



# NAVHS HANDBOOK

NAVHS – 1<sup>ST</sup> EDITION - 3/23/25

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# General Information

## Mission

To provide a virtual horse show experience tailored for adapted programs and individuals with special needs, making equestrian activities accessible and inclusive for all.

Our competitions are open to the following:

- Individuals with physical, cognitive, or emotional disabilities
- Hippotherapy Participants
- Veterans
- Neurotypical Individuals who participate in adaptive programs on academy horses.

Beyond encouraging a sense of accomplishment, we aim to create a rewarding experience that celebrates participants' goals, determination, and perseverance.

Our competitions support and empower adaptive programs with opportunities to provide participants with competitive shared experiences, encourage unity and engagement along with rewards directly for programs.

NAVHS competitions provide individuals and programs not just the opportunity to virtually compete but to also earn points towards day and year-end high-point awards.

The Official National Adaptive Virtual Horse Shows Handbook shall govern all NAVHS competitions. National Adaptive Virtual Horse Shows has created these Guidelines based upon Path International, the Special Olympics, the United States Equestrian Federation and with references to CHA and RDA

In case of a grievance, competition directors will consult the judge(s) and the NAVHS Handbook. Their decision will be final.

# Competitions

The following is a list of competitions available in National Adaptive Virtual Horse Shows.

The various competitions are intended to offer virtual horse show opportunities for competitors of all abilities participating in adaptive horseback riding programs. Program Directors, Instructors and Trainers are responsible for providing training for their competitors and volunteers and for competition selection appropriate to each competitor's skill and interest.

1. Adaptive
2. Veterans
3. English Dressage
4. Western Dressage
5. In Hand
6. Academy
7. Hippotherapy Achievement Goal
8. Carriage Driving
9. Equicizer/mechanical horse/ non motorized

## Entry Information

Entries must be received by the competition management on or before the entry deadline. No post entries will be allowed.

- Competitors are responsible for choosing their eligibility status and division.
- Competitors are responsible for entering their correct class(s)
- Competitors are only permitted to participate in one division and discipline per competition.
- Classes and Divisions are based on Eligibility Status
- Sections are based on Age and/or Discipline
- Each competitor is eligible to compete in all classes available in their Division but it is not required.
- Competitors are permitted to participate in all competitions for which they are eligible.
- Competitors are encouraged to compete according to their skills.
- Trainers/Instructors/Programs assume all responsibility for their volunteers.

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Trainers/Instructors/Programs assume all responsibility for their volunteers.

## Cancelation Policy

If a competitor is unable to compete and the cancellation is received before the competition's closing date a full refund will be issued.

After the competition's closing date, money will be refunded only in cases of medical emergencies. A letter from a doctor or veterinarian is required. The office fees are not refundable.

## Eligibility

To participate, an exhibitor must be one of the following:

- **Adaptive Status.** Have a medically diagnosed condition that causes a permanent impairment that can be measured objectively.
- **Veteran status.** Be or have been a member of our Armed Forces participating in an Adaptive riding or horsemanship program, taking lessons on a horse that is primarily a lesson/program horse.
- **Adaptive Academy status.** Be a participant in an Adaptive riding program, taking lessons on a horse that is primarily a lesson/program horse.
- **Open Academy status.** Be a participant in an open lesson program, taking lessons on a horse that is a lesson/program horse. No privately owned horse/competitor entries
- A **competitor** who is participating in a Hippotherapy program with a licensed therapist.

## Academy Competitors

- **Adaptive Academy:** Must be a participant in an Adaptive program, taking lessons on horses that are primarily lesson horses owned or leased by the adaptive program.
- Horses privately owned by an Academy division competitor are not eligible unless they are primarily used as a program lesson horse
- **Open Academy:** Must be a participant in an open lesson program, taking lessons on a horse that is a lesson/program horse.
- No privately owned horse/competitor entries permitted in the Open Academy division

Academy competitors will need to declare

- Division
- Age
- Discipline
- Section; Open Academy or Adaptive Academy

## Primary Impairment

**Cognitive.** Intellectual impairment is the primary disability, examples but not limited to

Intellectual disability

TBI/ABI

Autism Spectrum

Stroke/Alzheimer's/dementias

ADD/ADHD

Learning Disabilities

Downs Syndrome

MS



**Physical.** Physical impairment is primary disability, examples but not limited to

Visual Impairment	Neurological disorders
Spinal cord injury	Amputations
Musculoskeletal disorder.	Cerebral palsy
Spina bifida.	Hearing impairment
Epilepsy.	Paralysis

**Emotional.** Emotional impairment is the primary disability, examples but not limited to

Anxiety	Dissocial disorders
Bipolar	Disruptive behaviors
Eating disorders	Schizophrenia
OCD	PTSD
Depression.	Stress disorders

Adaptive competitors will need to declare

- Primary Impairment
- Division
- Age
- Discipline

## Veteran Competitors

- Need to have or are currently serving in our Armed Services
- Need to be a participant in an Adaptive program, working with horses that are primarily program lesson horses.
- Horses privately owned by a Veteran competitor are not eligible unless the horse is primarily used as a program lesson horse

Veteran competitors will need to declare

- Division
- Age
- Discipline

## Academy Competitors

- Must be a participant in an Adaptive program, taking lessons on horses that are primarily lesson horses owned or leased by the adaptive program.
- Horses privately owned by an Academy division competitor are not eligible unless they are primarily used as a program lesson horse

Academy competitors will need to declare

- Division
- Age
- Discipline

## Sections

1. Age
2. Discipline

Age sections

- Nuggets 3 - 6
- Younglings 7 - 13
- Juniors 14 -21
- Adults 22 - 45
- Primers 46 - 69
- Silver Stirrups 70 and over

- Age sections may be combined based on the median age of competitors

## Disciplines

The conventional and traditional tack, attire, and manner of communication with the horse which falls under one of the following categories:

1. English
2. Western

## Divisions

- Based upon gaits and the level of support a competitor requires
- Each competition prize list will define division requirements within each division. See prize list for specifications. Divisions may vary per competition prize list.
- Competitors can only choose one division per competition

### Supported Division

- a. Maiden Walk Only
- b. Maiden Walk/Trot or Jog
- c. Novice Walk/Trot or Jog

### Limited support Division

- a. Intermediate Walk Only
- b. Advanced Intermediate Walk
- c. Intermediate Walk/Trot or Jog
- d. Advanced Intermediate Walk/Trot or Jog

### Independent Division

- a. Advanced Walk
- b. Advanced Walk/Trot or Jog
- c. Advanced Walk/Trot or Jog/Canter/Lope

## Supported Division

### **Maiden Walk Only**

A Leader is required and zero to two side-walkers permitted.  
The horse will be on the lead at all times.

### **Maiden Walk/Trot or Jog**

A Leader is required and zero to two side-walkers are permitted.  
The horse will be on the lead at all times.

### **Novice Walk/Trot or Jog**

A Leader is required, and zero to two side-walkers are permitted.  
The horse will be off-lead at the walk and on-lead at the trot or jog.

## Limited Support Division

### **Intermediate Walk Only**

A spotter is required, who will remain at the horse's head, and zero to two side-walkers are permitted. The horse will be off-lead at all times.

### **Advanced Intermediate Walk**

A spotter is required, who will remain within approximately 10 feet from the horse's head, and no side-walkers are permitted. The horse will be off-lead at all times.

### **Intermediate Walk/Trot or Jog**

A spotter is required, who will remain at the horse's head, and zero to two side-walkers are permitted. The horse will be off-lead at all times.

### **Advanced Intermediate Walk/Trot or Jog**

A spotter is required, who will remain within approximately 10 feet from the horse's head, and no side-walkers are permitted. The horse will be off-lead at all times.

## Independent Division

### **Advanced Walk**

Competitors will ride independently at the walk. Competitors must have a spotter who, at their discretion, will remain in the center of the ring or just outside of the arena.

### **Advanced Walk/Trot or Jog**

Competitors will ride independently at the walk and trot or jog. Competitors must have a spotter who, at their discretion, will remain in the center of the ring or just outside of the arena.

### **Advanced Walk/Trot or Jog/Canter**

Competitors will ride independently at the walk, trot or jog, and canter. Competitors must have a spotter who, at their discretion, will remain in the center of the ring or just outside of the arena.

## Classes

### Classes

- Equitation
- Obstacles
- Patterns
- English Dressage
- Western Dressage
- In hand obstacles
- Showmanship
- Obstacle Showmanship
- Liberty Obstacle
- Hippotherapy Goal Achievement Award
- Pleasure Driving
- Reinsmanship
- Obstacle Pattern Driving
- Equicizer Equitation
- Equicizer Musical Freestyle
- Equicizer Position Challenge Pattern

1. Classes will have a maximum of 10 competitors
2. Classes with fewer than 3 entries may be combined with a similar eligibility division
3. Classes will be divided after 11 riders.
  - a. First by median age groups, more than 2 age groups may be used
  - b. Second by discipline
4. Classes will be awarded to 8th place. Participation ribbons will be awarded to the remaining competitors.
5. Points will be awarded to the top 6 placings to competitors and programs.
6. Participation points will be awarded to programs for all competitors.

## Class #'s

- Adaptive 1-30
- Hippotherapy. 50-52
- Veterans. 101-130
- Dressage. 200-279
- In hand 301-331
- Carriage Driving 401-455
- Equicizer 501-527

## Horse/Pony Eligibility

- Horses/Ponies must be primarily utilized for lessons at an Adaptive program (owned or leased by the adaptive program).
- Horses/Ponies must be serviceably sound
- Horses/Ponies should be selected based on the rider's weight, height, and ability.

### Serviceably sound.

- Horses must be able to perform the intended task with minimal signs of lameness or stress.
- Must not show clear evidence of lameness.

# General Showing Criteria

- Results as shown by the performance of the horse are not to be considered more important than that of the competitor's performance.
- Unsoundness of the horse does not penalize a competitor unless it is sufficiently severe to impair the required performance. In such cases, the imposition of a penalty is at the judge's discretion. Horses must be serviceable sound.
- Riders will in no way be attached to the horse, tack, or equipment.

Competitors are allowed to hold the saddle with either hand without penalty.

## Attire

1. Traditional discipline-appropriate competition attire is requested to participate in a class.
  - Chaps are not required
  - Tall boots are not required
  - Gloves are not required
  - Jackets are not required but would be appreciated
2. English, western and driving attire will follow traditional practices with the exception of acceptable adaptation equipment.
3. Boots: Appropriate and suitable footwear required.  
**NOTE:** We do understand that wearing a boot with a heel may not be appropriate for some competitors due to a physical disability. Please make sure that the competitor has the appropriate safety stirrup during competition.  
Examples; Quick Release Safety stirrups, S-shaped stirrups, Devonshire boots
3. Helmets: English and Western. All competitors must wear protective SEI-ASTM approved helmets with chin harness fastened at all times.
  - A western hat may be affixed over the helmet in western sections.
  - **NO ONE WILL BE JUDGED IF NOT WEARING A PROTECTIVE ASTM/SEI APPROVED HELMET.**
5. English attire
  - A short, dark colored riding coat.
  - A conservative color riding shirt or long-sleeved shirt with a collar
  - Tie or choker.
  - Breeches or jodhpurs.
  - Gloves are optional.
  - Boots with heels.
  - Approved helmet.

- Spurs are permitted for Veterans and Academy competitors.
- Spurs are NOT permitted for Adaptive competitors

#### 6. Western attire

- Pants/J Jeans
- A long-sleeved, collared shirt of a conservative color
- Belts, neckties, kerchiefs, bolos, chaps, and gloves are optional.
- Approved Helmet
- A western type hat worn on an approved helmet is permitted
- Spurs are permitted for Veterans and Academy competitors.
- Spurs are NOT permitted for Adaptive competitors

## Tack

- Confirm any unconventional/questionable tack or equipment prior to videoing
- The judge or competition directors may deem equipment unsafe or abusive/cruel.

#### Tack and Equipment

- Competitors and/or their trainers/instructors/program directors are responsible for but not limited to, using appropriate equipment, arena, saddles, bridles, lead ropes, carriages, safety stirrups, and footwear.
- Competitors and/or their trainers/instructors/program directors are responsible for deciding appropriate adaptive equipment for the horse and competitor.
- Competitors may in no way be attached to the horse
- English and western equipment will follow traditional practices with the exception of acceptable adaptation equipment.
- Equipment should be appropriate to the riding ability of the competitor and be suitable for the horse.
- Halters are required for all supported classes for use by the handler if needed.
- The lead line must be fastened to the halter and not to the bit or bridle.
- The halter may be over or under the bridle
- Reins may be constructed of various safe and suitable material
- Bridles need to be appropriate for the competitor and horse and may be traditional, bit less, or reins on a halter. Competitors may ride one or 2 handed.
- Saddles appropriate for division and competitor, traditionally English type or Western type
- Cavessons and nosebands are optional
- Bridles need to be appropriate for the rider and horse and may be traditional, bit less, or reins on a halter. Competitors may ride one or 2 handed.
- Saddles appropriate for division and rider, traditionally English type or Western typ



#### Whips/crops, under saddle

- Whips may not exceed 40 inches
- Whips are measured from the top of the handle to the end of the loop or lash
- No appendages of any kind/ type are permitted on the whip
- A competitor may carry one whip or the horse handler or 1 side walker may carry 1 whip

#### Driving Whips

- Whips may not exceed 84 inches
- Trainer/instructor is responsible for choosing an suitable length whip
- Each turnout is permitted 1 whip which may be handled by the driver or the Able-Bodied Whip (ABW)

#### Spurs

- Discipline-appropriate spurs permitted for Academy and Veterans only

#### **Prohibited Tack and Equipment**

- Bearing, side or running reins.
- Fly masks, blinkers
- Draw reins
- tie downs
- Head setting devices; I.e chambon, de gogue









#### **Permitted Miscellaneous equipment**

- Conservative colored boots
- nose nets
- Conservative colored bandages
- Bell boots
- Leather, rope, Nylon Halter, preferred with a breakaway piece
- Standing, Running and German martingales used only with a snaffle
- Cruper
- Anti grazing rein

## Outside assistance

- Outside assistance will be penalized at the judge's discretion.
- Electronic communication devices used to communicate between competitors and individuals outside the ring are prohibited.
- Unauthorized assistance from horse handlers and sidewalkers will result in penalties.
- Horse leaders and/or side-walkers may not give verbal commands or extra physical prompting, except in case of an emergency.

## Hearing impaired

- In place of calling the class procedures, patterns, courses, or tests, cue cards may be used for hearing-impaired competitors.
- Cue cards must be designated as follows:
- Word and/or symbol  
1=Walk, 2=Sitting Trot/Jog, 3=Posting Trot, 4=Canter/Lope,  
for extended gaits add an up arrow , for slow gaits add a down arrow   
Universal Stop Sign=Halt.   
Right & left with arrow    
Circle   
Over   
Weave 

## Visually impaired

In addition to calling the class procedures, patterns, courses, or tests a visually impaired competitor may be auditorily prompted when to turn right, left, halt, or perform a transition.

Any additional cue or words will be considered outside assistance.

## Disqualification of Competitors

- No Helmet in any class.
- No sound in the video.
- The horse is not serviceably sound. Judges and show directors will consult. Their decision is final
- Visible horse neglect: open wounds or sores, low body score, etc

## Equitation, Obstacle, and Pattern (Adaptive, Academy, Veteran)

The goal of these classes is to showcase a competitor's horsemanship and equestrian skills, highlighting their equitation, communication, and ability to effectively guide and connect with their horse.

The following criteria will be listed in order of importance and evaluated for each division when judging equitation, obstacle, and pattern classes.

- Rider's basic riding position
- Rider's proper equitation
- Rider's use of aids, natural and artificial
- Rider's position in motion
- Rider's communication with their horse.

## Classes

### **Equitation**

Competitors will be judged on their basic riding position, proper equitation, position in motion, use of aids, and their communication with their horse. Results as shown by the performance of the horse are not to be considered more important than the horsemanship of the competitor

### **Obstacle**

Competitors are judged on successfully completing each obstacle using good horsemanship, their communication with their horse, proper equitation, and the proper use of aids. The competitor's attempt to complete an obstacle properly will be considered more important than the horse's performance

### **Pattern Classes**

Competitors are judged on successfully completing the pattern, their communication with their horse, proper equitation, the use of good horsemanship and proper use of aids. The competitor's attempt to properly complete the pattern correctly will be considered more important than the horse's performance.

## Trot diagonal

- Trot may be performed at sitting or posting
- Jog should be performed sitting
- Trot diagonals will be judged in the Adaptive Independent division, Veteran, and Academy classes.

## Riders Position

### English

#### Basic Position:

- Eyes forward
- There should be a straight vertical line, from the ear, dropping down through the center of the shoulder and hip, touching the back of the heel.
- Shoulders back
- Upper body straight, but not stiff or hollow-backed.
- Hands slightly apart, over and in front of the horse's withers
- Heels down
- Calf and leg in contact with the horse and slightly behind the girth
- Stirrup on the ball of the foot

## Western

### Basic Position

- Eyes forward
- There should be a straight vertical line, from the ear, dropping down through the center of the shoulder and hip, touching the back of the heel.
- The stirrup should be just short enough to allow the heels to be lower than the toes with a slight bend in the knee and the toes directly under the knee.
- Feet should be placed in the stirrup with the weight on the ball of the foot.
- Arms are held in a relaxed, easy manner with the shoulders back and down.
- The upper arm should be in a straight line with the body.

### Reins

- The method of holding the reins is optional and the excess length of reins may fall on either side
- The position of the hand not being used for reining is optional.
- The hands should be slightly apart, over and in front of the horse's withers, and making a straight line from the horse's mouth to the rider's elbow.
- When split reins are used one finger between the reins is permitted.
- When using romal reins, no finger between the reins is permitted.
- The rider can hold the romal or the end of split reins to keep them from swinging and to adjust the length of the reins.

### Arena material

Obstacle build material will consist of

- poles (not raised). 10ft average
  - Cones (various sizes permitted)
  - Barrels
  - Jump blocks
  - Additional materials a program deems safe & appropriate are permitted to be used as obstacles.
- Any concerns inquire with the jury before videoing

Patterns

- cones

# Hippotherapy Goal Achievement Award

- This division is for individuals who are participating in a hippotherapy program with an OT (Occupational Therapist), PT (Physical Therapist), and/or SLP (Speech Language Pathologist).
- The therapist/participant can establish up to 3 goals for a competitor to achieve during a show series time frame. 1 goal per class
- A video of the goal being achieved will be sent in to verify the achievement
- Awards will be presented for achieved goals.
- No Riding skills will be acceptable as a goal
- Helmets are required.
- Traditional show attire is not a requirement.
- Traditional tack is not a requirement.

A year-end achievement award will be awarded to a competitor reaching 9 goals (Champion) or 5-8 (Reserve Champion)

## Dressage

The goal of dressage is to develop the horse into a happy, well-balanced athlete through harmonious training. As both horse and rider progress in their education, the horse becomes calm, supple, flexible, and responsive, while also gaining confidence, attentiveness, and a willing attitude.

The dressage adaptive tests are designed to showcase the competitor's skills. The competitors' abilities take precedence over the horse's movement and performance.

Collective Marks are awarded after the competitor has finished his/her performance in the following categories:

- 1) Rider's balance and equitation.
- 2) Rider's correct use of and the effectiveness of the aids.
- 3) Accuracy of the test
- 4) Rider's communication with and direction of the horse
- 5) Maintaining harmony and consistency with the horse.

## Position of the Rider

- There should be a straight vertical line, from the ear, dropping down through the center of the shoulder and hip, touching the back of the heel.
- Shoulders back
- Upper body straight and free and not stiff or hollow-backed
- Hands slightly apart, low and near the horse's withers
- The competitor should be well-balanced and the legs should be steady.
- The elbows and arms should be close to the body, enabling the rider to follow the movement of the horse smoothly and freely, as well as to apply his/her aids.
- Riding with both hands is not obligatory.
- All movements should be executed without apparent effort of the rider.

## Scoring

Each movement will receive a score from 0 to 10. The lowest mark is 0 and is given to a movement that is "not executed", which means that practically nothing of the required movement has been performed. Ten represents the highest mark.

The scale of marks is as follows:

10 Excellent  
9 Very Good  
8 Good  
7 Fairly Good  
6 Satisfactory  
5 Sufficiently  
4 Insufficiently  
3 Fairly Bad  
2 Bad  
1 Very Bad  
0 Not Executed

- All movements and certain transitions from one to another which have to be marked by the judge(s) are numbered on the judge's sheets.
- The mark for each movement in the dressage test is first established by whether the movement is performed either insufficiently (4 or below) or sufficiently (5 or above).

- Accuracy is a factor in the movement.
- A movement that must be carried out at a certain point in the arena should be performed at the moment when the competitor's body is at that point.
- Some Collective Marks and movements are given a coefficient, which means they are multiplied by the coefficient number. Coefficients are noted on the test sheets
- If a problem appears once, it may be treated lightly by the judge. Repeated occurrences should be penalized more severely.
- After each test is completed and the judge completes the Collective Marks, the score is obtained in the following manner:
- The marks are multiplied by the corresponding coefficients, where applicable, and then totaled.
- Penalty points incurred for errors in the execution of the tests are then deducted on each judge's sheet.
- Placings begin with the highest and end with the lowest points

## Errors

- When a competitor makes an "error of the course or test" (e.g. takes the wrong turn, omits a movement, etc.) a deduction of points as follows
  - a) The first time 1 point
  - b) The second time 1 points
  - c) The third time 2 points
  - d) The fourth time 2 points
  - e) The fifth time 3 points

## Ties

- If competitors have an equal score, the competitor with the highest score under the Collective Marks shall be declared the winner.
- If the scores in the Collective Marks also tie, the judge may be required to review the score sheets and either declare a winner or decide to maintain the tie.



# Tests

All trot movements in either western or english dressage may be ridden sitting or rising.

## Walk Only

- Maiden Walk
- Intermediate Walk
- Advanced Intermediate Walk
- Independent Advanced Walk

## Walk/Trot Level 1

- Maiden Walk Trot/Jog
- Novice Walk Trot/Jog
- Intermediate Walk Trot/Jog

## Walk/Trot Level 2

- Advanced Intermediate Walk/Trot/Jog
- Independent Advanced Walk/Trot/Jog

## Walk/Trot/Canter

- Independent Walk/Trot/Canter/Lope

# Execution of Dressage Tests

## Calling Tests

- All National Adaptive Virtual Horse Show Dressage tests may be called/read.
- Lateness in calling the movements and errors in the reading of the test will not relieve the rider from error penalties.
- Calling the test is limited to reading the movement as it is written only once. Repeating movements by the caller will constitute unauthorized assistance.
- Except for safety reasons, unauthorized assistance by the person calling the test or anyone else is prohibited and is cause for elimination.

## Salute

- At the salute, the rider may take the reins in one hand, let the other arm drop loosely along the body, or keep reins in two hands and then incline the head in a slight bow.

## Use of Voice

In the adaptive competition use of voice is permitted.

In the academy and veterans' competition

- The use of the voice in any way whatsoever, including clucking of the tongue once or repeatedly, is a fault and will involve a deduction of 1 point mark for the movement where this occurred.

## Gaits

All trot movements in either western or english dressage may be ridden sitting or rising.

Halt

- At the halt, the horse's neck should be raised, the poll high, and the head slightly in front of the vertical.
- While remaining "on the bit" and maintaining a light and soft contact with the rider's hands the horse should be ready to move off at the indication of the rider.

Walk—The following walks are recognized:

- Medium—A clear, regular, and unconstrained walk in which the horse is energetic but calm, moving with even, determined steps, showing four distinctly marked. The hind feet should step forward into the prints of the forefeet. The rider should maintain a light, steady contact with the horse's mouth.
- Free—A relaxed variation within the walk in which the horse is allowed complete freedom to lower and stretch out his head and neck.

Trot

- Working— The horse moves in proper balance and, remaining “on the bit,” goes forward with even, elastic steps and good hock action, which underlines the importance of impulsion originating from activity of the hindquarters.

Jog

- The jog should show free, active, and regular steps.
- Excessive speed or slowness will be penalized. The jog is judged by the regularity and elasticity of the steps, the cadence, and the impulsion. This originates from a supple back and well-engaged hindquarters, and by the ability to maintain the same rhythm and natural balance in the jog.

Canter

- This is a pace in which a horse moves in proper balance and, remaining “on the bit,” goes forward with even, light, and cadenced strides and push from the hindquarters which underlines the importance of impulsion originating from the activity of the hindquarters.

Lope

- The lope has three equal, regular beats with a time of suspension after the third beat. The lope has a typically slower tempo than a canter and must keep the three-beat rhythm or the regularity is lost. The lope must be balanced, rhythmic, straight, adjustable, and supple, showing a willingness to move forward in self-carriage with engaged hindquarters.
- Excessive speed or slowness must be penalized.

# IN HAND

In the In-Hand competition, the focus should be on the competitor's ability to handle and present the horse, with safety as the top priority. The horse serves as a partner, showcasing the handler's skill and technique.

The following criteria will be listed in order of importance and evaluated for each division when judging the in-hand classes.

- Handlers poise, confidence, and a balanced, functional body position.
- Handlers ability to execute maneuvers with precision and smoothness
- Handlers use of aids, natural and artificial
- Handlers correctly completing the pattern
- Handlers correctly navigating each obstacle,
- Handlers communication with their horse.

## Class Routine

- Enter the arena leading the horse at a walk.
- Complete pattern/obstacles
- Nod to the camera when complete

## Appearance of the horse:

- Turnout of the horse  
Clean, well-brushed hair coat (Dirt and stains are objectionable).  
The horse should be clean around the eyes, ears, muzzle, nostrils, between the legs, and around the tail.
- The mane, tail, and forelock must be clean and free of tangles.

- It is prohibited to use any ornaments on the aforementioned.
- Manes and forelocks, English or Western may be braided.

## Attire, Western or English

- Clean, neat, and workmanlike clothes, appropriate footwear, and an approved safety helmet are appropriate.

## Tack

- Tack should be neat, clean and in good repair.
- Horses must be in a halter.
- Chains on leads are permitted if under the chin. Not permitted to be over the horse's nose.

## Leading:

- The competitor should lead from the left side of the horse. Exception: the competitor must lead from right due to physical issues. Competitors must remain on the chosen side for the entirety of the class.
- The competitor should stay in position by the left side of the horse's head, "eye to eye" with the horse. The competitor should not touch the horse with his/her hands or feet.
- Excess lead shank/rein should be held safely and neatly in the left hand.
- A tightly coiled/rolled lead shank or reins wrapped around the competitor's hand will be considered a major disobedience. The judge will penalize at their discretion
- Emphasis should be placed on the control of the horse. The horse should move readily, freely, and quietly at the walk and/or jog/trot, with a minimum of urging by the competitor.
- All pivot turns of 90 degrees or larger should be executed to the right. Unless the handler must lead from the right side, in which pivots of 90 degrees or larger should be executed to the left.

## Poise, alertness, and merits:

- The competitor is aware of the horse and continuously handles it in a safe manner.
- The competitor continuously shows the horse at all times and is not distracted by persons and things inside or outside of the ring.

## Disobediences

- Poorly groomed horse
- Improper position of competitor or switching sides while leading the horse
- Changing of hands holding the lead or lead rope dragging the ground
- Backing or leading crooked
- Maneuvers not performed at designated markers
- Touching the horse with hands, body, or feet

## Showmanship

The goal of Showmanship is to evaluate the competitor's ability to execute, in concert with their horse, a set of maneuvers with precision and smoothness while exhibiting poise, confidence, and a balanced, functional body position.

The following maneuvers are possible elements for individual test patterns:

1. Lead the horse at a walk and/or jog/trot
2. Back in a straight or curved line
3. Halt
4. Pivot or turn—quarter, half, or full (360 degrees)

## Obstacle

Competitors are judged on their ability to successfully navigate each obstacle with clear communication with the horse and proper use of aids. Greater emphasis is placed on the competitor's effort to correctly complete each obstacle rather than the horse's performance.

## Obstacle Showmanship

Competitors are judged equally on their ability to correctly complete the pattern, navigate each obstacle, and demonstrate proper showmanship.

## At Liberty Obstacle

Competitors are evaluated on their horsemanship skills by successfully navigating each obstacle without the use of a lead rope or physical contact with the horse.

**NOTE:** This is only open to independent competitors

## Carriage Driving

The Carriage Driving competition should highlight the drivers ability to effectively guide and connect with their horse. The focus should be on the competitor's ability to drive and present the horse, with safety as the top priority.

The following criteria will be listed in order of importance and evaluated for each division when judging the Carriage Driving classes.

- Drivers poise, confidence, and body position.
- Drivers ability to execute maneuvers with precision and smoothness
- Drivers use of aids, natural and artificial
- Drivers correctly completing the pattern
- Drivers correctly navigating each obstacle,
- Drivers communication with their horse.

# Driving Classes

## **Pleasure Driving**

Competitors are judged on the partnership between the horse and the driver, with

emphasize on the presentation, the driver's reinsmanship, and the horse's manners. There should be a relaxed and harmonious partnership between horse and driver which will be considered more important than the horse's performance

## **Reinsmanship**

Competitors will be judged on the driver's reinsmanship. Reinsmanship is the skill of communicating with the driving horse through the reins, whip, body position and voice. There should be a relaxed and harmonious partnership between horse and driver which will be considered more important than the horse's performance

## **Obstacle Pattern**

Competitors are judged equally on successfully completing each obstacle and their reinsmanship. Emphasis on their communication with the horse and proper use of aids. The competitor's attempt to properly complete the course correctly will be considered more important than the horse's performance.

## **Dressage Driving**

Dressage develops and displays polish, discipline, and athleticism of equine and driver working together. Competitors will be judged individually in specified patterns and gaits to demonstrate the skills, obedience, and development appropriate to their levels. There should be a relaxed and harmonious partnership between horse and driver which will be considered more important than the horse's performance



## **General**

- Instructors/trainers/programs are responsible for ensuring suitability and safety.
- An Able-Bodied Whip (ABW) must be in the carriage at all times
- Carriages must be appropriate for competitors needs.
- Certified Helmets are mandatory for everyone in the carriage
- Headers must be readily available, with a lead rope
- 2 sets of reins required in all classes

## **Attire**

- Certified helmets are mandatory for everyone in the carriage
- Drivers and passengers should be dressed conservatively
- Long sleeves and brown leather gloves are suggested for all drivers and passengers in driving classes.
- Gentlemen may wear a coat or jacket in any class
- Ladies may wear a conservative dress, tailored suit, or slacks.
- Optional attire; a hat, an apron or knee rug and gloves.

## **Vehicles**

- Single turnouts only
- The vehicle should be suitable for the competitor.
- Drivers should strive to present an appropriate turnout.
- "Appropriate" indicates the suitability, balance and pleasing appearance of the combination of horse and vehicle.

- Factors determining appropriate may include compatibility for driver and size, type and weight of horse and vehicle.

## **Equipment**

- Bridles should fit snugly to prevent catching on the vehicle or other pieces of harness. A throatlatch and a full noseband is mandatory.
- A bridle with reins attached and passed through the saddle terrets must be in place whenever a horse is put to a vehicle.
- Under no conditions shall a bridle be removed from a horse while it is put to a vehicle.
- The horse must never be left unattended while put to a vehicle.
- Black or russet harness is considered appropriate
- A correctly-fitting harness saddle is important for the comfort of the horse.
- One whip per turnout permitted. This may be handled by the driver or the Able-Bodied Whip (ABW)
- A lead rope should be available for ease of control by the header
- Protective boots are permitted

## **Horse**

- Braiding of the mane is optional. Tails are not traditionally braided.
- It is prohibited to tie a tail to a vehicle or harness.

## **Measurement of Vehicle and Obstacles**

1. For "traffic cones," adjustment is made as follows:

- The track width of each vehicle should be taken at ground level at the widest width of wheels.
- The allowance is added to the track width.

- The cones are aligned and measured from the base of the cone corner to the opposite cone corner.
- This allows the greatest distance between the corners of the base and of the cone.

## 2. Clearance

- Maiden, Intermediate and Advanced Intermediate Walk Only  
Maiden, Novice, Intermediate and Advanced Intermediate Walk Trot,  
Added Clearance: 24"
- Advanced Walk Only  
Advanced Walk Trot  
Added Clearance 18"

## Obstacles Markers

- The course may have Start and Finish markers
- Suitable decorative materials permitted
- Safe and appropriate driveable obstacles such as cones.
- Cones should be no taller than 24".
- Cone pairs may be numbered with red and white markers and placed on the cones themselves.

# Equicizer/Mechanical Horse

This unique competition highlights the competitors ability to demonstrate a variety of riding skills. The focus should be on the competitor's ability to exhibit their skills with precision, poise and confidence.

The following criteria will be listed in order of importance and evaluated for each division when judging the Equicizer classes.

- Competitors equitation
- Competitors poise and confidence .
- Competitors position in motion
- Competitors ability to execute skills with consistency and smoothness
- Competitors use of aids, natural and artificial
- Competitors correctly completing the pattern
- Competitors execution of commands
- Competitors creativity
- Competitors accuracy

## Classes

### **Equitation**

Competitors will be judged on their basic riding position, proper equitation, position in motion, riding skills and poise and confidence, execution of commands.

### **Musical Freestyle**

Competitors will create their choreographed ride to a 90-180 second music clip using required elements. Competitors will be judged on creativity, equitation, position consistency, musical interpretation, poise and confidence.

## **Position Challenge Pattern**

Competitors will demonstrate correct equitation and position through a set pattern of required movements with accuracy and fluidity. Competitors will be judged on their control of their position through the movements and transitions, poise and confidence, pattern accuracy, equitation and execution of commands.

## **General Information**

Any questions/concerns can be forwarded to show management. Show management and/or the appropriate jury will clarify any questions concerning tack, equipment or attire.

## **Mechanical horse**

- Must not be motorized in any way.
- The 'Horse' does not need to be an Equicizer. Any non motorized horse is permitted.

## **Attire**

- Competitors are required to wear a protective ASTM/SEI approved helmet, with full chin harness fastened at all times. A western hat may be affixed over the helmet in western events.
- Traditional discipline appropriate clothing is requested to participate in a class.
- English and western attire will follow traditional practices with the exception of acceptable adaptation equipment
- Appropriate and suitable footwear required
- Exception: Musical Freestyle. Attire may be customized to Freestyle routine. Freestyle attire must not interfere with the judges ability to visually confirm that the requirements are being achieved. Helmets are required
- If judge is unable to see requirements due to attire a "0" will be awarded for that requirement.

## **Tack and Equipment**

- Competitors may use appropriate and acceptable adaptive equipment without penalty
- English and western equipment will follow traditional practices with the exception of acceptable adaptation and Musical Freestyle.
- Reins can be made from a variety of materials.

## **Arena**

### **Arena (for Dressage competition, see below)**

- The arena should measure approximately 60' wide by 120' long, or as close as possible depending on your facility.
- Call sheets are based on these dimensions.
- The arena must be defined.
- Class calls, patterns, tests and obstacles should be designed as closely as possible to the provided directions, tests, and course maps.
- It is permissible to decorate the arena with flowers and greenery, as long as the decorations are not distracting to the horses.
- The hippotherapy area (arena) is designed at the discretion of the therapist.
- The Equicizer area (arena) is designed at the program's discretion.

### **Dressage Arena**

#### **Dressage arena dimensions and set up guidelines**

- The arena should measure 40 meters by 20 meters.
- The arena must be defined
- The letters should be placed outside the arena, about .50 meters from the fence. Letter A may be placed 3-5 meters away.
- Small arena letters are required.
- All letters should be clearly marked and large enough to see from a distance.
- It is permissible to decorate the arena with flowers and greenery, as long as the decorations are not distracting to the horses.

## **Performance Awards**

Performance awards will be point based and awarded to the competitors and the programs. See website for details.

Registration required for participation.

# Video

## Video Information

- No special equipment needed. A mobile phone will work
- Videographer Placement: The videographer needs to stand and record from the following locations, (based on dressage court letter placement)

Equitation- Inside of the ring at "X"

Mounted Obstacle Course- Outside of the ring behind letter "C"

Pattern- Inside of the ring at approximately letter "I"

In hand Obstacle Course- Outside of the course behind letter "I"

Showmanship - Outside of the pattern at approximately letter "X"

Obstacle Showmanship - Outside of the course behind letter "I"

Liberty - Outside of the course behind letter "I"

Dressage: The videographer must stand and record from

Outside of the arena behind letter "C" approximately  
where the judge would be located.

Hippotherapy Achievement: Near the competitor and horse, but not in  
the horses way, for judges to view documented goal.

Pleasure Driving - Inside of the ring at "X"

Reinsmanship - Outside of the ring behind letter "C"

Obstacle Pattern - Outside of the ring behind letter "C"

Equicizer - On the side of the competitor and Equicizer showing the entire Equicizer  
and competitor in full at all times.



- The phone/camera should be held horizontally
- For best results try not to be facing into the sun. Do your best
- An indoor/covered arena is acceptable if the lighting is good.
- The better the lighting conditions, the better the video will look.
- The sound must be turned ON. Videos without sound will not be judged
- Enable the phones DO NOT DISTURB feature while videoing
- Videos can not stop and start. They need to be unedited and continuous

## The video

- Competitor should be in the start position to begin
- Video must be continuous from start to finish.
- Begin video with the videographer videoing another device displaying the date and time.
- Without stopping the recording, show a document, whiteboard or paper, showing the rider's name, class number and class name you are recording. DO NOT STOP RECORDING
- Focus the camera on the competitor and entire horse.
- Videographer or assistant will now Announce "you are now being judged".
- Do not physically move, stay in the required 'letter' location.
- Zoom in and out to have a clear view of entire competitor and horse at all times
- When the class is finished, zoom in on the competitor and horse and continue videoing for approximately 3 seconds.
- Absolutely no editing, no stopping and starting of video while completing the class.

## Please attempt to keep

- Equitation and obstacle videos between 4 - 5 minutes.
- Pattern videos between 2 - 4 minutes.
- Hippotherapy videos between 3 - 6 minutes
- Dressage videos between 5 - 7 minutes.
- In-Hand videos between 3-5 minutes
- Carriage Driving videos between 4 - 7 minutes
- Equicizer videos between 2 - 4 minutes

# Glossary

**Academy division:** Classes which are limited to horses whose primary use is being utilized in a lesson program

**Adaptive Program:** A facility, trainer, instructor, riding or horsemanship program which operates a structured and intentional set of activities and/or therapies designed to accommodate individuals with special needs.

**Age divisions:** Competition age is determined by the competitors age on Jan1 of the competition year.

**Conventional:** Adherence to traditional attire and tack which have been in long standing use.

**Disciplines:** The conventional and traditional tack, attire and manner of communication with the horse.

**Hippotherapy:** A form of therapy conducted by a licensed therapist which uses the movement of a horse to achieve functional goals.

**Liberty:** Working with a horse without the use of physical restraint, relying solely on body language, voice, cues and trust to communicate.

**Mechanical Horse:** Equicizer or any horse shaped mechanical riding simulator that does not use any type of motor to operate. Must be entirely powered by human power.

**Musical Freestyle:** Choreographed performance which execute a pattern of movements set to music.

**Liberty:** Working with a horse without the use of physical restraint, relying solely on body language, voice, cues and trust to communicate.

**Open Lesson Program.** A facility, trainer, instructor, riding or horsemanship program which operates a structured and intentional set of activities designed to accommodate primarily neurotypical individuals.

**Outside assistance:** Any help or guidance, verbal and or physical assistance, to the competitor once judging has commenced.

**Owner/lessor:** Person or entity that has legal possession, responsibility and rights of the horse

**Program director:** The individual responsible for overseeing the planning, development and management of the adaptive program.

**Program lesson horse:** A horse who is utilized primarily as a lesson horse. The majority of the horse's use is providing lessons to individuals who are not its owner/lessor.

**Serviceably sound:** Horses must be able to perform the intended task with minimal signs of lameness or stress. Must not show clear evidence of lameness.

**Traditional:** The classic, time honored style, methods and disciplines of riding, training and care.

**Turnout (driving):** The overall presentation of a horse, carriage, harness, driver and ABW.