



Prefix to the „Gæðingakeppni“

Gæðingakeppni is a century old tradition in Iceland to evaluate the quality and riding abilities of the Icelandic horse. The foundation of Gæðingakeppni is the power, energy and the charisma of the horse. The competition has evolved and has become quite accessible for everybody, different age of riders and all kind of horses. All rules about tack and shoeing, as well as the arbitration rules are the same as the in the FEIF Sport Rules and Regulations. The guidelines for the judges are accessible for everybody and are necessary reading for everybody who wants to get to know Gæðingakeppni.

As already explained the core of the competition is the horse itself. In the younger classes however, seat and aids are also evaluated. In the children's class seat and aids weigh 50%, in the youngster class seat and aids count the same as one gait. In the young adult class, the gaits have all the same value and so does form under rider and willingness. In the B class, the four-gaited class, the form of the rider and the willingness have each double value. In the A class, the five-gaited class, tölt, pace, form under the rider and willingness all have double value. The emphasis is on the charisma, power and the form of the horse. The word „Gæðingur“ is not easy to translate, (maybe as a good horse, best horse, quality horse), but it describes what we are looking for, speed, movements, gaits, power and freedom put into a frame of simple and clear rules.



“Gæðingakeppni” competition

1. Preface

1.1. Goal

The goal of a Gæðingakeppni competition is to find the best horse, what Icelanders call a “Gæðingur.” These are quality horses that are a joy to ride and a pleasure to watch. The judges should keep the following in mind when searching for this horse.

1.2. Willingness/spirit

The first and the most important factor when judging a “Gæðingakeppni” is the willingness/spirit of the horse, including its character. The willingness and character should bring out the best of the horse’s other qualities, but not interrupt them. Most emphasis is placed on the spirit, it should not be too sensitive and should allow the horse to show everything freely and with pleasure.

1.3. Beat and coordination

The beat of the gait is important when judging. Keep in mind however that the beat alone does not create the ideal riding horse. The beat, even though it is clear, may be stiff and not in a fluent rhythm which means that it does not give the rider the ultimate pleasure. The horse should also be soft and supple. The judge should always evaluate style, beat and coordination in the movement as to how well it shows in all the gaits during riding.

Example: Lift (Leg action) and energy that creates suppleness, drive and flexibility gives higher marks. On the other hand, if the judge thinks the horse carries itself too high, the movements are uncoordinated and the horse is stiff and mechanical, then a lower mark is awarded.

1.4. Drive and speed

Big reach and energetic drive counts for a lot, especially if it is accompanied with high leg action. The movement of the front legs should be coordinated with the movement of the hind legs and the judges should watch that and deduct or raise their marks depending on what they see. Exaggerated leg action that lessens the drive and speed should lower the mark.

1.5. Form under rider and movements

An elegant and proud manner with suspension and flexible, powerful movements is the trademark of a good horse and those should increase the horse’s marks dramatically. A prior regulation on riding horses states: “The movements of the riding horse should be light, elastic, high, suspended, clear, in good form and free.”

This description is still valid and everything that takes away from the horse’s flexibility and free manners, such as exaggerated leg action (lift) that is not in coordination with other movements of the horse, should be denounced. The Gæðingakeppni judging should be based on these basic points.



2. Elements judged in Gæðingakeppni

2.1. Walk:

Should be shown for 20 horse lengths at least or half a long side of the track to get an average score or more.

2.2. Trot:

To get a minimum score the horse should trot constantly for at least 10 horse lengths and to get an average score or higher the horse needs to trot at least one full long side of the track.

2.3. Slow Tölt:

Should be shown for a full long side of the 300 m track or for a corresponding length on a straight track to get an average score or higher.

2.4. Fast Tölt:

Same as slow tölt, except the speed needs to be quite a bit faster than medium tempo to get an average score or higher.

2.5. Canter/Gallop:

Gallop should be shown for at least one whole long side of a 300 m track to get an average score or higher. The horse should gallop with energy and suppleness in good balance, with a clear beat and good suspension. It should take the gallop softly and slow down without stiffness or a struggle.

2.6. Tölt A-Class (five-gait):

Free tempo, though it is evaluated higher if the horse can show tölt with speed changes.

2.7. Pace:

To receive an average score or higher the horse should pace in a clear beat for at least 100 meters. To receive the highest score the horse should go into pace from an energetic gallop and pace a full pace run with lots of energy and without mistakes. The transition into pace should be smooth and without struggle, ending the sprint well, slowing down without trouble.

2.8. Willingness/Spirit:

The element “willingness” refers to the horse’s character and temperament, i.e. spirit, bravery, energy, obedience and connection while ridden.

2.9. Form under rider:

This refers first and foremost to the form of the horse while ridden, i.e. conformation, head carriage and form, movements and manners along with the response of the horse to the rider’s aids. The rider should also be taken into consideration here, his behaviour, equipment, seat, rein contact and all aids given to the horse.



3. About competition horses, riders and equipment

3.1. The right to compete and sign up:

All trained horses 5 years old and older owned by members of LH¹ have the right to compete, if they fulfil the conditions that are set in these rules. A 5 year old horse may only compete in one discipline or event at the same show.

A horse can only compete for one club during the same calendar year. An exception is made for a fundraising competition or event.

[Iceland only] It is allowed to sign up a horse owned by a breeding farm and/or a breeding federation to participate in the Gæðingakeppni competition of a member club of LH if the manager of the farm or one of its owners is a member of the club. Horses from each farm are only allowed to compete on behalf of one club, following the same rules as for individual members of the club. Horses that are shown as breeding horses are not eligible to compete in Gæðingakeppni at Landsmót National Shows or Fjórðungsmót Shows, except for horses that participate in the breeding shows as offspring. They can compete in the Gæðingakeppni as well.

3.2. The rider:

When a horse performs in front of the judges it should be presented by its owner or a rider chosen by its owner. If the rider presents more than one horse in the same discipline a spare rider should be decided upon at the signup, so he can be available if needed. Equipment of the rider and horse is subject to the FEIF Sport Rules and Regulations. Whips are not allowed except in the youngster and children classes as well as in C-class.

3.3. Instructions:

The rider should follow the instructions of the judges and competition committee in all matters concerning the competition. If he refuses to follow current rules, the head judging committee (chief judge, tournament leader and one rider nominated at the riders meeting before the start of tournament) must disqualify him/her from the competition without exception. The caretaker of the horse can find a new rider for the horse if the judges agree.

3.4. Bucking and other vices:

Horses that buck, shy away, refuse to obey or show other such vices and/or disobedience should be disqualified from the competition.

If a horse leaves the track or steps over the rope or fence that marks the track with one or more of its legs, it must be disqualified from the competition, unless it is obvious that this was caused by an external event that disrupted the horse.

If a rider falls off his horse during the competition he is excluded from the competition automatically.

¹ Outside of Iceland, the ownership requirement is waived.



4. About judges and their work

4.1. Judges and judging committee

Judges for Gæðingakeppni competitions must have passed the official judges exam and have received an authorization from the board of LH as a Gæðingakeppni judge.

[Iceland only] Gæðingakeppni and youngster judges are divided into two different groups: a) Regional judges. b) National judges. Regional judges have the right to judge regional competitions. National judges have the right to judge all competitions that are put on by LH or any member club of LH. National judges also have the right to run a Gæðingakeppni competition. There should never be more than 40 fully licensed active National judges at any one time and never fewer than 25.

[Iceland only] Judges at Landsmót National Shows and Fjórðungsmót shows should be nominated by the judging committee of LH and approved by the board of LH; five judges are appointed, along with two spare judges that should be available.

[Iceland only] At a regional or smaller competitions it is allowed to have only three judges judging the show. Announcers and managers do not need to be judges, but they shall announce and run the competition as directed by a judge and under the responsibility of a judge. The club boards shall apply to LH to get judges for these competitions no later than April 1st each year.

4.2. Judges and their duties

A judge cannot own a horse competing at a Landsmót National Show or a Fjórðungsmót Show in the class he is judging. If a judge is judging at a regional competition and owns a horse taking part in it, he should step aside while the horse in question is being judged.

The judges choose the head of the judging committee amongst themselves. If a disagreement arises among the judges and/or if a judge refuses to give a mark, the head of the judging committee must try to reach a decision with the majority of the judges.

4.3. Competition procedure

At regional or smaller competitions the preliminaries start with the horses being ridden before the judges, one at a time, in the signed up sequence. The competition chair committee has the right to allow 3-5 horses being judged at the same time on the track, according to LH's Gæðingakeppni competition special rules (see Article 8).

The performance starts at the middle of the short side. When the rider enters the track he must take the shortest route to the beginning of the short side where he intends to start. Then he shall demonstrate clearly to the judges, by nodding his head, that he is starting his performance.

The rider decides in which direction he starts his performance and he can change direction once during the performance. He also decides in which sequence he presents the required elements. On a 300 m track the rider has three rounds total.



If the rider uses the 175 m straight track before he has ridden three rounds, he must end his performance on a short side.

The judges give the horses marks for each judged element by showing signs that are read by the speaker. It is allowed to only show the average score of the horse at the end of the performance. Then, the separated scores for each horse and the sequence of the riders according to the scores, must be available in print immediately after each event is over.

At Landsmót National Shows and Fjórðungsmót competitions, the placement of the riders according to the scores must be shown on a TV screen after the performance of each horse.

4.4. Track size

It is recommended that a Gæðingakeppni competition takes place on a 300 m oval track, but it is also allowed to compete on a 250 m oval track that is at least 4 m wide. Such tracks must have a straight track leading out of the oval track, so it is possible to show pace on a straight track of at least 175 m. An oval track must not be fenced more than necessary. It is not allowed to use the long side as a transfer route.

At Landsmót National Shows the competition should take place on a 300 m P-shaped track, which is not fenced more than necessary.

4.5. Special rules

At Landsmót National Shows, Fjórðungsmót Shows and other big competitions, the preliminary rounds in all classes should be ridden with three to five horses on the track at a time, according to LH's special rules governing Gæðingakeppni competitions. There are special rules for drawing the sequence of the riders.

Before the preliminary round starts, at least three to four horses that are not competing must be judged for co-ordination purposes.

After the preliminary round, at least twice the number of the horses that are allowed in the finals must continue in the semi-finals, according to the rules. The sequence of the riders is decided by random drawing.

The finals should take place at least one day later than the preliminary rounds and semi-finals.



5. The LH regulations for calculating scores in Gæðingakeppni

5.1. Calculation rules

The judges shall give marks with two decimals when the total score is shown. The average score for each rider shall also be shown with two decimals. Placements and final standing shall be decided with the third decimal. This rule applies for all classes of Gæðingakeppni.

5.2. Program

5.2.1. A-Class (five-gait)

The rider is allowed three rounds on the track and needs to show walk, tölt, trot, gallop and pace in those three rounds. It is allowed to show pace once on the 175m straight track, according to Article 7.

5.2.2. B-Class (four-gait)

The rider is allowed three rounds on the track and needs to show walk, slow tölt, trot, gallop and fast tölt.

5.2.3. C-Class (beginners four-gait)

Riders and horses competing in C-class cannot compete in A or B class at the same tournament. C-class is not offered at Landsmót. This is a test for beginners in competition.

This test is performed on the oval track.

The riders are allowed two rounds to show walk, tölt and/or trot. If the rider shows both trot and tölt, the score for the better gait shall be used in the calculation.

5.2.4. C1-Class

Riders and horses competing in C1-class cannot compete in A or B class at the same tournament. C1-class is not offered at Landsmót.

This test is performed on the oval track.

The riders get two rounds to show walk, tölt and trot.



5.3. Calculation of Scores

Scores are given according to Gæðingakeppni scale, 5-10, where 5.0 is the zero point.

Scores are calculated according to these tables, depending on classes:

Five gaited horses

(A-Class)

	Section	Score	Multiple
1.	Walk	5-10	1
2.	Trot	5-10	1
3.	Tölt	5-10	2
4.	Gallop	5-10	1
5.	Pace	5-10	2
6.	Willingness	5-10	2
7.	Form under rider	5-10	2

To calculate a total score, add all seven sections, double sections 3, 5, 6 and 7 and divide by 11. Average the marks of all judges.

Four gaited horses

(B-Class)

	Section	Score	Multiple
1.	Walk	5-10	1
2.	Trot	5-10	1
3.	Slow Tölt	5-10	1
4.	Fast Tölt	5-10	1
5.	Gallop	5-10	1
6.	Willingness	5-10	2
7.	Form under rider	5-10	2

To calculate a total score, add all seven sections, double sections 6 and 7 and divide by 9. Average the marks of all judges.



Four gaited horses

(C-Class)

	Section	Score	Multiple
1.	Walk	5-10	1
2.	Trot and/or tölt	5-10	1
3.	Gallop	5-10	1
4.	Willingness/Spirit	5-10	1
5.	Form under rider	5-10	1

To calculate a total score, add all five sections and divide by 5. Average the marks of all judges.

Four gaited horses

(C1-Class)

	Section	Score	Multiple
1.	Walk	5-10	1
2.	Trot	5-10	1
3.	Tölt	5-10	1
4.	Willingness/Spirit	5-10	1
5.	Form under rider	5-10	1

To calculate a total score, add all five sections and divide by 5. Average the marks of all judges.



6. Regarding special finals in Gæðingakeppni competitions

6.1. Finals

At regional competitions, the horses that have received the highest scores in the preliminary rounds should enter the track together to be judged again in a final competition, to determine the winner.

In a final competition, the number of participating horses should be the same as the number of awards available per class. At Landsmót National Shows, the competition chairperson has a right to hold both A and B finals in all classes. In the A finals are horses that placed 1st -7th and in the B-finals are horses that placed 8th – 15th in the preliminary rounds. The winner of the B-finals earns the right to compete in the A-finals. At Landsmót National Shows and other big competitions, eight horses have the right to compete in the finals of each class.

At other competitions five or three horses have the right to compete in the finals. If a horse is prevented from participating, the first reserve horse from the preliminary round gains the right to participate.

The executive committee makes sure all riders have clearly visible numbers on their boots.

At the executive committee's discretion, special finals may also be employed at competitions other than Landsmót National Shows, Fjórðungsmót Shows or big competitions.

6.2. Finals are carried out as follows:

In the finals, the judge's responsibility is to arrange the horses in places, taking into consideration the scoring requirements that are made for the preliminary round, with the exceptions required by the different competition forms under the rules governing the finals.

1. The horses are ridden at the same time, evenly spaced out on the oval track.
2. The speaker gives instructions on which element is presented and when, in accordance with the rules. He should also make sure that the finals are ridden in both directions except for the pace in the A-class.
3. In A-class, B-class and the Young Adults class (18-21 yrs) the scores for each contestant are read out between each gait and in the end for both form under rider and willingness/spirit.
4. In the Children's and Teenage classes, the scores for each contestant are read out between each gait and in the end the score for seat/aid.
5. The executive committee makes sure that all riders carry numbers that can be easily seen on both sides, i.e. on their boots.

Five gaited Horses – A-Class

The finals should be carried out as follows:

1. The riders must show tölt at a free speed for up to two rounds on each side.
2. The riders must show trot for up to two rounds on each side. The trot must be shown for at least two whole long sides of the track.
3. Two runs of pace must be shown, both in the same direction, after consulting the riders.



4. Between elements and while changing hands (reins), the riders must slow down to walk, even their spacing and wait for further instructions from the speaker.
5. All finals start on the left hand (rein).

Four gaited horses – B-Class

Following instructions should be read to the riders at the beginning of the B-Class finals.

Finals should be carried out as follows:

1. The riders must show slow tölt for up to two rounds on each side.
2. The riders must show trot with speed differences for up to two rounds on each side.
3. The riders must show fast tölt on the long sides for up to two rounds on each side.
4. Between elements and while changing hands (reins), the riders must slow down to walk, even their spacing and wait for further instructions from the speaker.
5. All finals start on the left hand (rein).
6. If two (or more) horses are tied for first place, a ride-off/duel will be ridden or a coin will be tossed, if the riders prefer. No ride-offs/duels are ridden for the other places.
7. Ride-offs are always ridden on the left hand (rein), one round for each gait. This is valid for both Gæðingakeppni competitions and the competitions for the younger classes.

Four gaited horses – C-Class

Following instructions should be read to the riders at the beginning of the C-Class finals.

Finals should be carried out as follows:

1. Tölt or trot is shown no more than two rounds on each rein. The rider may choose whether he shows tölt or trot, it is not allowed to show both.
2. Walk is shown up to one round on each rein.
3. Gallop is shown, two times on a long side. One rider at a time shows gallop with increasing speed and supple slowing down. The riders agree on which long side, in association with the speaker, to start and show the gallop.
4. After each section a score is given and in the end also for spirit and form under rider.
5. In between sections and when changing hand (reins), riders should slow down to walk, spread evenly on the track and await further instructions from the speaker.
6. All finals shall start upon the left hand (rein).

Four gaited horses – C1-Class

Following instructions should be read to the riders at the beginning of the C1-Class finals.

Finals should be carried out as follows:

1. Tölt is shown no more than two rounds on each rein.
2. Trot is shown no more than two rounds on each rein.
3. Walk is shown up to one round on each rein.



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4. After each section a score is given and in the end also for spirit and form under rider.
 5. In between sections and when changing hand (reins), riders should slow down to walk, spread evenly on the track and await further instructions from the speaker.
 6. All finals shall start upon the left hand (rein).

6.3. Tie break

If two (or more) horses are tied for first place, a ride-off/duel will be ridden in accordance with the final rules. The judges will show places instead of markings. No ride-offs/duels are ridden for the other places. Ride-offs/duels are always ridden on the left hand (rein), one round for each gait.

This applies to both Gæðingakeppni competitions and the competitions for the younger classes.

If one or both/all the riders do not want to ride a ride-off/duel, the judges will show places based on the marks they gave the horses in the finals just ridden.

6.4. Starting order at big events

In Gæðingakeppni and big events in all classes, the starting order is made by draw performed by the executive committee. Riders or their representatives have the right to be present if they so wish.



7. The LH regulations for Children , Teenage and Young Adult competition

7.1. Riders

The competition takes place in three age groups: The Children's class, Teenage class and the Young Adults' class. The age of the riders is decided by the calendar year. Children compete in the Children's class up to the competition year when they turn 13 years old, teenagers compete in the Teenage class up to the competition year when they turn 17 years old, and young adults compete in the Young Adults class up to the competition year when they turn 21.

In the Children's and Teenage classes, it is not the horse, but the rider who wins the prize.

7.2. The competition horse

A rider in the Children's class, Teenage class or Young Adults' class cannot ride a horse that participates in other disciplines of the competition, unless he rides the horse himself in all disciplines.

Each rider can ride more than one horse. If a young rider gets more than one horse into the finals, he must choose which one he will ride in the finals. If the competition also determines qualification for a Landsmót or other big events, that qualification also determines which horse the young rider will ride at the big event, since riders in the young classes can only ride one horse each at big events, including Landsmót. A young rider at Landsmót cannot be a reserve rider for himself in his class, but, as explained above, has to choose which horse he will ride the finals and therefore also at Landsmót.

The horses that participate in the Children's class, Teenage class or Young Adults' class must be owned by a member of the same club as the rider.

If a horse that is signed up is unable to participate at a Landsmót National Show, Fjórðungsmót show or other big competitions, a reserve rider and his horse replaces the pair that could not attend.

7.3. Scores

A score will be given for each gait. These notes will be added and divided by the number of scores, to determine the average score. Also, a special score for seat and aids will be given for each gait in the Children's class and the Teenage class.

7.4. Program

7.4.1. Children's Class:

Two rounds must be ridden, showing walk, trot and/or tölt and gallop. If the child rides both trot and tölt, the score for the better gait is used.

7.4.2. Teenage Class:

Three rounds must be ridden, showing walk, slow tölt, trot, gallop and a fast gait, either tölt or trot, along the long sides.



7.4.3. Young Adults' Class:

Three rounds must be ridden, showing walk, slow tölt, trot, gallop and fast tölt, along the long sides. Scores for form under rider and willingness are added.

7.5. Finals in the young riders classes

At regional competitions, the horses receiving the highest scores in the preliminary rounds should enter the track together to be judged again in a final competition, in order to determine who the winner is.

In a final competition the number of participating horses should be the same as the number of awards available per class.

The executive committee makes sure all riders have clearly visible numbers on both sides, i.e. on their boots.

7.6. Finals are carried out as follows:

In the finals the judge's responsibility is to arrange the horses in places, taking into consideration the scoring requirements that are made for the preliminary round, with the exceptions required by the different competition forms under the rules governing the finals.

1. The horses are all ridden at the same time, evenly spaced out on the oval track.
2. The speaker gives instructions, based on the rules for the class in question, on which element is presented and when. He should also make sure that the finals are ridden in both directions.
3. In the Children's and Teenage classes the scores for each contestant are read out between each gait and in the end the score for seat/aid.
4. In the Young Adults class the scores for each contestant are read out between each gait and in the end the scores for both form under rider and willingness/spirit.
5. The executive committee makes sure that all riders carry numbers that can be easily seen on both sides, i.e. on their boots.

7.6.1. Finals in the children's class

Tölt and/or trot must be ridden for at least two rounds on each side. If a child shows both trot and tölt, the score for the better gait will be used.

Two runs of gallop should be shown, one at a time, with speed transitions and a smooth slow down.

The riders gather at the short side and decide together, in consultation with the speaker, in which direction they will ride the gallop.

After each gait the scores are read out and finally for the seat/aid.

7.6.2. Finals – Teenage class:

Tölt, trot, and a fast gait, either tölt or trot, on the long sides. At least two rounds on each side. In both classes, the element seat and aid must be given a separate score in the finals.

After each gait the scores are read out and finally for seat/aid which has the same value as one gait.



7.6.3. Finals competition – Young Adults' class:

Slow tölt, trot, and fast tölt on the long sides. At least two rounds on each side.

At the end of the final the scores for both form under rider and willingness/spirit for each contestant are read out.



8. Special LH rules for Gæðingakeppni competitions at Landsmót National Shows and Fjórðungsmót shows

8.1. Three to five horses are judged on the track together in the preliminary rounds. The programs are as follows:

8.1.1. B-Class: Three to five horses on the track together, ridden on the left hand (rein).

- Two rounds slow tölt
- Two rounds trot, free tempo
- Two rounds fast tölt on the long sides
- Willingness x 2, form under rider x 2

Judges divide by 7

8.1.2. A-Class: Three to five horses on the track together, ridden on the left hand (rein).

- Two rounds tölt x 2
- Two rounds trot, free tempo
- One pace run, one at a time x 2
- Willingness x 2, form under rider x 2

Judges divide by 9

8.1.3. Children's class: Three to five horses on the track together, ridden on the left hand (rein).

- Two rounds trot and/or tölt
- Two long sides gallop
- Seat and aid x 2

Judges divide by 4

8.1.4. Teenage class: Three to five horses on the track together, ridden on the left hand (rein).

- Two rounds slow tölt
- Two rounds trot, free tempo
- Two rounds fast gait on the long sides, tölt or trot
- Seat and aid

Judges divide by 4

8.1.5. Young Adults' class: Three to five horses on the track together, ridden on the left (rein) side.

- Two rounds slow tölt
- Two rounds trot free tempo
- Two rounds fast tölt on the long sides
- Form under rider



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- Willingness

Judges divide by 5

Before the preliminary round starts, at least three to four horses that are not competing must be judged for co-ordination purposes.

After the preliminary rounds, at least twice the number of the horses that are allowed in the finals must continue into the semi-finals, according to the rules. The sequence of the riders is decided by random drawing.

The finals will take place at least one day later than the preliminary rounds and semi-finals.

The arrangement to decide the order of the competition horses in Gæðingakeppni competitions and children's class, Teenage class and Young adults' class at Landsmót National Shows and Fjórðungsmót Shows, is that the executive committee draws the deserving starting place for each competition horse.

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