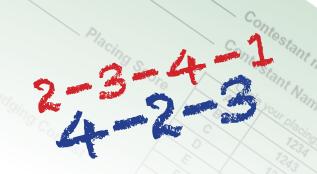**TEXAS A&M**
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UNDERSTANDING "CUTS" IN A 4-H JUDGING EVENT

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Understanding and determining the placings scores for a judging contest can sometimes be a complicated and confusing task, especially for the inexperienced judge or volunteer. However, it is important to know how scores are determined using the "placings" and "cuts" in order to be able to gauge your accomplishments in the contest.

Definition of terms:

- *Official Placings, or placings:* the ranking of the class by either an individual or committee of what is correct on the day of the contest. Each class has a maximum value number of 50 points available.
- *Cuts:* the numerical value assigned to the degree of difficulty within the class. A cut is placed between each item/object within a pair. Low cuts (1 to 2 points) indicate a higher degree of difficulty between the pairs, cuts of 3 to 4 exhibit a moderately difficult to fairly straightforward decision, whereas, a high cut (4 to 5) represent a very easy decision between a pair. Each class has three cuts and cannot exceed fifteen (15) total points. If the cuts add up to 15, the middle cut cannot exceed 5 points. If the three cuts add up to 14, the maximum cut for the middle pair is 8 points, or else a negative score could be calculated.
- *Pair Switch:* a placing where two items/objects in the class are flipped from the official.
- *Double Pair Switch:* where both top and bottom pairs are switched with the official.
- *Simple Bust:* three items/objects in the class are out of the right position.

Judging Contest Dynamics
Understanding the dynamics of a judging contest is necessary in order for the 4-H member judging to not get confused and potentially mis-mark their score sheet. Here are some factors to remember when learning about a judging contest:
- There are twenty-four (24) possible placings for each class.
- Each class has three pairs, a top pair, middle pair, and bottom pair.

Top Pair   *Bottom Pair*
1 - 2 - 3 - 4
Middle Pair

- In addition to the three pairs, the class also has three cuts: a top, middle, and bottom cut.
- The official placings are done subjectively, but typically, the ranking officials/committee all share similar fundamental evaluation principles.
- Unless other wise noted, all classes are judged left to right. The left item/object being #1 in the class and the far right being #4 in the class.
- If you are judging a class of live animals in a pen, the animals will have some form of markings to indicate their number.

Calculating A Class Score
To properly learn how to calculate the score, you will need to use an organized system. Below is an example of one way of calculating scores using officials and cuts.

Example of Class Placings and Cuts

Official Placing	4 - 3 - 2 - 1
Cuts	2 - 5 - 3
Sample Placing	4 - 2 - 3 - 1

Ask yourself this:

The example placed 4 over 2	Agree	Deduct 0
The example placed 4 over 3	Agree	Deduct 0
The example placed 4 over 1	Agree	Deduct 0
The example placed 2 over 3	Disagree	Deduct 5
The example placed 2 over 1	Agree	Deduct 0
The example placed 3 over 1	Agree	Deduct 0

For this example, the total deduction is five (5) points out of 50, so the placing receives **45 points as a score**.

The previous class demonstrates a pair switch (middle pair) which makes the score easy to calculate. However, when the placing differs greatly from the official, the scoring is more complicated.

The next example demonstrates a "simple bust." Typically, it is where the judge placed either the first or last item/object in a class correctly, but misplaced the other three items/objects in relation to the official placing.

Example of a Simple Bust in Class Placings and Cuts

Official Placing	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	
Cuts	4 - 2 - 3	
Sample Placing	1 - 4 - 3 - 2	

Ask yourself this:

The example placed 1 over 4	Agree	Deduct 0
The example placed 1 over 3	Agree	Deduct 0
The example placed 1 over 2	Agree	Deduct 0
The example placed 4 over 3	Disagree	Deduct 3
The example placed 4 over 2	Disagree	Deduct 5
The example placed 3 over 2	Disagree	Deduct 2

For this example, the total deduction is ten (10) points out of 50, so the placing receives **40 points as a score**.

A complete "bust" of class occurs when the 4-H members placings and that of the official are in substantial disagreement.

Example Bust in Class Placings and Cuts

Official Placing	2 - 3 - 1 - 4	
Cuts	4 - 2 - 3	
Sample Placing	4 - 1 - 3 - 2	

Ask yourself this:

The example placed 4 over 1	Disagree	Deduct 3
The example placed 4 over 3	Disagree	Deduct 5
The example placed 4 over 2	Disagree	Deduct 9
The example placed 1 over 3	Disagree	Deduct 2
The example placed 1 over 2	Disagree	Deduct 6
The example placed 3 over 2	Disagree	Deduct 4

For this example, the total deduction is twenty-nine (29) points out of 50, so the placing receives **21 points as a score**.

Other Resources

There are many other resources which can be used to calculate placing scores. Many of these are web based calculators which allows the user to type in the placings and cuts, and it will calculate the class score.

Additionally, there is smart phone application developed by the Learning Games Lab at New Mexico State University. This free app can be downloaded from the Apple App Store. The name of the app is: e-judging.

Note: any type of electronic devices are not allowed in the contest area. Please make sure that all class calculation using a electronic device is done after the completion of the contest and the participants score sheet has been turned in!