

FROM THE CENTER OF THE RING

OCTOBER 28, 2011

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The Education and Clinic Committee, along with the Judges and Stewards Committee, in an effort to enhance our awareness of horses, general knowledge of our wonderful breed, and horses in general, including everything related to judging and stewarding, present this newsletter for your consideration. We cordially invite all PFHA Officials to submit and share your opinions, comments, articles, and any information that may benefit our Association. This, in our opinion, is the forum to enhance our general knowledge, by sharing information.

FROM DR. JOSE M. LARACUENTE CHAIR, PFHA EDUCATION AND CLINIC COMMITTEE



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REMINDERS FOR JUDGES AND STEWARDS

2012 ANNUAL PFHA JUDGES AND STEWARDS

The 2012 PFHA Annual Clinic for Judges and Stewards is scheduled for February 17-19, 2012 in Gainesville/Micanopy, Florida. The Host Hotel will be the Hilton University of Florida Conference Center in Gainesville, Florida. The hotel is located at 1714 S.W. 34th Street, Gainesville, Florida. Phone 352-

371-3600. The name of the group when making reservations is Paso Fino Horse Association/Judges and Stewards Conference. You may make your reservations after November 6, 2011. The Hotel provides shuttle transportation to and from the Gainesville Airport. The room rate is \$109.00 + tax per night. The cutoff date

for group rate is January 18, 2012. The clinic fee is \$200.00 (Judges), \$150.00 (Stewards) and \$50.00/day (Auditors) which includes breaks and lunch for Friday and Saturday. Sunday, February 19 we will conduct the practical aspect of the clinic at Besilu Collection Farm in Micanopy, Florida.



2012 MANDATORY CLINIC ATTENDANCE

The following PFHA Officials have to attend the 2012 PFHA Clinic. If you have any doubts, please contact the Judges and Stewards Committee Chair.

Renewal Judges:

Rex Bradley
 Mike Cumming
 Katherine Earheart
 Dr. Margaret Fahringer
 Edith Gandy
 Jaime Gascon
 Jill M. Graff
 Shaw Laney
 Ed Smith
 Robbyn Young

Renewal Stewards:

Phyllis Gaudreau
 Robert A. Martin
 Phyllis A. Ryan

Applicant Judges : (First Clinic)

Jose M. Colon
Applicant Judges: (Second Clinic) pending completion of second clinic requirements
 Dr. Jorge Barquet
 Gerardo Estevez
 Diego Gonzalez
 Benjamin Phillips
 Debbie Rash
 Debbie Wolcowicz

Applicant Stewards: (Second Clinic)

Adele Maurer

**2012 PFHA
 Annual Clinic for
 Judges and
 Stewards is
 scheduled for
 February 17-19,
 2012 in
 Gainesville, FL**



WHAT SHOULD WE DO AS OFFICIALS WHEN HARASSED OR THREATENED BY EXHIBITORS OR OTHERS? BY JOSE M. LARACUENTE

There have been and always will be people who will not or do not want to accept the decisions of the officials in any sport. These incidents have been getting worse at our beloved Paso Fino Shows. As a matter of fact from May to July 2011 there were three incidents in which exhibitors acted in an irrational manner accusing the judges of being bought, verbally abused and in one case even accusing the steward. The attack and dissatisfaction continued on face book. There is also an incident in a fellow CONFEPASO country in which a representative of a farm actually insulted the Judges, took a very disrespectful and aggressive posture and had a concealed weapon in her purse. In that particular case the woman was arrested due to proper and prompt response by the judges and technical delegate. There was also an incident in a show in Puerto Rico where shots were fired. Although, it is my understanding that this incident was not because of the judging, it still causes concerns for our officials.

Because of my concerns, I did a study of what are the legal ramifications or legal procedures in cases of physical or verbal abuse to our officials. Interestingly, there is a group named NASO (National Association of Sports Officials) that in general supplied me with the answer. For your information, there are twenty-five (25) states and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico that have approved legislation to protect us from these unfortunate incidents. Those states are; Alabama, Arkansas, California, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho (resolution), Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Washington State (resolution), West Virginia and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Depending on the state and the severity of the case, a person found guilty may receive a penalty of a misdemeanor, a felony, a fine and/or imprisonment.

What can we do as officials? We have several options. If you feel you were physically attacked, you may file at the state level. If you feel, you were verbally



WHAT SHOULD WE DO AS OFFICIALS WHEN HARASSED OR THREATENED BY EXHIBITORS OR OTHERS?(CONT')

attacked and/or insulted; you may file a protest or formulate charges with the Paso Fino Horse Association or with the United States Equestrian Federation. Depending on the severity of the case, you may issue a Warning Card (USEF, GR 1037) or file charges (USEF, GR 604). A Warning Card is not meant to replace a charge. If the violation warrants a charge, that is what should be filed. If you decide to go the PFHA route you may file a complaint. If the complaint is upheld by the Hearing Committee, there is no appeal process. If there is disciplinary action by USEF, the action will be maintained by PFHA in conformity with existing USEF rule regarding such reciprocity. When a person or horse is sanctioned and CONFEPASO is notified, automatically the sanction will be honored by all country members. Keep in mind the different datelines for filing. A copy of the Warning Card must be given to the alleged offender at the competition and sent to the USEF with the Steward's Report. If charges under USEF are to be filed, they should be received by the steward or a member of the Show Committee within 48 hours of the alleged violation. On the other hand, complaints, which include protests or charges, have no datelined when filed with PFHA.

TEAMWORK BY DICK LOCKHART, PFHA SENIOR CERTIFIED STEWARD AND USEF REGISTERED STEWARD

Teamwork, a combination of two words which have distinct meanings in and of themselves. When placed together, they show forth what we should be about. Most of us understand that a Horse Show is not about us as Officials, but about the horse and the exhibitor. If the management team of the sponsoring group has done their job, they have put together a total TEAM of gracious Volunteers and Officials that are going to show forth a combined effort to make sure that each and every exhibitor, along with the spectators, has a good time and wants to come back the next time a show is available.

No matter the breed or discipline involved, three elements must be seen in order to call it a successful show. Three questions asked. (1) Did the exhibitor feel that their entry got looked at? Did the judge give them a fair look while in the arena? Did we spend too much time looking at our top candidates and dismiss the lower placements?

(2) Did the exhibitor have a good time with other exhibitors? Did we provide experiences that he or she will remember positively when planning next year's show scheduling? Simple things



TEAMWORK (CONT'D)

like attractive facilities, food service, restrooms, parking? These are all things that sometimes go over our heads but your exhibitors take note.

(3) The sponsoring regions or show groups must make money to afford to do this the next year or for the next show. A sponsoring group must walk a fine line and charge enough to make expenses for the next event and meet their needs. If they gouge folks, they will find somewhere else to spend their time and money. Leave something on the table.

The above comes mostly under the Show Manager's responsibility. The judge must always be seen as a professional and not be fraternizing or spending time with exhibitors. The judge and steward should pretty well be joined at the hip before and during a competition for the world to see. Remember that a spectator does not know that you are talking about a ballgame to your friend that is not even showing. They only see you in discussion with someone on your way to the lunch area. We must be seen as above reproach. Our job is to be there to officiate. As officials, we give up some of our visiting opportunities.

Have we done our contacting in advance? Both with Show Management and fellow officials? Are our travelling documents in order? Schedules for pickup or car rental? With today's electronic convenience, we should all be on the same page. Have we had discussion with our joint judges as to how we are ALL going to treat potential eliminations in the ring? Has management requested that you utilize the microphone? Do not pick it up without their approval. Remember, only positive remarks. We are invited to a competition to officiate. We are not entertainment.

As more experienced officials, we have a responsibility to the newly certified officials to pass along any ideas and thoughts that have been positive in our position as show officials. Often there are times when our roles are switched as managers, judges, stewards, ringmasters, gatekeepers, etc. We need to remember that once we have accepted the cloak of Officials, we are being appraised and appraised. Congratulations, you are part of a great team!



“The judge and steward should pretty well be joined at the hip ..”



WARNING CARD GUIDELINES



The purpose of this memo is to provide licensed officials and competition management with guidelines to help determine the appropriate issuance of a Warning Card.

First and foremost, a Warning Card is not meant to replace a charge. If a rule violation warranted a charge prior to Warning Cards going into effect, the same rule

violation is still subject to a charge being filed by the steward, technical delegate, or member of competition management.

Second, a Warning Card is not meant to replace a steward's or technical delegate's responsibility to point out in a diplomatic manner any instance where Federation rules are not enforced. Personal interaction with the alleged rule offender comes first.

Determination of Use

Warning Cards are meant for offenses which are of a less serious nature. Consider whether or not, if found guilty, the offender would be likely to be disqualified from the competition, or receive other penalties after a hearing. If the answer is yes, then the offense is not minor and warrants a charge.

While not limited to the following, a Warning Card could be considered for the following circumstances. This would normally be after the alleged offender has been personally spoken to by the steward or technical delegate but repeats the violation:

- Poor sportsmanship: losing temper, being belligerent, using foul language, or acting in a rude manner towards officials, other competitors or to staff/management to a **lesser degree** not warranting a charge.
- Not following local rules of the competition such as smoking, leash laws, manure disposal, use of golf carts.
- Excessive schooling that is not to the point of being considered abuse; shaking of whips or other objects outside or inside the ring; electronic communication violations.
- **Minor** instances of illegal equipment and whips in the schooling areas.



“Warning Cards are meant for offenses which are of a less serious nature.”



SUMMARY OF PENALTIES (PFHA RULE BOOK) BY JOSE M. LARACUENTE

- **Youth Classes:**
 - In most classes, entries will be **penalized** for bunching up or for not working on the rail.
 - Junior riders may be **excused** from a class if the rider's horse does not meet the requirements of the class.
- **Youth Horsemanship:**
 - Horses that do not perform the Paso Fino gait will be **excused** after lining up. (prior to testing)
 - Failure to complete the pattern in the correct sequence **will not disqualify the rider**, but must be placed accordingly.
- **Bellas Formas:**
 - Horses with a swayback or fallen crest will be **heavily penalized**. Horses with other transmissible faults will be **penalized**.
 - Horses that fail to demonstrate the Paso Fino gait will be **disqualified** from placement.
 - Horses are to be **penalized** if the handler if the handler uses hi/her hands below the horse's knee to position the hoof.
- **Classic Fino:**
 - Horses that are excessively restrained or held in gait shall be **penalized**.
 - Horses that fight the bit, flatten its ears or swishes the tail shall be **penalized**.
 - Horses that break gait on reverses, stops or starts shall be **penalized**. Exhibitors are not allowed to turn on the sounding board.
 - If they fall from the sounding board they shall be **penalized** for not tracking straight.
- **Paso Performance:**
 - Loss of cadence, form or smoothness due to excessive speed shall be **penalized**.
- **Paso Pleasure:**
 - Refusal to back **disqualifies** the horse from placement.
 - Loss of cadence, form or smoothness due to excessive speed shall be **penalized**.
 - Horses that fight the bit, flatten its ears or swishes the tail shall be **penalized**.
 - Any indication of bad manners shall be **heavily penalized**.
- **Paso Versatility:**
 - Failure to take the correct lead in the canter will be **penalized**.
 - One refusal to jump, **penalized**, by lowering the horse standing.
 - Two refusals will automatically **disqualify** the entry from competition.
 - Failure to properly execute the paso gait will automatically eliminate the horse. This should be done before the individual tests.
- **Paso Western Pleasure:**
 - Failure to take the correct lead in the lope shall be **penalized**.
 - If hands are changed or if two hands are used with a curb bit, the exhibitor shall be **penalized**.
 - Refusal to back **disqualifies** the horse from placing.
 - A fall in a Western Pleasure class will be cause for **elimination**.
- **Paso Trail:**
 - Horses not properly performing the gait required should be **penalized** in the same manner as not completing the obstacle.



SUMMARY OF PENALTIES (CONT'D)

- Failure to follow the prescribed obstacles, or course of travel through the obstacles, will result in automatic **elimination**.
- Horses are to be **penalized** for any unnecessary delay while approaching the obstacles.
- **Paso Costume:**
- **Paso Country Pleasure:**
 - Extreme speed, loss of form, cadence or smoothness shall be **penalized**.
 - Horses indicating aggressiveness, over collection, or excessive animation shall be **severely penalized**.
- **Paso Pleasure Driving:**
 - Excessive speed that might tend to create a safety hazard may be **penalized** (judge's discretion).
- **Amateur Adult Equitation:**
 - Riders that are unable to control their mount will be **excused** for safety reasons.

In qualifying classes, if the horse is either excused or requested by the rider to be excused before the lineup, the horse will be **disqualified** and not permitted to enter the Championship class. If the horse is **excused** after the lineup, the horse may enter the Championship class.

In Bellas Formas classes, horses that are **excused** cannot enter the Championship class. Only the First and Second place may enter the Championship class.

In any class, horses may be **excused** for safety reasons.

Definitions:

Disqualification: To exclude a competitor or horse, for cause, from participation in a given class, division or competition. A competitor disqualified may not use this class as a qualifying class for a Championship.

Elimination: To exclude a competitor or horse, for cause, from judging consideration in a class. A competitor who is eliminated is ineligible to receive an award regardless of the number of competitors in the class.

Excused: To have a judge grant permission to, or request that a competitor leave the class. A competitor who is excused is ineligible to receive an award.

Shown and judged: To be considered shown and judged, a horse must perform all required gaits both ways of the ring in the original class and must remain in the ring until either eliminated or placed by the judge.

Falls: A rider is considered to have fallen when he is separated from his horse that has not fallen, in such a way as to necessitate remounting or vaulting into the saddle. A horse is considered to have fallen when the shoulder and haunch on the same side have touched the ground or an obstacle and the ground. If the fall is due to bad manners of the horse, the rider and the horse will be disqualified.

The judge(s) have the responsibility to enforce the General Class and Show Rules, and also rules relating to the soundness of horses at any show at which they are judging. The rules are to be enforced by any of the following means:

1. Requiring the violation to be corrected.
2. Excusing the horse and exhibitor from the class.
3. Prohibiting the horse and exhibitor from participating in the class.
4. Other appropriate action.

It is the purpose and intent of this rule to permit and further competition. Therefore, correction of violations should be permitted where practical and where correction may be done without undue delay of the show and without being unfair to other competitors.



ABUSE AND CRUELTY

BY FRED MORETTI, MEMBER OF THE J/S AND EDUCATION/CLINIC COMMITTEES.

The USEF and PFHA have rules for Cruelty and Abuse. You will find the general language is similar but the list of examples differ. The difference being the training techniques used by different Breeds / Disciplines.

Both Rule Books state "but are not limited to the listed acts"; thereby leaving the list open-ended.

At the 2010 J/S Clinic we presented a session on "how a judge may, through his/her placements, influence the direction of the breed," I don't believe enough emphasis was placed on the rest of the story, and that is: The primary responsibility of a judge is to contribute to the preservation of the breed standard and to discourage any tampering with the naturalness of the breed. Using cruel acts and equipment to acquire training results is tampering with the naturalness of the breed.

For this article, tail alterations are not being discussed.. The intent is to bring to the forefront attention to abrasion /sores and cruel training devises and procedures.

By definition, an abrasion is a wound caused by superficial damage to the skin, no deeper than the epidermis. It is less severe than a laceration, and bleeding, if present is minimal . Abrasion injuries most commonly occur when skin comes into moving contact with a rough surface, causing a grinding or rubbing away of the epidermis. Examples; using coarse nylon braiding on barbadas, or, concrete on the knee of a child who falls.

It is common for a steward to bring an abrasion to the attention of a judge and have him/her say "but it is not bleeding". The rulebook is very clear and stipulates, "it may or not be bleeding". I believe the reason some officials do not take appropriate action when seeing an abrasion is, they don't consider it cruel. The presence of a little external bleeding seems to make a difference in their action or reaction.

Many times we see an abrasion /sore covered up with hoof black or blue ointment. This attempt to camouflage the wound does not make it acceptable. In good conscience, I believe the attempt to cover it up should warrant more of a penalty.

As with most breeds/disciplines, many judges are also trainers, several may use objectionable training techniques and equipment. While we cannot legislate what goes on at one's stable or home, we do ask, when officiating you follow the rule for abrasions to its fullest intent. With your help we may some day eliminate this common abuse to our horses.

Very closely associated with abrasions is the unorthodox training equipment some Paso Fino Trainers chose to use. When checking equipment at the line up you never know what you will encounter. Not too many years ago our judges walked the line up without touching the equipment. Those days are long gone. Our judges and stewards attempt doing a good job looking at the equipment on every horse. Several years ago I coined a phrase that is very applicable to the tack checking issue of today, "some judges/stewards look but they don't see". Recently at a competition I noted an unusual piece of equipment below the chin of a horse about to enter the ring. Upon inspection I found it to be a four inch long piece of angle iron, a hole drilled on each end with a chain attached. This piece of steel was camouflaged with one wrap of electrical tape. I allowed the horse to enter the ring, three judges were officiating, the tack was checked and no one objected to the angle iron, need I say more?



“With your help we may some day eliminate this common abuse to our horses.”



ABUSE AND CRUELTY (CONT'D)

The rule book states " metal must be covered and not be considered cruel or inhumane and be sufficiently covered to ensure comfort to the animal". What ever happened to the sheep skin wrap requirement of years ago? (electrical tape is not a substitute)

Several Breeds /Disciplines require all applicant judges to receive a psychological test. I have always questioned its value. In its stead, I request each of you licensed officials to answer (to yourself) the following question.

If at a competition you see abrasions on your first place horse, would you still place it first?

If you see abrasions or sores, take the proper action and do something about it.

Together we can influence the breed training methods for the benefit of the breed.



JUDGING "IN THE RING" OR "OUT OF THE RING" BY ROBERT YUNITS, CHAIRMAN, PFHA JUDGES AND STEWARDS COMMITTEE

I am writing this controversial article because I feel it is needed. Sometimes we must ask ourselves why we judge. Is it for the love of the sport or are we masochistic? If there are 100 classes at the show then only 100 people think judging was excellent. If you take second in those hundred classes then some think that they should have first and others are very happy with the placement. If you take third you think the Judge is blind. So on and So on.

One of the areas I believe the horse industry needs is a policy that exhibitors or fellow Judges should not verbally complain ringside about the judging. We all know Judges in the ring have a bird's eye view.

Many of you are guilty of saying "the Judges should have judged it this way instead of that way."

How many of you are guilty of this and continued to judge ringside while having a conversation with a friend or a client?

How many of you were having a cocktail while deciding placements?

How many people have blamed the judging to keep a client happy and say it will be better next year?

Remember we are members of USEF/PFHA and if you feel that the judging was unfair you may fill out evaluations on any show official. Note: It is a violation to do any of the above as per rule page 27 section VII, A.2" in the PFHA rule book. "Committing any act or making a remark during a show considered offensive or made with intent to influence or cast aspersions on the judging." Remember that you must not have any of the above agendas before doing this. Most horse associations have a Judges and Stewards committee that can review officials at a horse

"Sometimes we must ask ourselves why we judge."



JUDGING “IN THE RING” OR “OUT OF THE RING” (CONT'D)

show, if evaluations dictate.

There are classes that mistakes are made, and the Judges and Stewards Committee initiates a review of these classes. I applaud the spectators or fellow judges that bring real problems to the committee. When anyone brings a problem to the committee is kept confidential. There are several ways that a problem can be rectified, we act accordingly. Sometimes we can only fix them for the next year.

Another reminder to spectators/officials: You may arrange a meeting with the judges after the show as long as you make an appointment and have the steward present. Wouldn't it be better to see what the judge thought, rather than deciding he/she was wrong in his/her placement? Also remember that a horse can break gait, blow up, or misbehave and if the judge does not see it then it does not matter. It is so easy to say that a horse just blew up and why did the judges keep that horse in the ring. How about the judge that gives a sixth place, and other judges give it first. After all they are in the same arena, but they can be on opposite ends and see differently.

The boards of directors of PFHA select your Grand National Show Judges at the board meetings. Remember, you, the membership pick the Judges. We have Judging clinics every year in February. You may come as an auditor or renew as a judge or a steward. Presently we are allowing Senior Certified Judges and Stewards to renew every five years. We are allowing Certified Judges and Stewards to renew every three years. A Rule change is in place to have Senior Certified Judges and Stewards renew every three years and Certified Judges and Stewards to renew every two years. Send your delegate to the meeting in January ready to take action and support continued education. We need continued education to keep our officials informed. The breed is changing at a rapid rate so stop complaining if you do not support the Judges and Stewards committee in this endeavor. When you know everything about Judging or Stewarding or being a spectator then it is time to give up your official cards or give up the sport.

Remember to read our rule book and understand that the Judges or Stewards are obligated to follow the rules. If they are not, then please fill out confidential evaluations. Some say that it is costly to come to these clinics. Remember being a Judge is a privilege not a right. Let's come together and fix these problems because this is about the Paso Fino Horse and the future of the development of our breed.



“We need continued education to keep our officials informed.”



PERFORMANCE VS. PLEASURE WHY THE DISPARITY? BY RICK MEYER

When I was asked to do an article for "From the Center of the Ring" the comments, the questions and several heated conversations about why do the judges continue to place Performance horses in Pleasure classes came to mind. I ask, "Why does this situation continue to happen year after year; Judge's clinic after clinic, show after show, etc.?"

I've always been a Problem/Solution thinker so ...

Let's try to think outside the box -

- Are the rules not crystal clear?
- Is the Performance horse the same as the Pleasure horse with different action and attitude?
- What if the judges were not forced by the rules to place the horses sequentially?
- Is the use of sounding board in Pleasure classes causing a need for quickness and less emphasis on the largo and flat walk?
- Are the judges forced to pin a Performance type horse in Pleasure classes?
- Should we go back to no "cross entering"? Forcing

the owners and trainers to make the decision of Performance or Pleasure - not the judge!

- Why do some of the Pleasure exhibitors feel that they are not judged fairly?
- Is it time to go to Divisional judging?
- If a Paso Fino show horse isn't Fino or Performance; then it must be Pleasure?

If a Classic Fino horse does not exhibit the Classic Fino gait during the class, the horse is excused. Why then does a Judge not excuse a performance horse out of a pleasure class and vice versa?

What would it take to clearly define the difference between Performance and Pleasure?

If we were not allowed to use the sounding board in Pleasure classes; would we place the emphasis back on the rail work the way it was intended?

A pleasure horse per the PFHA Rule book should be willing, natural, balanced and free moving. This class is to demonstrate the more re-

laxed manner of movement of the Paso Fino horse. Our pleasure horse should portray a smooth, well gaited horse with a calm, pleasant attitude that makes everyone want to ride him!

The other breeds don't seem to have this problem - they have distinct differences between their Performance and Pleasure horses. Most other breeds do not have work offs - why do we?

If quickness is driving this problem, what about a one year moratorium of no sounding board in the Pleasure classes?

As judges, we need to reward the smooth, well gaited, willing, flat walking horses that can also largo in our Pleasure classes. Based on the comments from several show managers around the country; judges that continue to place the bold, Performance type horse that exhibits mainly quickness in Pleasure classes will not be asked back to judge.

This situation cannot continue



“What would it take to clearly define the difference between Performance and Pleasure?”



PERFORMANCE VS. PLEASURE (CONT'D)

- this is destroying the integrity of both the Performance and Pleasure Division and a viable market for selling our Paso Finos in the process.

Our pleasure show horse should be the horse that brings new people to our breed - it's the one that is

easy to handle, fun and smooth to ride, it can go fast or slow with a willing, relaxed attitude!

These statements and questions are here to stimulate your thoughts and possible solutions to this disparity.

Together maybe we can

solve this problem!

Please contact me at rickmeyer@charter.net with any comments, ideas or solutions.



**THE SPORTMAN'S CHARTER
UNITED STATES EQUESTRIAN FEDERATION**

That sport is something done for the fun of doing it and that it ceases to be sport when it becomes a business only, something done for what there is in it;

That amateurism is something of the heart and spirit - not a matter of exact technical qualifications;

That good manners of sport are fundamentally important;

That the code must be strictly upheld;

That the whole structure of sport is not only preserved from the absurdity of undue importance, but is justified by a kind of romance which animates it, and by the positive virtues of courage, patience, good temper, and unselfishness which are demanded by the code;

That the exploitation of sport for profit alone kills the spirit and retains only the husk and semblance of the thing;

That the qualities of frankness, courage, and sincerity which mark the good sportsman in private life

shall mark the discussions of his interests at a competition.

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