

Consumer Decision Making Contest Placing & Scoring Classes

Placing and scoring classes in the Consumer Decision Making contest can be quite a challenge, especially for the less experienced volunteers, coaches, and 4-H members. This brief is intended to serve as a guide in preparing, placing and scoring classes. It can also serve as a teaching resource when working with teams and coaches.

Selecting your Class

Selecting “placeable” items for a specific class is the foundation for a good contest. In many cases the products can be compared relatively well, with clear distinguishing characteristics. Finding products that have sufficient information, features, and details will help determine whether that class will be easy, difficult or somewhere in between. Select your items/products carefully, keeping in mind any and all relevant comparable factors.

Sometimes the supporting scenario for each class of products is what makes the class more or less difficult. When preparing scenarios, be certain that it is clearly written and does not confuse the contestant. Providing unnecessary information in a scenario is acceptable, but one that is not written well can make all the difference and build inconsistency into the contest.

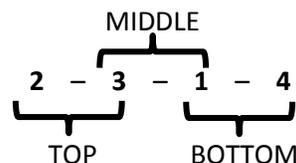
In a class of four products, setting the “official” placing is only half of the challenge. Using the scenario, the official placing should be written from left-to-right with 1st Place listed first, and 4th Place listed last. Here is an example:

Product 1 – 3rd Place
 Product 2 – 1st Place
 Product 3 – 2nd Place
 Product 4 – 4th Place

Write the placing
 2 – 3 – 1 – 4

Setting Cuts for Each Class

Once you have determined your official placing for the class, the “cuts” are what determine how each of the 24 different combinations of placings by contestants will be scored. In order to set cuts, you should first group the class into pairs: top pair, middle pair, and bottom pair.



Each pair should be compared to each other and assigned a value based on the “Cut Value” in the table provided. Each pair is assigned a cut value based on the type of decision that is required to distinguish between the two products.

For example, if the top pair (2 & 3) was very similar and both met all the needs of the scenario, the decision to place one over the other would be very difficult. According to the table, you would assign it a small cut (1-2 points). This translates to a small penalty for placing 3 first over 2.

However, if the middle pair (**3 & 1**) was much more different and one met more of the scenario criteria than the other, this would make the decision between those two much easier. As a result, you would assign that pair a larger cut (5-6 points for relatively easy). As a result, switching the two and placing **1** over **3** would result in a larger penalty.

The bottom pair would follow the same considerations as the top and middle pair as it relates to how difficult or easy it would be to decide on which is better. Assign a lower cut for a difficult decision or a higher cut for an easier decision.

Here is another example. When assigning the cuts, here are two different ways to represent the official placing and cuts for each respective class.

Official Placing & Cuts	2 – 1 – 3 – 4 2 – 5 – 1	2₂ 1₅ 3₁ 4
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Both of these mean the same thing:

- The official placing is **2** is 1st, **1** is 2nd, **3** is 3rd, and **4** is 4th
- The top pair was a difficult decision (2 points)
- The middle pair was a relatively easy decision (5 points)
- The bottom pair was a very difficult decision (1 point)

It is important to remember that the total of all cuts cannot be larger than 15 points.

Scoring a Class

There are 50 points available on each class, thus a perfect score (a rank that agrees with the official placing) equals 50 points. There are a number of tools that can be used to help you calculate a contestant's score based on the official placing and cuts. However, in order to properly select and place a class, you need to understand how to do this manually. Most contests use these tools to expedite calculations. However, 4-H members can learn to calculate their own score manually.

Official Placing 2 – 1 – 3 – 4
Cuts 2 – 5 – 1

To calculate the score on a Sample Placing, you need to use an organized method such as the one provided below:

Sample #1 Contestant Placing 2 – 3 – 1 – 4

The sample placed 2 over 3 .	This agrees with the official.	Deduct 0.
The sample placed 2 over 1 .	This agrees with the official.	Deduct 0.
The sample placed 2 over 4 .	This agrees with the official.	Deduct 0.
The sample placed 3 over 1 .	This disagrees with the official.	Deduct 5.
The sample placed 3 over 4 .	This agrees with the official.	Deduct 0.
The sample placed 1 over 4 .	This agrees with the official.	Deduct 0.

The total deduction for this sample is 5 points (out of 50), so the placing receives 45 points. This sample reflects simply the middle pair (**1 – 3**) having been switched, making the calculation easy. However, if the contestant placing is significantly different than the official placing, it can get more difficult to calculate.

Sample #2 Contestant Placing 3 – 1 – 4 – 2

The sample placed 3 over 1.	This disagrees with the official.	Deduct 5.
The sample placed 3 over 4.	This agrees with the official.	Deduct 0.
The sample placed 3 over 2.	This disagrees with the official.	Deduct 7 (2 + 5).
The sample placed 1 over 4.	This agrees with the official.	Deduct 0.
The sample placed 1 over 2.	This disagrees with the official.	Deduct 2.
The sample placed 4 over 2.	This disagrees with the official.	Deduct 8 (2 + 5 + 1).

The total deduction for this sample is 22 points (out of 50), so the placing receives 28 points.

Developing and coaching a 4-H Consumer Decision Making team requires that the entire team (including the coaches and event organizers) understand how classes are selected, placed, and scored. Without this basic appreciation, it is challenging for leaders to provide good and effective teaching opportunities for their teams. It is especially challenging for teams to develop the skills they need when classes are not selected, placed or scored accurately and consistently. Practicing is important in building great consumer skills, but practicing on sound teaching tools is much more critical to the process.

References:

University of North Carolina Extension, Livestock Judging Manual.

<http://www.unce.unr.edu/4H/programs/stem/files/pdf/LivestockJudgingManuaMissouri.pdf>

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension, How to Score Classes for Livestock Judging.

<http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/pages/publicationD.jsp?publicationId=1392>