

AERC Best Condition Scoring, by Dr. Cassee Terry NW

How to interpret the Best Condition Score:

Best Condition consists of three parts: The vet score, Time and Weight (that the horse carried). The vet score is weighted the heaviest with a total of 500 points possible, Weight is worth 100 and Time 200 points respectively.

Time and Weight factors are plugged into an algorithm and points are calculated based on the highest weight and the fastest time being set.

The vet score is a bit more subjective. However I usually always see that if multiple vets do the judging and scores are combined, the top horse is top just the "score" may be different.

The Vet scores are broken up into the Standing evaluation of: Recover, Hydration, Lesions, and the Movement evaluation of: Soundness and Quality of movement. Each area having a max of 10 points awarded. I break the vet card down into these categories to make it easier for myself. The recovery takes into account the CRI numbers at the CRI scoring time and I also take a Pulse at the BC presentation time. These numbers are placed into an algorithm and a score is given. Hydration, I take 5 parameters from the vet card and assign them each 0-2. Mucus membranes, Cap refill, Jug refill, Skin tent and gut sounds. Thus a max score of 10 points. Likewise lesions I assign wounds, muscle, back, galls and anal tone each a max of 2 points. Then on the movement evaluation I give 2 scores each from 0-10. Soundness is the lack of lameness, how good is the horse moving. Quality of movement is the horse's willingness and coordination to have forward motion during the trot out.

The 3 scores are added up and that is the total BC score. Some ride managers recognize the High Vet Horse, this is a ride acknowledgement not a sanctioning award. It is common to have the high vet horse not be the overall BC horse, again because of weight and time factors.

Behavior and cleanliness are not scores on the BC itself. It can manifest in the ability to get a score on one of the areas, or if there is a safety issue the horse can be disqualified at the vets discretion. For example if a horse is acting out on the trot the quality may be affected.