns. I keep tabs on who receives what training, who gives the training, and coordinate the education teams with the Chief’s approval. All of the chiefs I have hired so far have been very willing to work with our system of education. I give the incoming chief a heads up on who the people on the team are, and where I suggest that they work. I mention where a person’s strengths & weaknesses are, and what things he/she would most like to learn if there is extra time during rally for more instruction. At the end of the rally I try to meet with each one of the NTs to find out how they feel about the way things went.

I arrange with the rally organizer to allow me to have a few minutes of rally time right before the competitors receive their awards. I use the time to award judge certificates & recognition. It increases visibility of the HM Team in a positive way to the competitors, as well as encouraging the HM Team. I award certificates to all NTs, graduating them to J1 status after their first rally, as long as they’ve attended at JTP session. It’s kind of like a D1 rating, where it’s almost impossible to fail. The J2 promotion is based on JTP attendance, work at rally, and rally attendance. It is relatively simple to achieve with a reasonable amount of dedication.

The J3, however, is where I up the ante. In order to be promoted to J3, or fully qualified AHMJ, the person not only has to attend a certain amount of JTPs and rallies, but must also demonstrate good leadership, CSAL (commonsenseandlogic), excellent teamwork, at least C3 level skills in Bandaging & Longeing, be proficient in Formals at all levels, and Safeties at all levels. With Formals and Safeties, the person need not be an expert in biting or saddlery, but must understand the basic actions of bits & saddles, along with martingales, etc., and know where to look for answers to any questions the

competitors may have. By the time a person achieves this rank, they are usually encouraged by me to enter the National Provisional Chief Program.

## **HM Retreat**

The HM Retreat is designed as a reward for the dedicated individuals who make HM happen on a regional level. Everyone who either serves on the HM Team at rally, or teaches at a JTP, Barn Faire, or Regional Clinic is issued an invitation. The retreat is meant to be a low-key time of fellowship, eating, and hopefully firing up enthusiasm for the next season of HM activities. I hold the retreat at a friend's ranch which has plenty of room for camping, a river near by for going tubing, and horses I can use for having a vaulting session. At present, I'm not having attendees bring their own horses, but in future, I would like to be able to have us all go on a trail ride as part of our activities.

The retreat runs from 10am on Saturday to noon on Sunday. All meals are provided. The retreat is another line item on my Regional HM Program Budget. There is no cost for this retreat. I figure that the HM Team has more than earned it!

The retreat is still a new thing, with plenty of ways to develop. The main thing is to use it to show your (and the Region's) appreciation for all the hard work of the HM Team. It is so much easier to keep your team going when they know how much they are needed and appreciated. The more unified they feel as a team, the better spokesmen they are for HM, the more they'll share with the local clubs, and the more new recruits they'll bring in.

## **Final Remarks**

Not everyone wants to be, or is suited to be, a J3 or a Chief. It is important to let your team know that it is okay to remain a J2. They can always specialize in a certain area of HM, and become a J2+, or they can aspire to simply be the best J2s the region has ever seen. It is important to be sensitive to the needs and desires of each HM Team member, in order to encourage when it is needed, but not push. Your team members will be a lot more willing to stay involved when they feel they can trust you not to over-face them.

Encourage your team members to teach dismounted at their local clubs. One of the most important duties of the JTP is to provide a way for sound education to make it back to the club.