

*Q: Do you judge riders at schooling shows by a different standard than you do at recognized shows?*

**BILL:** The answer to this, for better or worse, is a resounding NO! Some judges seem to have a sliding standard and want to be “kinder” or “encouraging” to less experienced competitors. I am totally in favor of encouraging them—particularly with my comments on the test sheet or, if time permits, in conversation after the ride. But to jimmy the scores higher—whether at a schooling show or at a competition in a more remote part of the country—just confuses riders and trainers. A single standard that remains the same morning to night, professional to amateur to kid on a fat pony, and—as much as is humanly possible—week to week and show to show is the only good way to indicate to riders where they really stand and what progress they are making.