National ASA
YOUNG JUDGES
& PARADERS
CHAMPIONSHIPS

Merino Sheep Young Judges Championship
National Handbook

For use at the 2026 National Championships

AGRICULTURAL SHOWS
AUSTRALIA

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The National Agricultural Shows Australia (ASA) Merino Sheep Young Judges Championship (National Championship) through competition provides education and experience for future judges for Agricultural Shows and industry alike.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. To be eligible to compete in the National Merino Sheep Young Judges Championship each Competitor must meet their qualifying jurisdiction criteria to represent at the national finals.
    a. If the jurisdiction does not have criteria the following will apply. The competitor must have lived (primary residence), worked or enrolled in an educational institution within the State, Territory or affiliated jurisdiction they represent for the three (3) months prior to their selection as the jurisdiction representative.
2. A competitor can only represent one jurisdiction at a National Championship in any one year of National Championships. Therefore, a competitor can only represent one jurisdiction across all Young Judges and Paraders in the National Championship competitions in any National Championships one year.
3. Competitors must be fifteen (15) and under twenty-five (25) years of age on first (1st) May in the year of the Competitor's jurisdiction Final. Competitors under the age of eighteen (18) must be accompanied by a chaperone.
4. The Computer Scoring Program and the Hormel Slide are to be used at the National Championship Final for calculation of the points and placings.
5. The Championship Judge **must** not have access to any Master Score Sheet prior to the announcement of the winners of the National Championship.
6. At no time during the National Championship should a competitor talk with the Championship Judge unless directed to do so by the Ring Steward.
7. Jurisdiction Representatives **must** inform the ASA National Finals Coordinator of the title, name, address, date of birth, age, contact numbers (phone and mobile) and email address of **their** Competitor in a Judging Championship going on to a National Championship Final. The ASA National Competitions Coordinator will advise these Competitors of the venue and times of the National Championship Final.
8. The winner and runner-up of the National Championship should be requested to do a report on any travel tour they undertake to validate sponsorship money.
9. The winner is ineligible to compete again after winning the final of the National ASA Merino Sheep Young Judges Championship.
10. Competitors will be eliminated from the National Championship if the Judge's Steward considers they are receiving outside assistance, including the use of unauthorised devices.
11. The Championship Judge should declare any conflicts of interest to the NationalCompetition Coordinator before the National Championship for determination. These would include relationships, both personal and professional, and any financial gain.
12. All disputes raised by competitors will be handling following the dispute resolution procedure which is appendix 1.

PROCEDURE FOR RUNNING THE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

1. Two (2) classes of four (4) animals are to be judged by the competitor
    a. One (1) Class judged at a time.
    b. Exhibits in each class need to be the same sex and it is better if animals of relatively similar age are selected for each class.
    c. Animals in each Class must be identified by 'poll cards' numbered one, two, three, four (1, 2, 3, 4), and **not** A, B, C, D. This is essential when the Computer Scoring Program and Hormel Slide are used.
2. The winner of the National Championship is marked out of a maximum two hundred (200) points: fifty (50) points for the placings in each of the two (2) Classes; twenty five (50) points for handling of exhibits; and fifty (50) points for the Oral Classes.
    a. Visual judging will take place first.
    b. Each Competitor may select their Class for the Oral presentation.
3. Visual Judging
    a. Competitors will be allowed eight (8) minutes to judge the four (4) animals in each Class and to complete each Visual Judging Card. Judging cards must be completed in this allocated time.
    b. The method to exhibit animals is described on page 5.
    c. Judging Cards are simple in design. All that is required by Competitors is to place exhibits in order from one to four (1 to 4).
    d. Judging cards must be completed in the allocated time.
    e. Judging cards will not be returned to the competitors.
4. Oral Judging.
    a. All Competitors will take part in the oral judging and the championship judge uses the card/ sheet marked 'Oral Class'.
    b. Prior to the commencement of the oral presentations, competitors are to select the class they wish to speak on.
    c. Before the commencement of the Oral presentation, each competitor is required to advise the ring steward of which class they will be delivering their oral presentation on. The ring steward will then use the competitors visual judging card to sash the exhibits.
        i. The ribbon colour order is: *Blue – First (1st), Red – Second (2nd), White – Third (3rd), Yellow– Fourth (4th).*
        ii. In the case of the order of sashing not agreeing with the competitor's recollection of the class placings. Placings will be confirmed with the visual judging card in front of the competitor.
    d. Each Competitor in the Oral Judging is allowed two (2) minutes to speak, explaining their placing from their nominated group of animals. **Penalty points apply** – One (1) point should be deducted for every ten (10) seconds or part thereof over the allotted two (2) minutes.
    e. Competitors in the Oral Class are scored on their accuracy of observation, their ability to compare, ringcraft, speaking ability along with general presentation and dress.
5. The Championship Judge will not speak on any class until after all competitors have given their oral and score cards have been handed to the stewards.
6. In the case of a dead heat the Competitor with the highest points for oral judging will be declared the winner, or if there is still a dead heat the Championship Judge will have the final say. All tie-break details are to be confirmed by the Judge's Steward.

7. Presentation of the Winners for the National Championship
    a. All finalists will be presented and then the results announced in the following order of reserve champion then champion.

EXHIBIT PRESENTATION & PARADING OF ANIMALS

1. Ideally experienced handlers will be utilized. If handlers have limited experience they will need to be given an induction prior to the commencement of the competition.
2. The competition will commence with the exhibits standing in numerical order for eight (7) minutes.
3. Exhibits will then be tipped and in a seated position for two (3) minutes.
4. Exhibits will be returned to the standing position for a further two (1) minutes.
5. Timing for each position is not to commence until all exhibits are in position. Competitors should step back from exhibits while they are being positioned.

USE OF JUDGING CARDS

1. Judging cards must be completed the allocated time.
2. Judging Cards are simple in design. All that is required by Competitors is to place exhibits in order one, two, three, four (1, 2, 3, 4).
3. It is essential that one (1) Championship judge officiate for the three (3) Classes.

The Championship Judge, when filling out the Master Card, is to note a numerical difference (split) between placings per Class, as directed in the instructions for use of the HormelSlide.

4. At a National Championship the following guidelines apply the split should be no greater than five between placings, with a maximum split of 12 in total. The Hormel Slide shows the degree of penalty (splits) as related to the degree ofdifference between placings and the Competitor is scored accordingly.
5. The exhibit placing card should be used by the ring steward to record the class selected and the placing of exhibits for each competitor to ensure exhibits are correctly sashed before the competitor commencing the oral section.
6. The oral timing record sheet is to be used to record the length of speech and calculate any penalties if required.
7. The Oral Section Guideline may be retained by the Competitor. It is designed to ensure Competitors use comparative details in their Oral description of the Class.
8. The reason card is to note the features of each exhibit and the reason it was placed in its position.

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP TIMING

To maintain the interest of Competitors, the animals and the spectators, it is important the entire National Championship is completed in approximately one and a half (1½) hours. The timing should be as follows:

Visual Judging:

Judging two (2) classes	22 minutes
- Seven (7) minutes – sheep standing	
- Three (3) minutes – sheep sitting	
- One (1) minute – sheep standing	
Judging cards must be completed in this allocated time.	
Changeover times	3 minutes
Data Reader Steward (Competitors) finalise visual score	3 minutes

Oral Judging:

Competitors orals	42 minutes
Comments from Championship Judges	10 minutes
Announcement and Presentation of Awards	9 minutes
Total Time	90 minutes

To maintain the impetus of the National Championship, immediately after the Championship Judges have completed their final comments, the National Championship results should be ready to be announced, and the Awards and Presentations made.

COMPETITION CARDS

COMPETITORS' VISUAL PLACING CARD

(Visual/ Physical Class)

Judging Cards must be completed in the allocated time.

Competitors Number: _____

Class: _____

Placings: 1st ☐ 2nd ☐ 3rd ☐ 4th ☐ Max Points 50

---------- ✂ ----------

COMPETITORS' VISUAL PLACING CARD

(Visual/ Physical Class)

Judging Cards must be completed in the allocated time

Competitors Number: _____

Class: _____

Placings: 1st ☐ 2nd ☐ 3rd ☐ 4th ☐ Max Points 50

REASON CARD FOR COMPETITOR'S NOTES

Class: ……..

Placings: 1st …… 2nd …… 3rd …… 4th ……

*Please remember when speaking to say why you put first (1st) place over second (2nd), second (2nd) place over third (3rd), etc.

Exhibit 1	Good Attributes Faults	Placing
Exhibit 2	Good Attributes Faults	Placing
Exhibit 3	Good Attributes Faults	Placing
Exhibit 4	Good Attributes Faults	Placing

CHAMPIONSHIP JUDGE ORAL ASSESSMENT CARD

Class……

Competitor									Max
Class									
PLACING									
Accuracy of observation									15
Ability to compare exhibits									15
Speaking ability									10
Presentation and dress									10
SUB TOTAL									50
PENALTIES									
TOTAL									

MASTER CARD – CHAMPIONSHIP JUDGE'S FINAL PLACINGS CARD

At a National Championship, the following guidelines apply: the split should be no greater than five between placings, with a maximum split of 12 in total.

Class: _____

Placings: 1st ☐ 2nd ☐ 3rd ☐ 4th ☐

1-2 ☐ 2-3 ☐ 3-4 ☐

- ✂ Cut here- -

MASTER CARD – CHAMPIONSHIP JUDGE'S FINAL PLACINGS CARD

At a National Championship, the following guidelines apply: the split should be no greater than five between placings, with a maximum split of 12 in total.

Class: _____

Placings: 1st ☐ 2nd ☐ 3rd ☐ 4th ☐

1-2 ☐ 2-3 ☐ 3-4 ☐

ASA NATIONAL YOUNG JUDGES CHAMPIONSHIP HANDLING SCORE CARD

Class……

Competitor No.	Notes	Handling Score /25

STEWARD'S CARD – EXHIBIT PLACING FOR ORAL SECTION

Before the commencement of the Oral presentation, each Competitor is required to give instruction to the Ring Steward to place exhibits.

Ribbon colour order: Blue – First (1st), Red – Second (2nd), White – Third (3rd), Yellow– Forth (4th).

Competitor No.	Class	Placing

Championship Judges Placings		

ORAL TIMING CARD

Penalty points apply – One (1) point should be deducted for every ten (10) seconds or part thereof over the allotted two (2) minutes, per class.

Competitor No.	Oral Time	Penalties Received

Timekeeper Steward

Name	Signature	Date

RESOURCES

ORAL SECTION GUIDELINES

All Competitors will take part in the Oral Judging and speak on one s. Upon entering the Judging Ring each Competitor will give instructions to the Ring Steward to place the ribbons on the animals in their placement order. Ribbon colour order being Blue – 1st, Red – 2nd, White – 3rd, Yellow - 4th.

The ring steward will place the exhibits and the ribbons on them according to record on the exhibit placing for oral section. The competitor will be asked to confirm this is correct prior to delivering their oral.

If there is a disagreement between the order the competitor recalls to the order submitted on the visual judging card, the visual judging card prevails.

Competitors are allowed two (2) minutes to clearly express their oral reasoning to the Championship Judge and spectators the reasons they placed the Exhibits in a particular order. **Penalty points apply** – One (1) point should be deducted for every ten (10) seconds or part thereof over the allotted two (2) minutes.

Competitors to have their reasons organised and emphasise the most important points they wish to make.

When giving their reasons, the main objective is to inform the Championship Judge that the Competitors have seen and compared each animal in the Class.

It is important to make comparisons between animals rather than describe individual animals. Commence the Oral reasoning as follows:-

'I placed this Class four, one, three, two (4, 1, 3, 2').

Give the most important reasons first and remember to use comparative terms. Where necessary then follow with:

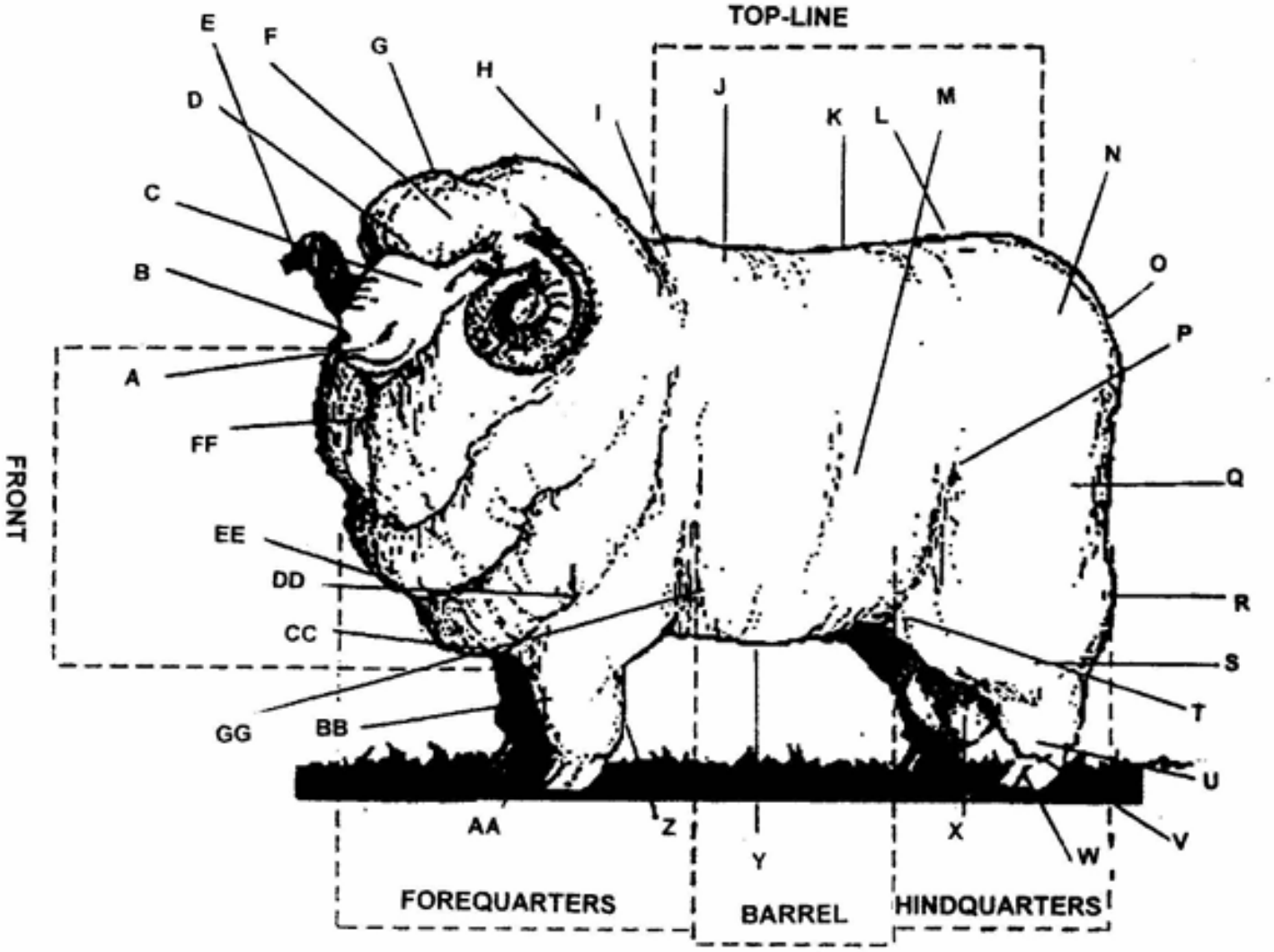
'In the top pair I placed four (4) ahead of one (1) because four) 4(…….'.

This demonstrates to the Championship Judge the accuracy of the priorities. Mention any major faults if present.

Continue in similar manner by comparing the middle pair and finally the bottom pair. Remember: Speak clearly; Be concise; Show conviction in your placings;

Introduction (important statements first, small points at the end) logical order (comparison of pairs) and conclusion;

JUDGING POINTS DIAGRAM



A	Muzzle	L	Loins	W	Hoof
B	Nostrils	M	Ribs	X	Testes
C	Face	N	Rump	Y	Underline
D	Forehead	O	Tail	Z	Elbow
E	Horns	P	Flank	AA	Knee
F	Crest	Q	Twist	BB	Forearm
G	Poll	R	Hock	CC	Brisket
H	Scrag	S	Stifle	DD	Shoulder
I	Withers	T	Lower Flank	EE	Apron
J	Seat of Devils Grip	U	Fetlock	FF	Dew-lap
K	Back or Saddle	V	Pasterns	GG	Girth

NOTES FOR CHAMPIONSHIP JUDGES

In the selection of a Class of animals for the Merino Sheep Judging Championship, the aim should be to get a group of four (4) animals upon whose placing experienced Judges, after careful inspection and consideration, would be likely to agree.

As a general rule, these should be four (4) ewes and four (4) rams (fine or medium strength) with a quality variation.

A suitable group of animals might be made up of a fairly clear leader, a fairly obvious 'tail', and two (2) others that present a more difficult choice. Animals of similar age and size should be selected for the National Championship. For a State or National Championship it is expected that the gap between individual animals could be closer and this would also be reflected in the points allocated to the splits between placing.

Prior to the National Championship the Championship Judge will select the animals to be judged – if required this can be done a day or two before the National Championship. On the day of the National Championship the Championship Judge will decide on the correct placing of the animals in each Judging Ring and note on the Master Card. At no time during the National Championship should the Championship Judge talk with a Competitor unless directed to do so by the Ring Steward.

In filling out the Master Cards, the Championship Judge is required to note a numerical difference between animals as directed in instructions for use of the Computer Scoring Program and Hormel Slide. Both the Computer Scoring Program and Hormel Slide show the degree of penalty as related to the degree of difference between animal placings and the Competitor is scored accordingly.

A Competitor is in as good a position as is the Championship Judge to observe both the good and bad points or faults of the animals. But even if the competitor does so, they may draw different conclusions because the competitor does not give those good and bad points the same importance as does the Championship Judge. This difference of opinion will be reflected in the Competitor's low score for placing, and the competitor should not be further penalised in the Oral Test if their observation has been accurate and the Championship Judge considers the reasoning to be logical.

Each Competitor in the oral section is allowed one (1) minute to line up the animals in their order of merit and two (2) minutes to state their reasoning for the placings.If the competitor finishes in less than this time, but has said all that was needed to support their case, they should not be penalised. Stewards will apply penalties as required if the competitor exceeds two minutes speaking.

At the conclusion of the National Championship, the Championship Judge is asked to give their own reasons for the placing of the animals. If possible, with the animals present. Comment on the various oral and ringcraft styles of the Competitors may also be made.

As far as possible to maintain Competitor and spectator interest in the National Championship, it is important that it is confined to a time limit. Championship Judges are asked to confine their comments to the times suggested in the 'Competition Procedure' for all Merino sheep judging Competition

EQUIPMENT AND ATTIRE GUIDELINES

Competitors must be neatly and suitably attired. Attire should be selected to allow the competitor to participate in judging. It is essential to consider workplace health and safety when selecting attire. Enclosed shoes are strongly encouraged in all competitions along with the use of hats when sun protection is necessary. Caps are discouraged along with excessive jewellery.

Competitors will not be penalised for wearing the uniform if provided by their state.

Shorts, chewing gum and poor presentation is unacceptable and will be marked down accordingly. The use of unauthorised electronic devices is strictly prohibited and will be dealt with in accordance with Agricultural Shows Australia policy.

During visual judging, competitors may choose to remove their blazer; however, it is encouraged that a blazerbe worn during the oral section of the competition. Competitors will be provided with a dust coat for visual judging if required by the competition.

MASTER SCORE SHEET

Competitor's Name	No	Non-oral Class				Oral Class (50)	Penalties	TOTAL (200)	Placings
		Placings A (50)	B (50)	Handling (50)	Sub Total (150)				

NATIONAL ASA CHAMPIONSHIP AWARDS SHEET

Championship: _____

Present all competitors with badges in draw order

Draw number	Competitor Name	Jurisdiction
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		

Present place getters:

Award	Recipient Competitor	Jurisdiction
Reserve Champion		
Champion		

Presentations made by:

Name	Role

Judges Steward

Name	Signature	Date

Data Entry Steward

Name	Signature	Date

Data Reader Steward

Name	Signature	Date

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1: DISPUTES RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

Overview

Agricultural Shows Australia (ASA) and the National Championships aim to provide a fair and transparent process for competitors to raise and resolve grievances. This procedure outlines the steps and timeframes for competitors to follow when raising a grievance, as well as the process ASA will use to address and resolve these disputes.

Step-by-Step Resolution Procedure

1. Raising a Grievance

1.1. Initial Complaint Submission

- Advice needs to be given that a complaint will be given to the National Finals Coordinator within an hour of the competition's conclusion.
- A competitor who wishes to raise a grievance must first submit their complaint in writing (hand written or electronic) to the National Finals Coordinator.
- The complaint should include the following details:
    - Name of the competitor
    - Description of the grievance
    - Relevant evidence or documentation supporting the complaint
    - Desired outcome or resolution
- The formal complaint needs to be received within 24 hours of advice being received.

1.2. Acknowledgment of Receipt

- Upon receiving the complaint, the National Finals Coordinator will acknowledge receipt in writing.
- The acknowledgement will include a brief outline of the next steps and an estimated timeline for resolution.

2. National Finals Coordinator's Investigation and Resolution

2.1. Initial Review

- The National Finals Coordinator will conduct an initial review of the grievance.
- During this review, the National Finals Coordinator may:
    - Request additional information from the competitor
    - Interview relevant parties involved in the dispute
    - Gather further evidence

2.2. Decision and Response

- The National Finals Coordinator will make a decision regarding the grievance as to whether it will be escalated to Agricultural Shows Australia review panel.
- The decision will be communicated to the competitor in writing and will include:
    - The findings of the investigation
    - The decision made regarding the grievance
    - Any proposed actions or resolutions

3. Escalation to Agricultural Shows Australia

3.1. Appeal Submission

- If the competitor is not satisfied with the decision made by the National Finals Coordinator, they may appeal to Agricultural Shows Australia.
- The appeal must be submitted in writing within 1 day of receiving the National Finals Coordinator's decision.
- The appeal should include:
    - A copy of the original complaint
    - The State Team Manager's decision
    - The reason for the appeal and any new evidence or information

3.2. Acknowledgment of Receipt

- ASA will acknowledge receipt of the appeal.
- The acknowledgment will outline the process and estimated timeline for reviewing the appeal.

4. Agricultural Shows Australia's Review and Resolution

4.1. Formation of Review Panel

- ASA will form a Review Panel.
- The Review Panel will consist of:
    - A representative from ASA
    - An independent expert related to the field of the grievance
    - A legal advisor (if necessary)

4.2. Comprehensive Review

- The Review Panel will conduct a comprehensive review of the grievance, considering all submitted information and evidence.
- The panel may:
    - Request further information from the competitor or involved parties.
    - Conduct interviews with relevant parties
    - Consult with additional experts if required
- This review process will be completed within 30 days.

4.3. Final Decision

- The Review Panel will make a final decision based on their findings.
- The final decision will be communicated to the competitor and the State Team Manager in writing within 5 days of completing the review.
- The communication will include:
    - A detailed explanation of the Review Panel's findings
    - The final decision regarding the grievance
    - Any actions to be taken or resolutions to be implemented

Contact Information

For any questions or further information regarding the dispute resolution process, competitors may contact their State Team Manager or Agricultural Shows Australia directly at nationalfinals@agshowsaustralia.org.au.