



June 12 - 14, 2025
Lexington, Kentucky

Rules and Regulations
for the



A MUSTANG HERITAGE FOUNDATION PRODUCTION



updated 4.9.2025 - changes in red

Mustang Heritage Spectacular
Extreme Mustang Makeover classes

The Mustang Heritage Spectacular and Extreme Mustang Makeover is produced by the Mustang Heritage Foundation (MHF) with support from the US Forest Service (USFS). The Mustang Heritage Foundation is dedicated to facilitating successful placements for America's excess wild mustangs and burros through innovative programs, events, and education. In keeping with this mission, the Mustang Heritage Spectacular event and Extreme Mustang Makeover classes (EMM) will promote adoption by showcasing the mustangs' value and trainability through competition.

Not adhering to the competition rules and regulations outlined in this document may result in disqualification from current and/or future Mustang Heritage Foundation competitions and programs.

SUMMARY & DEADLINES

1. Apply to be **APPROVED by the USFS** for mustang adoption
2. **Register for a PICK UP LOCATION – by October 15, 2024**
3. **Register for the EMM competition – December 15, 2024**
4. Competitors **submit progress reports** during the 6-month training period:
January 1, February 1, March 1, April 1, May 1
5. Auction decision deadlines:
 - i) Youth in-hand mustangs OPT-IN to Auction – **request by March 31, 2025**
 - ii) All adult mustangs OPTING-OUT of Auction – **confirm by May 15, 2025**
6. Attend the **Mustang Heritage Spectacular!** June 12-14, 2025
 - i) Compete in the **preliminary classes**
 - ii) Top **in-hand** competitors perform **Freestyles**
 - iii) **EMM Auction**
 - iv) Top 10 Adult under-saddle perform **Freestyles**
 - v) Mustangs move out – **by June 15, 2025 @ 8:00 AM**

Contacts:

Mustang Heritage Foundation
Danielle Aamodt, Director of Operations & Programs
267-972-1491 Danielle@mustangheritagefoundation.org

US Forest Service
Charlene Johnston
530-640-1549 charlene.johnston@usda.gov

GENERAL EMM RULES (ALL EMM DIVISIONS/CLASSES)

Up to **80 total participants** will be selected out of all EMM applications submitted by the deadline. A waitlist will also be maintained in case they can be included.

MHF has the unconditional right to determine eligibility and can, at any time, remove an applicant or participant from a MHF program or event for any reason whether specified or not.

1. EVENT OVERVIEW

- A. Offering the following EMM Divisions with USFS-provided horses:
 - a. EMM Adult under-saddle
 - b. EMM Youth in-hand
 - c. EMM Adult in-hand
- B. Approximately **\$65,000 total** in cash and prizes will be awarded between the EMM divisions/classes.
- C. The top two (2) competitors with the highest combined preliminary class scores will receive Champion and Reserve Champion Mustang Horsemanship Buckles and cash prizes.
- D. Three (3) total incentive awards will also be presented to the competitors with the top 3 highest combined preliminary scores in the following categories:
 - i. **Rookie** (under saddle): Only first-time MHF/EMM competitors are eligible
 - ii. **Young Gun** (under saddle): Only competitors between ages 18-21 years old at the time of the event are eligible
 - iii. **Silver Spur Champion** (+\$750 prize money): To the highest placed adult in-hand competitor ages 55+ at the time of the event.
 - iv. **Silver Spur Reserve Champion** (+\$250 prize money): To the second highest placed adult in-hand competitor ages 55+ at the time of the event.

Competitors are only eligible for one incentive award per event.

- E. Auction: Mustangs must complete at least one preliminary class at the event to be eligible for the auction.
 - a. **All adult competitors' mustangs are automatically included in the auction. However, competitors may OPT-OUT of the auction** and still compete with a fee. The decision to opt-out must be **confirmed by May 15, 2025** and **requires an opt-out fee of \$1,500 for under-saddle horses; or \$750 for in-hand horses**. This fee includes the average commission of an EMM mustang plus entry fees and stabling, which is typically covered by the auction commission.
 - b. **Youth competitors' mustangs are NOT included in the auction**, unless they specifically request to be included; the request to be included in the auction must be **submitted by March 31, 2025**.
- F. **Withdrawals:** Competitors who need to withdraw from the event for any reason must send notice in writing to MHF staff: Danielle Aamodt (danielle@mustangheritagefoundation.org). Only the USFS adoption fee of \$125 will apply, if not already paid.

2. COMPETITOR APPLICATION & SELECTION

- A. Interested competitors must complete and submit the following within the outlined deadlines:

STEP 1: Apply for Adoption through the USFS:

In Question 1, "How did you hear about this program?", answer "MHF EMM"

https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd656535.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0ZVmAQZwHtYEdOlem2nh3J1kWcYRhImUghpmOPP9kXlwDWFo_RbnHLZyl

STEP 2: Register for a PICK-UP LOCATION by October 15, 2024:

<https://www.mustangheritagefoundation.org/extreme>

STEP 3: Enter the EMM competition

Register for the Mustang Heritage Spectacular EMM classes

MHF is not responsible for any incomplete applications

Please contact Danielle Aamodt (danielle@mustangheritagefoundation.org) for assistance.

B. AGES:

- a. **Adult under-saddle** competitors must be 18 years or older by the competition date (June 12, 2025) to be eligible to compete in the adult under-saddle division. There is no maximum age limit for this division.
 - b. **Youth in-hand** competitors must be between ages 8 – 17 years old at the competition date (June 12, 2025) to be eligible to compete in the Youth division.
 - c. **Adult in-hand** competitors must be 18 years or older by the competition date (June 12, 2025) to be eligible to compete in the adult in-hand division. (See the **Silver Spur incentive awards**: Sections 1.D & 3.C)
- C. **Applicants must first meet all USFS Wild Horse Adoption Requirements.** Any applicant or approved competitor may be removed from the selection process or competition at any time if found to have any alleged history of cruelty to animals or humans. Removal of any competitor from the application process or competition is at the discretion of MHF and/or USFS.
- D. Applicants must be current members of MHF during the application process and through the event. Learn more about membership and join at <https://www.mustangheritagefoundation.org/become-a-member>. Memberships help support mustang and burro adoptions and awareness.
- E. All competitors will be approved individually via application.
- F. Competitor selection will be made based on, but not limited to, their experience, references, facility approval, and geographic location. Waitlisted applicants will also be reviewed for selection in case they can be included.
- G. MHF and USFS staff members (full or part-time) along with their immediate family are ineligible to compete.
- H. **Applicants agree to be subject to a criminal background check** and MHF reserves the unconditional right to remove any applicant or competitor from the process at any time for any unspecified reason.
- I. Applicants must submit a signed release with their application specifying that all photos and filming may be used to promote the event and will be the property of MHF.

- J. Applicants are required to provide a digital headshot photo of themselves and a short biography, here: <https://www.mustangheritagefoundation.org/emm-trainer-bio/>. Competitors who do not submit a photo or biography will be **disqualified** from participating in the event. The photo and biography will be used for promotional purposes and will be viewed by the public.
- K. **Sponsorships:** MHF enters into corporate sponsorship agreements with a variety of companies. Applicants are required to agree and adhere to the following sponsorship considerations:
- i. MHF will supply shirts with sponsor logos for competitors to wear during the event. Competitors will not be required to wear MHF event shirts during the actual competition but may be required to wear shirts during promotional and adoption events and award ceremonies.
 - ii. Competitors will be restricted from wearing apparel or equine products during the competition that have logos that are larger than 4 inches wide and 2 inches tall.
 - iii. Competitors may have small banners and brochures or small printed materials at their animal's stall **ONLY** to promote their training business and their sponsors during the event. Competitors may not hang banners of any size in the common event areas promoting their sponsors.
 - iv. Competitors may promote personal businesses/sponsors on props used during the freestyle performance in the Finals, however the promotion logo/statement must be no larger than 12 inches by 24 inches.
 - v. Competitors may purchase EMM/MHF logoed merchandise (t-shirts, banners, caps, etc.) from MHF but may not reproduce any MHF/EMM logos in any way on apparel, banners, or on posted materials.

3. MUSTANG PICK UP & CARE

- A. **Adoption:** The USFS will offer a variety of mustangs to be ADOPTED by the competitor at pick-up.
- a. **Adoption Fee:** A USFS adoption fee of **\$125 is due at pick-up** for horses being adopted. The adoption fee is WAIVED for competitors including their horse in the auction.
 - b. If a competitor does not pay the adoption fee with the intention of bringing the horse to the auction and the horse is not included in the auction, the competitor will remit the \$125 adoption fee to the USFS then or, if necessary, will be responsible for returning the mustang to the USFS. (Also see Section 3.D.a on Auction Opt-out)
- B. Competitors who are approved by the USFS will pick up their mustangs at their designated location and date (the location choice must be confirmed on the application):
- a. **December 6-7, 2024** at the **Somervell County Expo Center** at 202 B0 Gibbs Blvd., US-67, Glen Rose, Texas 76043
 - b. **December 13-15, 2024** at the **Wilson County Fair Grounds** at 945 East Baddour Parkway, Lebanon, Tennessee 37087.
- C. At the time of pick up, mustangs will have current vaccinations, negative Coggins test (EIA), and trimmed hooves.
- D. Mustangs selected for the Mustang Heritage Spectacular EMM will be as uniform in size and age as possible for each class. Age of animal is determined by the USFS and will comply with the industry standard of age accumulating on January 1 each year.

E. **Transport requirements:** Competitors must meet all requirements outlined in these rules and regulations for transporting and stabling their mustang. Competitors must provide or arrange transportation for their mustang from the pick-up facility directly to their facility. While it is permitted for someone else to transport the animal, all trailers must meet these minimum standards:

- i. A covered top
- ii. Sturdy walls/floors
- iii. Smooth interior free from any sharp protrusions
- iv. Ample head room
- v. Non-skid materials covering the floor
- vi. Adequate ventilation
- vii. If necessary, removable partitions or compartments to separate animals by size and sex

Competitors should not release their mustang into a large area, such as a pasture, since it will likely be difficult to recapture the animal for training or to provide necessary veterinary care. However, once the animal is gentled, competitors may release the animal into a pasture or similar area. Competitors must provide shelter for their mustang from inclement weather and temperature extremes in any area they are kept.

- F. **Facility requirements:** Facility can consist of a corral/paddock/stall/round pen. Facility must be a minimum of 400 square feet (20 feet x 20 feet) and have fences at least 6 feet high. Facility must be sturdy and constructed of materials such as poles, pipes or planks (minimum of 1.5 inch thickness) without dangerous protrusions. Unacceptable fencing such as barbed wire, large-mesh woven fencing, stranded and electric materials are not permitted. Competitors should not release their mustang into a large area, such as a pasture, since it will likely be difficult to recapture the animal for training or to provide necessary veterinary care. However, once the animal is gentled, competitors may release the animal into a pasture or similar area. Competitors must provide shelter for their mustang from inclement weather and temperature extremes in any area they are kept.
- G. Competitors will have from the date of pickup until the event dates (June 12-14, 2025) to train and work with their mustang.
- H. Mustang training must be humane and compassionate. “Least resistance” techniques are encouraged. At all times, the humane care and best interest of the animal is paramount. For MHF/EMM events and MHF programs, the competitor is responsible for the wellbeing and humane treatment of any mustang entrusted to their care. Contact MHF staff or management to report any health issues with the animal so that proper veterinarian care can be administered. Any suspected inhumane treatment of animals should be reported to management immediately with potential consequences as outlined in MHF’s Humane Treatment Policy (section 4).
- I. Competitors are responsible for all care-related costs from the day the mustang is picked up through the event dates. Expenses incurred during the training period and competition will not be reimbursed.
- J. **If the competitor is unable to complete the training or participate in the event,** they are responsible for either adopting the horse –or– returning the mustang to the nearest USFS facility or a USFS approved location. Applications are subject to review if an individual has a history of returning animals in MHF programs or events without completing the training or competition.

- K. In the case of **serious injuries** or **death** of an issued mustang, competitors are required to notify the USFS contact (Charlene Johnston at charlene.johnston@usda.gov) and MHF staff (Danielle Aamodt at danielle@mustangheritagefoundation.org) **within 24 hours** of the occurrence.

4. MHF HUMANE TREATMENT POLICY

- A. All mustangs and burros must be treated humanely and with dignity, respect, and compassion at all times. Any competitor or participant using abusive or excessive training techniques or being inhumane to an animal in their care may be removed from the competition and/or all future MHF contests or programs. Determination of abusive, excessive, or inhumane treatment is determined by a panel assigned by MHF and will include licensed equine veterinarian(s) and/or respected horse industry professional(s). If an animal is presented at the event with any injury or lameness, MHF reserves the unconditional right to remove the competitor from the competition and/or any future MHF events or programs. This policy is in addition to the event rules. All competitors must agree to, sign, and return the Humane Treatment Policy with their application. The following list, while in no way exhaustive, includes examples of unacceptable conditions, behavior, and training techniques:
- i. Animals who appear to be emaciated, unfit, or injured will not be permitted to compete;
 - ii. Striking an animal with objects, excessive spurring, and/or excessive jerking of the reins is not permitted and can lead to **disqualification**;
 - iii. Any inhumane treatment that results in wounds or injury of the animal

5. CONDUCT

- A. To promote fair competition, the conduct of all participants must be orderly, responsible, sportsmanlike, and humane in the treatment of animals or people. This includes, but is not limited to, conduct while competitors have animals in their possession, conduct on the show grounds, conduct on social media, conduct while wearing any MHF or EMM logoed attire, conduct while interacting with event staff; and includes the conduct of individuals traveling with competitors, spectators, and all other participants present on the show grounds. Any misconduct or alleged unsportsmanlike or irresponsible conduct, such as illegal, indecent or profane, and inhumane treatment of animals or people will be grounds for disciplinary action against offending individuals. Further, event management may immediately expel any offenders from the competition or show grounds in order to preserve the decorum of the show.

6. DIGITAL MEDIA POLICY

- A. MHF understands that sharing the journey of a competitor on digital media is a part of the current landscape and we encourage competitors to do so, thoughtfully. One of MHF's highest priorities is ensuring that the digital content relating to MHF and MHF programs aligns with our mission, values, and public image to guarantee the future and reputation of our Foundation and the legacy of the mustang breed.

- B. **Quality and Respect:** As a participant in MHF programs, competitors are representing MHF in everything they do. By participating, competitors agree to be mindful of their representation when developing any digital content. Additionally, the MHF community will want to follow the competitors' journeys and may engage along the way. It is MHF's expectation for each competitor, participant, and partner of MHF to create content that is consistent with MHF's mission and values and be respectful in any engagement with followers, however potentially controversial. Competitors are to carefully consider their audience (intended or unintended) as they develop content and review any content prior to sharing or distributing to ensure accuracy and alignment with MHF mission and values.
- C. **Auditing:** MHF staff will be monitoring competitors' digital content for violations of the digital media policy and will hold all participants accountable for the content they share while partnered with MHF. If any content is considered in violation of this policy, MHF will request that the participant remove and/or alter the content as soon as possible after notification. MHF reserves the unconditional right to revoke competitor approval or discontinue any partnership/relationship with a participant at any time based on violations of this digital media policy.

7. COMPETITION RULES

A. FORMATS (BY DIVISION/CLASS)

All written rules will supersede anything previously discussed or implied. Any additional clarifications of these rules must be obtained in writing from the proper MHF staff. If there are questions or any confusion involving these rules or policies, the MHF staff is available to provide written clarification upon request.

- 1) During the competition, animals and competitors will be assessed by a panel of accomplished horse professionals.
 - a) Preliminary **Adult under-saddle** classes will include:
 - i) Handling & Conditioning
 - ii) Mustang Maneuvers
 - iii) Trail
 - b) Preliminary **Youth & Adult in-hand** classes will include:
 - i) Handling & Conditioning
 - ii) In-hand Trail
 - iii) **In-hand Freestyle (ALL Youth / Only Top 10 Adult in-hand)**
- 2) Freestyles:
 - a) **Adult under-saddle:** The overall top ten (10) competitors from the combined preliminary classes will be invited to participate in the Finals competition consisting of a Freestyle Performance.
 - b) **Youth in-hand:** ALL Youth will be invited to participate in an in-hand Freestyle performance. The Freestyle will count as a third class towards an overall total for Final placings.

- c) **Adult in-hand:** The overall top 10 competitors from the combined preliminary classes will be invited to participate in an in-hand Freestyle performance. The Freestyle will count as a third class towards an overall total for Final placings.

B. ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Competitors are required to complete and submit progress reports during the training period leading up to the event by the following dates: **January 1, February 1, March 1, April 1, May 1.** Progress report information will be provided with details of the required information. Progress reports can be submitted on the MHF website.
- 2) The purpose of this event is to showcase the talent and trainability of mustangs and to provide an opportunity for competitors to engage in safe competition with these animals for prize money and awards. Therefore, all animals entered in the competition should be gentle and safe to maneuver through the show grounds. Upon entry onto the show grounds, should an animal be deemed unsafe by MHF and/or USFS that horse may be excused or uninvited to participate in the competition and adoption. The goal is for all competitors and animals to participate safely in the event. If there is a concern regarding an animal's training status, please contact MHF Event Staff: **Danielle Aamodt** danielle@mustangheritagefoundation.org or **267-972-1491**.
- 3) Upon entry onto the show grounds, any competing animal's microchip will be verified by a USFS or MHF representative to confirm the animal's eligibility.
- 4) Upon entry onto the show grounds, competitors must provide a current Health Certificate, negative Coggins paperwork, and proof of current vaccines for all animals.
- 5) Upon entry onto the show grounds, competing animals will be examined by a veterinarian or knowledgeable individual to determine the health and condition of the animal. Should an animal be deemed in poor condition by the veterinarian or knowledgeable individual, that animal may be excused or uninvited to participate in the competition.
- 6) At least one bag of shavings and one stall per competing animal will be provided. One shared tack stall will be provided (tack stall may be shared with up to three other individuals). Competitors are not allowed to put locks on horse stalls.
- 7) Competitors are responsible for all care-related costs from the day of pickup through the competition and auction. Expenses incurred during the training period and competition will not be reimbursed. Competitors are responsible for bringing any tack, feed, and supplies needed during the competition.
- 8) An arena will be available for warm up and scheduled practices.
- 9) Competition schedule will be finalized just before the competition.
- 10) Winners will be announced following competition.
- 11) Competitors must fulfill all requirements related to transport, stable facilities, care, and training.
- 12) Competitors will be given specific competition patterns at the event. Competitors will have an opportunity to "walk through" the patterns with the judges, without their animal, prior to the competition.
- 13) Class awards may be presented. Any class ties will be broken by the score from a predetermined element in the class. If a tie exists between class scores, the score from that predetermined movement will be the tiebreaker. In case of further ties, the next score will be used until there is a tiebreaker.

- 14) Overall division ties will be broken by the Trail class to determine the top 10 finalists. If a tie exists between Trail scores, the score from a predetermined movement will be the tiebreaker. In case of further ties, the next score will be used until there is a tiebreaker.

C. JUDGES

- 1) MHF will designate the appropriate number of judges, as well as an equipment/rule steward to support the efforts of show officials to ensure all rules are being followed.

D. EQUIPMENT

- 1) Animals may be exhibited in English, Western, or other appropriate equine styles/disciplines and equipment. Competitors are asked to wear appropriate attire and head gear, which reflects the style/discipline of their riding. Adornments will NOT earn any extra points, for example, silver on saddles or sequins on shirts.
- 2) If being ridden during the preliminary classes, animals must be saddled and bridled in appropriate tack/gear.
- 3) **ILLEGAL** equipment that will result in automatic **disqualification** from the class in which equipment was used in (regardless of discipline) includes snaffle bits with mouthpieces smaller than 5/16" and/or consisting of non-smooth material (such as twisted material), stud chains, and bosals made of anything but rawhide, leather, or rope with flexible core (no metal of any kind). Use of any bit or equipment determined severe by the judges will not be allowed and will result in disqualification from the class in which it was used.
- 4) The judge or steward may prohibit the use of any bit or equipment they consider inhumane or would tend to give a horse/rider an unfair advantage. The diameter of all mouthpieces, length of shanks, and use of curb straps or chains must comply with MHF rules. National Snaffle Bit Association and American Quarter Horse Association rules are resources for preferred equipment including the diameter of mouthpieces, length of shanks, and use of curb straps or chains. It is the competitor's responsibility to contact MHF Event Staff to obtain written approval regarding any questionable equipment, or to clarify if a certain type of equipment is deemed humane and permitted. Said request and approval/disapproval must be conducted in writing via email.
- 5) Animals may be shown with two hands in a snaffle bit or bosal. Showing an animal with two hands when using a curb or shank-type bit is strongly discouraged during any point of the competition (including the Finals) and will result in an automatic 5-point deduction per judge from the class score.
- 6) Training aids (whips, sticks, treats, the tail end of a lead rope, etc.) will not be restricted, although competitors should realize that horses shown with the use of training aids will be judged accordingly. Any excessive use of a training aid (including striking the animal) will result in automatic 10-point deduction per judge from the class score.
- 7) Wearing guns (real or toy) in any arena or during the competition, as well as shooting guns and/or blanks is NOT allowed during the competition or anywhere on the show grounds and will result in automatic **disqualification**.

E. TREATMENT OF ANIMALS

- 1) In-hand competitors are NOT allowed to ride, sit, or stand on mustangs between the ages 12-24 months (2 years old) prior to or during the competition and will result in disqualification. *This includes in the stall/warm-up areas at the event and during the competition.*
- 2) Mustangs between ages 12-24 months (2 years old) are NOT allowed to pull ANY items (carts, sleds, etc.), however the competitor may pull an item while leading the horse. *This includes in the stall/warm-up areas at the event and during the competition.*
- 3) Excessive spurring or jerking on the reins or lead line during the competition will result in an automatic 10-point deduction per judge from the class score.
- 4) No person shall alter, change, or attempt to hide the natural markings and/or rubbed or raw skin of a horse by surgery, dye, powder, or in any other manner. Competitors may clip/trim the animal's hair, **but it is preferred to** leave mane, tail, ears, muzzle and fetlocks in their natural condition. Use of false tails or extensions on the mane or tail are prohibited during the preliminary competition and will result in an automatic 10-point deduction per judge from the class score. Costume-related mane/tail decorations will be allowed during the Finals freestyle performance.
- 5) Alteration of the tail function (tail blocking, dead tails, etc.) is prohibited at any and all points during the training period or competition and will result in **disqualification**.
- 6) **DRUGS:** No person shall administer drugs internally or externally to a participating animal, either before or during the event or adoption. Any medication, drug, mechanical device, or artificial application that could affect or enhance the animal's performance or appearance at the event is prohibited. If an animal is receiving medication for therapeutic purposes the competitor must submit a letter from their veterinarian to MHF staff that notes the reason for the medication and the prescribed amount. **MHF RESERVES THE RIGHT TO DRUG TEST ANY ANIMAL PARTICIPATING IN THE COMPETITION.** Positive tests will result in removal from the event, removal of any reimbursements or prize money, refund of adoption fees paid by an adopter, and the return of the animal to the USFS should the adopter wish to return the adopted animal. Regarding herbal/natural supplements, competitors are cautioned against the use of medicinal preparations, tonics, pastes, and products of any kind, the ingredients and quantitative analysis of which are not specifically known, as many of them may contain substances that are forbidden.

F. PRELIMINARY CLASS DESCRIPTIONS & SCORING

1) **Handling & Conditioning Class** (100 points from each Judge)

For this class, the competitor will lead the horse into a small pen inside the arena, un-halter and release the horse in the pen. The competitor will exit the pen and the horse's conditioning will be judged. Then the competitor will be allowed back into the pen. Upon re-entering the pen, the competitor will re-halter the horse and lead the horse out of the pen to complete a set of handling maneuvers in the arena.

CONDITIONING will be judged on the following (30 points): The horse's condition will be judged in two areas: **Appropriate weight & muscling**, based on the Henneke system (15 points); and **overall appearance**, including hair, coat, feed condition, etc. (15 points).

HANDLING will be judged on the following (70 points): Judges will assess the horse's demeanor and responsiveness during the haltering process, as well as the relationship between horse and

competitor through the completion of additional handling maneuvers including but not limited to the following: **Walk; Trot; Stop; Back; Pick up feet; Load and unload from a trailer.**

PENALTIES: patterns completed out of order (-5 points); competitor losing horse during the class (-5 points).

Additional criteria: No person shall alter, change or attempt to hide the natural markings and/or rubbed or raw skin of a horse by surgery, dye, hoof polish, powder, or any other manner (if altered, it's -10 point penalty per judge). **Stud chain use is prohibited** and will result in automatic class **disqualification**. Competitors may clip/trim horses, or leave mane, tail, ears, muzzle and fetlocks natural. Use of false tails or extensions on the mane or tail are **prohibited** and will result in **disqualification**. No points will be deducted for short or rubbed out manes or tails. The score will not reflect conformation. To learn more about appropriate weight/conditioning for a horse based on the Henneke system, visit:

<https://www.gerlltd.org/Education/Equine%20Body%20Condition%20Score%20Presentation.pdf>

2) **Mustang Maneuvers Class** – under-saddle only (100 points from each judge)

This class is intended to show the horse's willingness and ability to complete a set of generic horsemanship maneuvers. Judges will assess exhibitors showing in either Western or English discipline accordingly. For example, if a 360 pivot is requested – judges will expect a horse shown under English tack to turn on the backhand and expect a horse shown under Western tack to attempt to spin. A horse will be given credit for being relaxed, quiet, soft, and cadenced at all gaits. Credit will also be given to a horse that is responsive to the rider and makes the required transitions smoothly, timely, and correctly.

Maneuvers may include but are not limited to: **walk; trot; lope/canter; change of direction while on the rail; stop; back; pivot or turns to the right &/or left; lead changes; two-track; side pass.**

3) **In-hand Trail & under-saddle Trail Class** (100 points from each judge)

This class is designed to show a horse's willingness and ability to perform several tasks that might be asked of him during a normal trail ride or workday. Competitors will be asked to lead and ride their horse through a course of generic obstacles and maneuvers. Competitors will be able to "walk through" the course with judges prior to the class. Horses are not allowed during the walk-through.

IN-HAND maneuvers and obstacles may include but are not limited to: **walk; trot; stop and back; walk over logs/poles; walk/trot between cones/obstacles; maneuver forward and/or reverse through a simple chute; pick up each foot; brush horse once on each side; load and unload from stock trailer.**

RIDING maneuvers and obstacles may include but are not limited to: **walk; trot; lope/canter; lead change; stop and back; turns or circles to the right &/or left; walk over logs/poles; walk over bridge; maneuver forward and/or reverse through a simple chute; pick up and carry an object.**

Additional elements may be added such as brush, artificial foliage, rain slickers, etc.

PENALTIES: pattern completed out of order (-5 points); dismounting or being bucked off during a riding class (-5 points).

4) **IN-HAND FREESTYLES**

All in-hand Freestyles will be scored as a third class towards an overall total for Final placings. See Section G for further details.

G. FINALS/FREESTYLE DESCRIPTION & SCORING

The top 10 ADULT UNDER-SADDLE competitors with the highest combined total scores from the preliminary classes will return for a finals competition that includes freestyle performance.

All YOUTH IN-HAND competitors will be invited to perform a Freestyle as a third class towards an overall total for Final placings.

The Top 10 ADULT IN-HAND competitors with the highest combined total scores from the preliminary classes will be invited to participate in an in-hand Freestyle performance. The Freestyles will be scored as a third class towards an overall total for Final placings.

ADULT UNDER-SADDLE FREESTYLE

- 1) The Final Score for UNDER-SADDLE Freestyles will be calculated using the following formula:

20% Overall Preliminary Score
80% Freestyle Scores

- 2) **Ties** in the Adult under-saddle Finals will be broken by the Maneuvers class score. If a tie exists between maneuvers scores, the score from a predetermined movement will be the tiebreaker. In case of further ties, the next score will be used until there is a tiebreaker. MHF reserves the right to use a "ride off" as a tie breaker for first place.
- 3) For the freestyle performance, **under-saddle** competitors will have four (4) minutes to stage or set the arena.
- 4) **Under-saddle** Competitors will have three and a half (3.5) minutes to complete their freestyle performance. The music and time will start simultaneously when the competitor or horse enters the arena, whichever comes first. It is the competitor's responsibility to ensure EMM staff are aware of which is entering first (horse or rider), so that the time and music can be started appropriately.

IN-HAND FREESTYLES

- 5) The IN-HAND Freestyles will be calculated as a third class in the Overall Final placings.
- 6) **Ties** in the In-hand Finals will be broken by the Trail class score. If a tie exists between trail scores, the score from a predetermined movement will be the tiebreaker. In case of further ties, the next score will be used until there is a tiebreaker.
- 7) **In-hand competitors are NOT allowed to ride, sit, or stand on their mustangs (regardless of their age) during the Freestyle performance and will result in 10 point penalty per judge and/or disqualification if the horse is under 24 months (2 years) old.**
(If prepared, horses older than 24 months or 2 years old may be ridden for the Auction to showcase their ability)

- 8) **Mustangs in the in-hand classes** are NOT allowed to pull ANY items (carts, sleds, etc.), however the competitor may pull an item while leading the horse. *This includes in the stall/warm-up areas at the event and during the competition.*
- 9) For the freestyle performance, **in-hand** competitors will have **two and a half (2.5)** minutes to stage or set the arena.
- 10) **In-hand** Competitors will have **up to three (3)** minutes to complete their freestyle performance. The music and time will start simultaneously when the competitor or horse enters the arena, whichever comes first. It is the competitor's responsibility to ensure EMM staff are aware of which is entering first (horse or rider), so that the time and music can be started appropriately.
- 11) Youth competitors are NOT permitted to drive or operate any vehicle, including any open cab vehicles (i.e. golf carts, 4 wheelers, etc.).
- 12) In-hand Mustangs should NOT be cued to perform unsafe tricks at any time. These include, but are not limited to: rearing, bucking, kicking, etc. Any such cue will result in a 5-point deduction from each judge.

GENERAL FREESTYLE RULES (ALL DIVISIONS/CLASSES)

- 13) The freestyle portion of the final's competition encourages competitors to choose music, costumes, and props which permit them to show the athletic abilities of their horse in a crowd appealing way. During the freestyle performance, competitors will be scored based on the following per judge:
 - a. Overall Horsemanship (40 points)
 - i. Communication/partnership between horse and rider/handler and the horse's overall willingness to perform and execute maneuvers correctly in a controlled, relaxed and confident manner (18 points).
 - ii. Incorporation of a variety of maneuvers (18 points).
RIDDEN maneuvers would include, but are not limited to, side pass, two tracking either direction, pulling or dragging, serpentines, rollbacks, lead changes, circles with variance in size and speed, stops, etc.
IN-HAND maneuvers would include, but are not limited to, side pass, serpentines, circles with variance in size and speed, stops, etc.
 - iii. The level of difficulty demonstrated in the performance through various maneuvers or methods of training (4 points).
 - b. Entertainment value (40 points)
 - i. Components of choreography (18 points). The composition and arrangement of the exhibition in relation to the music and its rhythm.
 - ii. Creativity (18 points). The use of themes, maneuvers, costumes, and/or props to enhance the performance and overall originality.
 - iii. Entertainment elements, including engagement, relatability or storytelling, surprise or delight, and lasting impact of the performance (4 points).
- 14) **PENALTIES:** Clear refusal of an obstacle (-5 points), blatant disobedience such as bucking, kicking, running off (-5 points).
- 15) Competitors must provide their own props and assistance for arena set up and tear down – it is the competitor's responsibility to make sure all props are cleared from the arena immediately

following the conclusions of the freestyle performance, including hay, confetti, etc. Not completely clearing the arena of debris will result in a no score for the freestyle.

- 16) All props must be freestanding. Nothing may be driven into the ground (i.e. rebar, stakes, etc.), and doing so will result in no score for the freestyle.
- 17) Competitors may promote personal businesses/ sponsors on props used during the freestyle performance, but the logo/statement must be 12 inches by 24 inches.
- 18) Props of pyrotechnic nature including fireworks, flares, firecrackers, rings of fire, etc. are NOT allowed and will result in **disqualification**.
- 19) Wearing guns (real or toy) in any arena or during the competition, as well as shooting guns and/or blanks is NOT allowed during the competition or anywhere on the grounds and will result in an automatic **disqualification**.
- 20) Live "voice-overs" and/or commentary from the competitor or their representative are not allowed during the performance and will result in **disqualification**.
- 21) Lighting and/or spotlights cannot be manipulated or altered for any of the competitor freestyle performances.
- 22) Music is a required component of the freestyle performance – if the competitor does not turn in music during the finalists' meeting at the event, management may select music for them. Music must be submitted as one single track (MHF staff will not transition from one track to another during the performance or merge music files for a competitor) as an mp3 file. Music will not be played from a phone or any other device. The music file will be downloaded onto our music system. All music is subject to review and approval by MHF staff. If the competitor does not pick up their flash drive following the freestyle, MHF will discard it at the end of the event.
- 23) All freestyle music and themes should be in good taste and family-friendly.
The purpose of the Mustang Heritage Spectacular event is to highlight the MHF's mission to place more mustangs in private care. Therefore, the code of conduct will be strictly enforced and music containing profanity and controversial or disparaging themes or props are strictly prohibited. MHF reserves the right to **disqualify** and remove from competition any competitor that violates this rule for any reason or no reason; and if so, MHF's decision will be final. If clarification is needed, contact the MHF event staff prior to the freestyle performances.
- 24) Other animals (dogs, additional horses, additional cattle, etc.) will NOT be allowed in the arena during the finals performance for any reason and will result in **disqualification**. Other people (including children) will NOT be allowed in the arena during the finals performance for any reason other than to drive in a vehicle to be used during the performance. If someone other than the competitor is driving in a vehicle in the performance, none of the occupants of the vehicle will be allowed to exit the vehicle during the performance and the windows must be rolled up (the vehicle, if driven by someone other than the competitor, must be a closed-cab; gators, golf carts, ATVs, etc. will NOT be allowed and will result in **disqualification**). Other people are NOT allowed to act as props, ride or come in contact with any horse at any point during the performance and will result in **disqualification**. Other people may hand props to the competitor from outside the arena.
- 25) Mustangs are not allowed to trot or lope onto or into any moving or covered vehicles/trailers/props of any kind and will result in **disqualification**.
- 26) Competitors may not stand or kneel on a horse that is standing, sitting, or laying on any object. Examples include tarps, bridges, platforms, chairs, etc. It is advised that competitors contact

MHF staff with questions before their performance. It is the competitor's responsibility to clarify any information.

- 27) Competitors must wear appropriate footwear during the freestyle performance – bare feet are NOT allowed and will result in **disqualification**.
- 28) Judges and/or MHF staff may stop any performance deemed unsafe, dangerous, or otherwise inappropriate.
- 29) All items/props are subject to final review and approval by MHF staff.

H. AWARDS

- 1) **COMMISSIONS:** EMM competitors participating in the Auction will be eligible for 50% commission of the adoption price minus a \$200 processing fee.
- 2) **PRELIMINARY CLASS PRIZES:** Preliminary classes will be offering the following cash prizes awarded to the Top 6 in each preliminary class, both ridden and in-hand (Handling & Conditioning, Mustang Maneuvers, and Trail):
 - i) 1st Place: \$700
 - ii) 2nd Place: \$600
 - iii) 3rd Place: \$500
 - iv) 4th Place: \$300
 - v) 5th Place: \$200
 - vi) 6th Place: \$100
- 3) **HORSEMANSHIP PRIZES:** Horsemanship Champion and Reserve Champion will be awarded cash and prizes. This category consists of the top two (2) competitors with the highest combined overall preliminary division scores.
 - i) Horsemanship Champion: \$2,000
 - ii) Horsemanship Reserve Champion: \$1,000
- 4) **INCENTIVE AWARDS:** Incentive Awards will be presented to the top competitor in each category with the highest combined preliminary scores from each class (Handling & Conditioning, Maneuvers, and Trail). Final scores do not count towards incentive awards. Each competitor is only eligible to win one incentive award per event with precedence given to the Rookie award. For example, if Competitor A has the highest preliminary scores in the Rookie and Young Gun categories then they will be given the Rookie Award and the next highest score in the Young Gun category will receive the Young Gun award.

Incentive categories are:

 - i. **Rookie** (under saddle): Only first-time MHF/EMM competitors are eligible
 - ii. **Young Gun** (under saddle): Only competitors between ages 18-21 years old at the time of the event are eligible
 - iii. **Silver Spur Champion** (+\$750 prize money): To the highest placed adult in-hand competitor ages 55+.
 - iv. **Silver Spur Reserve Champion** (+\$250 prize money): To the second highest placed adult in-hand competitor ages 55+.
- 5) **TOP 10 ADULT UNDER-SADDLE FINALISTS:** Approximately \$30,000 total in CASH & PRIZES will be awarded to the Top 10 Adult under-saddle Finalists.

Champion: \$8,000 and a Champion buckle

Reserve Champion: \$6,000 and a Reserve Champion buckle

3rd Place: \$4,500

4th Place: \$2,500

5th Place: \$2,000

6th Place: \$2,000

7th Place: \$1,500

8th Place: \$1,500

9th Place: \$1,000

10th Place: \$1,000

- 6) **TOP 5 IN-HAND FINALISTS:** Approximately \$15,000 total in CASH & PRIZES will be awarded between the Top 5 in-hand finalists in each division:

Youth Champion: \$3,000 & A Cut Above Belt Buckle

Youth Reserve Champion: \$2,000 & A Cut Above Belt Buckle

3rd place Youth: \$1,000

4th place Youth: \$1,000

5th place Youth: \$500

Adult in-hand Champion: \$3,000

Adult in-hand Reserve Champion: \$2,000

3rd place Adult in-hand: \$1,000

4th place Adult in-hand: \$1,000

5th place Adult in-hand: \$500

(See also: Silver Spur incentive awards, Section 3.C & E.4)

8. AUCTION

- 1) Mustangs must compete at some level (competing in one preliminary class is acceptable) to participate in the auction. EMM Mustangs cannot attend the event for the auction only.
 - a. **All adult competitors' mustangs are automatically included in the auction. However, competitors may OPT-OUT of the auction** and still compete with a fee.
The decision to opt-out must be **confirmed by May 15, 2025** and **requires a fee of \$1,500 for under-saddle horses; or a fee of \$750 for in-hand horses**. This fee includes the average cost of an EMM mustang plus entry fees, which is typically covered by the auction commission.
 - b. **Youth competitors' mustangs are NOT included in the auction**, unless they specifically request to be included; the request to be in the auction must be **submitted by March 31, 2025**.
- 2) Adult competitors are REQUIRED to stay and present their horse during the auction, EXCEPT for adult competitors who have paid to Opt-Out.
- 3) Competitors participating in the auction will be eligible for 50% commission of the adoption price minus a \$200 processing fee.
- 4) Competitors should demonstrate their animal's abilities in a way that showcases the trainability of the breed. For example, if an animal is exhibited under-saddle during the competition, then it should also be demonstrated under-saddle for the auction presentations. **If the animal is able to be ridden safely at the event, in-hand horses that are over 2 years old may be ridden during the auction (only) to showcase their ability.**
- 5) Competitors are encouraged to meet the adopter of their horse and are asked to leave feed and water in the horse's stall prior to departing.
- 6) ****There will be no bidding allowed on the arena floor by competitors**** Competitors who did not opt-out of the auction and wish to bid on their mustang **must have a representative bid for them from the audience or online during the auction**. Competitors may apply any prize money and/or commission earned toward the adoption price.

For more information on the Mustang Heritage Spectacular event and Extreme Mustang Makeover classes, please contact Danielle Aamodt at danielle@mustangheritagefoundation.org.