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Wild Mustang & Burro Finals

presented by Mustang Heritage Foundation

October 21-24, 2026

www.MustangHeritageFoundation.org/Finals

Event location: Hoosier Horse Park

7105 S Kern St, Edinburgh, Indiana 46124

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General Rules

Rules that apply to ALL disciplines & divisions

Mustang Heritage Foundation

This event is produced by the Mustang Heritage Foundation "MHF" which is a 501(c)3 nonprofit dedicated to promoting and supporting successful placements of America's wild mustangs and burros through innovative programs, events, and education. Learn more at www.MustangHeritageFoundation.org.

1. Event Overview

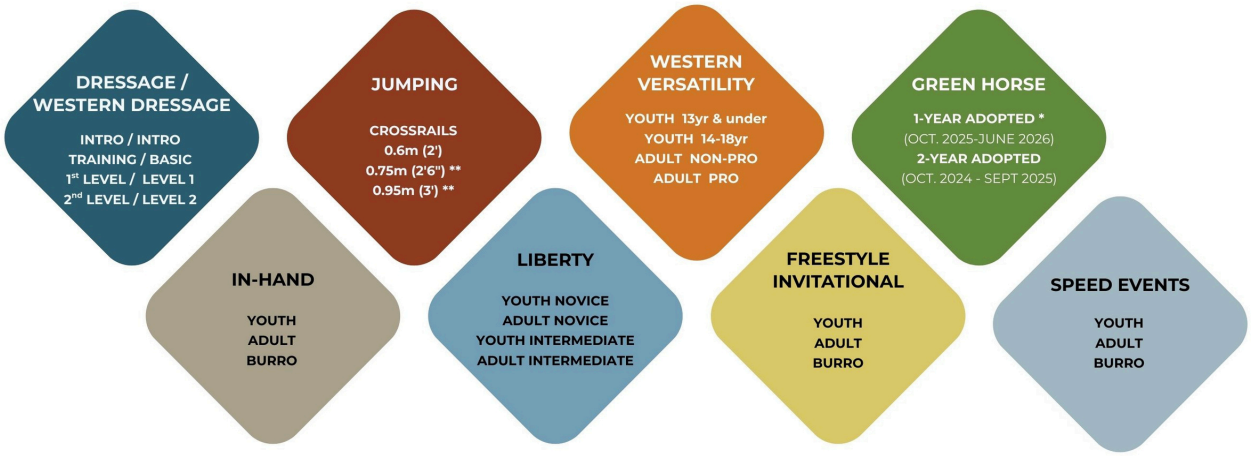
1.1 Purpose & Guiding Principles

The Wild Mustang & Burro Finals exists to celebrate ethical horsemanship, responsible training, and the unique abilities of wild-bred mustangs and burros.

These rules are built on four non-negotiable principles:

- **Animal welfare comes first**
  The physical and mental well-being of the animal always takes precedence over placings, titles, or prizes.
- **Safety is a shared responsibility**
  Competitors, officials, and event staff share responsibility for maintaining a safe environment for people and animals.
- **Fairness reflects ethical horsemanship and sportsmanship**
  Fair competition is measured by humane handling, honest presentation, and respectful conduct toward others both in and outside of the competition. Attempts to gain advantage via manipulation or loopholes will not be rewarded.
- **Education first, but firm action when needed**
  When appropriate, enforcement emphasizes correction and learning. Immediate or escalated action will be taken when welfare, safety, or integrity is compromised.

1.2 Disciplines, Divisions, & Classes offered



Each division entry includes three (3) classes, except the Freestyle divisions, which consist of one (1) competition class.

DISCIPLINE	CLASS 1	CLASS 2	CLASS 3
Green Horse	Horsemanship	Ridden Pattern	Trail
Jumping	Course 1	Course 2	Course 3
Speed Events	Poles	Barrels	Flags
Liberty	Training & shoulder	Training @ liberty	Obstacles @ liberty
Western Versatility	Reining	Ranch Riding	Trail
Freestyle Invitational	Performance		
In-Hand	Horsemanship	Showmanship	In-hand Trail
Dressage / Western Dressage	First Test (score 1)	Second Test (score 2a)	Second Test (score 2b)

2. Animal Eligibility

2.1 Eligible Animals

Only **wild-bred mustang horses and burros** are eligible to compete, including animals:

- **Originally from federal public lands** (managed by the Bureau of Land Management "BLM", US Forest Service "USFS", National Parks, or other federal agency)
- Originally from **Reservations** with verifiable documentation or branding
- Born in off-range holding facilities, provided the dam was confirmed pregnant prior to adoption or sale

Crossbred or domestic-bred animals are not eligible. With 65,000+ mustangs & burros in off-range holding, MHF focuses on the mission of promoting and supporting their successful placements.

Some disciplines have minimum age requirements for horses. Refer to the discipline rules for details.

2.2 Documentation

Competitors must be able to provide documentation upon entry verifying:

- Animal origin
- Adoption or sale date
- Identification matching entry information

Failure to produce required documentation may result in refusal of entry.

2.3 Age Verification & Estimated Ages

For most animals, age information can be verified through government agency documentation or online search via the Bureau of Land Management or the applicable federal or tribal agency of origin. This is the preferred method and should be the first step if age is in question.

If government records are unavailable or do not confirm an adequate age estimate, competitors have two options:

- *(Recommended)* Submit a written letter from a licensed Veterinarian or qualified equine dentist providing an estimated age, signed and dated prior to the event.
- Request an estimated age assessment from the Event Veterinarian on-site at the time of the event.

Age documentation is only required when a horse's eligibility to be ridden is uncertain — specifically, when it is unclear whether the horse has reached the minimum age of four (4) years.

Event Management and the Event Veterinarian reserve the right to request age verification for any animal and to make final determinations regarding age-based eligibility. These determinations are final.

3. Adoption Date Requirements

3.1 Standard Divisions

For ALL divisions **except Green Horse divisions**, there is **no restriction on adoption or sale date**.

3.2 Green Horse Divisions

Green divisions exist to support and encourage appropriate training timelines.

- **1-Year Adopted Division**
  Original adoption or sale date must fall between **October 1, 2025 – July 15, 2026 (extended)**
- **2-Year Adopted Division**
  Original adoption or sale date must fall between **October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025**

Animals outside these windows are not eligible for Green divisions but may compete in other appropriate divisions.

4. Qualification Requirements

4.1 General Requirement

Qualifications are required **per competitor/animal combination**.

The qualification period runs from **October 1, 2025 through October 1, 2026**.

Unless otherwise noted, competitors must:

- Complete **two (2) qualifying classes**

- At **two separate horse shows**
- In **comparable classes**

The term *comparable* is intentionally flexible to allow access across a wide range of show structures. The Event management will evaluate reasonableness and intent of submitted qualifiers rather than technical exactness.

4.2 Exceptions

- Green Horse 1-Year Adopted Division
  One (1) qualifying class is required.
- Jumping Divisions at 2'6" and 3'
  To count as a qualifier, the competitor must place in the **top 50%** of the class.
  *If the number of competitors is odd, rounding should go **down**. (i.e. in a class with 7 competitors, top 50% = 3.5, so results must be in top 3 to qualify)*
- Freestyle Division entries are by **invitation only** based on a virtual freestyle challenge. See Freestyle Division rules for requirements.

5. What Counts as a Qualifier

For the inaugural Finals, qualification standards are intentionally simple.

Qualifications should be submitted at:
www.mustangheritagefoundation.org/qualifiers

A qualifier is defined as:

Completion of a similar class at a horse show during the qualification period.

There are two (2) options for acquiring qualifiers:

5.1 Automatic Qualifier Events

Certain events are designated as automatic qualifiers.

- Event managers can apply for designation at www.mustangheritagefoundation.org/qualifiers
- Results are submitted directly by event management
- Competitors do not submit these results themselves

A current list of automatic qualifiers is maintained on the official Finals qualifier hub at www.mustangheritagefoundation.org/qualifiers

5.2 Competitor-Submitted Results

Competitors may qualify through:

- Local shows
- Open or rated competitions

With this option:

- Competitors are responsible for accurate submission

- Insufficient documentation, falsified or misleading submissions may result in qualifier rejection or disqualification

6. Entries & Fees

6.1 Entry Eligibility & Approval Process

Only competitors who have completed and received approval of required qualification submissions through the official qualifier hub at www.mustangheritagefoundation.org/qualifiers are eligible to enter the Wild Mustang & Burro Finals.

Once qualifiers are reviewed and approved, **competitors will receive an official approval email with the link to the online entry system.**

Questions about entries can be directed to Shows@MustangHeritageFoundation.org

Entry access is not granted prior to qualification approval.

6.2 Entry Platform

All entries must be submitted through the HorseSpot platform.

The Wild Mustang & Burro Finals entries, schedules, draw orders, and results will be managed and published on HorseSpot's website.

To enter, competitors will:

- Create a HorseSpot account
- Complete their competitor profile
- Enter accurate horse information
- Upload required documentation

Required horse documentation includes:

- Proof of horse eligibility (as outlined in Section 2)
- Current horse health documentation:
  - Negative EIA test (Coggins)
  - Core vaccines required within 1 year of the event dates: **Tetanus, EEE/WEE, WNV, Rabies**
  - Additional vaccines required within 1 year of the event dates: **Equine influenza (Flu)** & **Equine Herpesvirus (EHV-1/EHV-4)**

Competitors are responsible for consulting their Veterinarian regarding compliance.

Entries are not considered complete until all required documentation and payment are received.

Event Management reserves the right to reject incomplete entries.

6.3 Division Entry Structure

With the exception of the Freestyle Division, **each division entry includes three (3) classes.** (Refer to discipline rules for details)

Freestyle Division consists of one (1) competition class.

A division placing requires completion of all required classes.

Competitors entering a division are expected to compete in all classes within that division unless:

- The competitor voluntarily withdraws from a class
- The competitor is eliminated from competition

If a competitor does not complete all required classes within a division, the final division results will reflect the entry as:

- Withdrawal, Retired, or
- Elimination (if applicable)

Failure to complete all division classes does NOT entitle the competitor to any refund.

(See Section 7 for awards and prize eligibility.)

6.4 Entry Fees

Division Entry Fees:

- **$150 per division (3 classes)**
- **Freestyle Division: $100**

Late Entry Fee *after October 1, 2026*:

- $50 per division, in addition to standard entry fees

Additional **$25 admin fee** applies per horse on HorseSpot.

All entry fees must be paid in full at the time of submission unless otherwise specified.

Entries submitted without payment will not be accepted.

6.5 Refund Policy

Refunds, when permitted, should be requested through a competitor's HorseSpot account.

Refund schedule:

- Full refunds available until: October 1, 2026
- Partial refunds available until: October 19, 2026
- No refunds available after: October 20, 2026

No refunds will be issued if a competitor fails to complete a full division, including if competitors withdraw, retire, or are eliminated or disqualified for any reason.

Administrative or processing fees may be non-refundable.

Event Management reserves discretion on this policy in extraordinary circumstances.

6.6 Stall & Other Fees

Stall fees: $150 each

Tack stalls may be available in limited quantity. Reservation policies and availability will be published prior to the event. Stall reservations are not confirmed until payment is received.

Trainers who bring four (4) additional entries will earn one (1) stall free-of-charge.

Bedding fees: $10

One bag of bedding will be provided per stall by Event management.

Competitors are responsible for maintaining stalls in accordance with facility rules.

6.7 RV Reservations

RV hook-up reservations are managed through the Mustang Heritage Foundation website:

https://www.mustangheritagefoundation.org/event-details/rv-spot

Limited hook-up spots are available on the Horse Park grounds.

Additional RV accommodations are available through Johnson County Park grounds nearby.

RV reservations are subject to availability and are not guaranteed without confirmed payment.

6.8 Entry Limits & Acceptance

Event Management reserves the right to:

- Limit entries per division
- Split or combine divisions or classes
- Establish waitlists
- Close entries prior to the published deadline
- Refuse or cancel any entry in the interest of safety, welfare, or event integrity

Submission of an entry constitutes agreement to abide by all published rules and policies.

7. Awards & Prizes

7.1 Class Placings & Ribbons

Each individual class will award ribbons 1st through 6th.

Class placings are determined by the official results of that individual class and stand independently from division championship results.

Class placings do not determine prize money eligibility unless specifically stated.

7.2 Division Championship Awards

Division Championships will be determined by the cumulative scores of all required classes within that division, except Dressage/Western Dressage which will be determined by two

scores (refer to Dressage/Western Dressage rules).

With the exception of the Freestyle Division, each division consists of three (3) classes.

The Freestyle Division consists of one (1) class and will be scored accordingly.

To be eligible for Division Championship awards, competitors must complete all required classes within the division. Final division standings will be based on official cumulative results.

The following Division Championship awards will be presented:

- Champion
- Reserve Champion
- Third Overall

If a competitor withdraws or fails to complete all required classes within a division, that entry will **not** be eligible for Division Championship awards or placings.

7.3 Division Tie-Breaking Procedure

In the event of a tie in cumulative scores for Division Championship placings, the following tie-breaking procedure will be applied, except in the Freestyle Division (refer to Freestyle discipline rules for tie-breaking procedures specific to that division):

1. The competitor with the higher placing in the final class of the division will receive the higher overall division placing.
2. If a tie remains, the competitor with the higher placing in the second class of the division will receive the higher overall division placing.
3. If a tie remains, the competitor with the higher placing in the first class of the division will receive the higher overall division placing.
4. If competitors remain tied after application of the above measures, the tie will be resolved by the judge(s) who scored the division.

Division tie-breaking determinations on placings are final.

7.4 Division Prize Money

Division prize money will be calculated as fifty percent (50%) of the total entry fees collected for that division.

Prize money will be awarded to the top three (3) overall division placings:

- Champion
- Reserve Champion
- Third Overall

The exact distribution percentages among the top three placings will be published prior to the event.

Prize money is awarded only at the division level and is not awarded for individual class placings.

7.5 Eligibility for Awards & Prize Money

To receive Division Championship awards or prize money, a competitor:

- Must have completed all required division classes
- Must remain in good standing
- Must not be disqualified from the event
- Must comply with all welfare, medication, and enforcement policies
- Must resolve any pending disciplinary or review matters

Competitors who are excused, eliminated, or disqualified for rule violations, or who fail to complete a division will forfeit eligibility for Division Championship awards and prize money.

If a placing is voided due to a rule violation, awards and prize money will be redistributed according to adjusted official results.

Prize money payments will be issued after final verification of results and resolution of any pending reviews.

7.6 Additional Awards & Sponsored Prizes

Additional awards, prizes, or sponsored recognitions may be offered.

Details of sponsored awards, non-cash prizes, or specialty recognitions will be published prior to or during the event.

Event Management will determine eligibility criteria for any sponsored awards.

Event Management reserves the right to modify or substitute awards if necessary.

8. Welfare Standards (All Disciplines)

All welfare and safety determinations are final.

Protection of animals, clarity of enforcement, and integrity of the event take precedence over competitive outcome.

8.1 Humane Handling and Training

All animals must be handled and trained humanely at all times.

Prohibited practices include, but are not limited to:

- Excessive force that results in panic or defensive behavior
- Pain-based or fear-based training methods
- Retaliatory or punitive handling
- Repeated aggressive cues after compliance
- Jerking or spurring after response
- Striking with unnecessary force
- Pushing a horse in visible distress
- Forcing through repeated resistance without adjustment

Humane, thoughtful horsemanship is expected in competition and on the grounds. Many methods can be accepted, as long as they result in a willing, calmly responsive, and mentally present horse.

8.2 Soundness and Fitness

Animals must be:

- Physically sound
- Mentally fit
- Appropriately conditioned for the class entered
- Body condition scoring of 4 or better by the Veterinarian on site

Officials and event management may excuse any animal deemed unfit, with or without prior warning. Presentation of an animal that appears injured, distressed, or improperly conditioned may result in disqualification regardless of competitive standing.

8.3 Health Concern Issues

No harmful or sensitizing substance(s) may be applied to an animal's mouth, teeth, gums, legs, or body prior to or during competition. Violation is grounds for elimination.

Evidence of blood on the animal's mouth or sides in the competition arena is grounds for elimination. Evidence of blood observed anywhere on the animal outside the competition arena is possible grounds for elimination from the next scheduled class, at event management's discretion. These cases will be referred to the on-site Veterinarian.

9. Equipment & Training Practices

Be sure to also refer to each discipline's equipment rules, as they may differ.

9.1 General Standards

- Equipment must fit properly and be used as intended
- Equipment must not cause pain, injury, or distress

9.2 Authority to Require Changes

Judges, Stewards, or Event Management may:

- Require equipment adjustments
- Prohibit specific equipment
- Disqualify an entry if humane standards are not met

9.3 Permission for Bridleless Competition

Competitors wishing to compete without a bridle must submit a request to event management or the presiding judge prior to their scheduled class. Bridleless competition is not permitted by default and requires explicit written or verbal approval before the competitor enters the arena.

If approved, the competitor must use a neck rope for the duration of their performance. The neck rope is required as a minimum safety measure and does not substitute for demonstrated control of the horse. The presiding judge, arena steward, or event management retains authority to withdraw approval at any time if animal welfare or arena safety concerns arise. Withdrawal of approval does not entitle the competitor to a scratch, refund, or re-ride.

Discipline sections govern all other equipment requirements. Bridleless approval does not waive or modify any other rule.

10. Drugs, Medications & Substances

10.1 General Rule

No substance may be used to:

- Mask or conceal pain
- Artificially enhance performance
- Alter normal sensory, neuromuscular, or pain responses in the animal
- Conceal unsoundness

This applies to substances administered internally or externally to gain competitive advantage.

10.2 Testing and Cooperation

- Competitors agree to comply with drug testing if welfare or fairness concerns arise
- Competitors must cooperate fully
- Refusal to cooperate may result in immediate elimination

Nutritional supplements are not prohibited unless they contain substances that affect pain, normal responsiveness, or performance.

10.3 Permitted Therapeutic and Supportive Care

Medications, treatments, or supplements administered for the legitimate support of a horse's health or management of a documented medical condition are permitted **provided they do not**:

- Artificially enhance performance
- Mask pain or unsoundness
- Suppress normal sensory, neuromuscular, or pain responses
- Compromise the safety or welfare of the horse

Examples of permitted therapeutic care may include, but are not limited to:

- Allergy management
- Gastrointestinal support
- Dermatologic treatment
- Maintenance care for chronic, non-performance-limiting conditions

If you have questions, it is recommended to consult with your Veterinarian regarding these rules. You may also contact the event Veterinarian on site at the event with specific questions.

Questions prior to the event can be submitted to: Shows@mustangheritagefoundation.org

11. Sportsmanship, Safety & Conduct

11.1 Sportsmanship Expectations

All participants are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful, responsible, and sportsmanlike manner.

This expectation applies:

- In competition arenas
- In warm-up areas
- Throughout the show grounds
- During interactions with officials, staff, volunteers, competitors, and spectators

Unsportsmanlike conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Disrespect toward officials, event staff, or volunteers
- Harassment, intimidation, or aggressive behavior
- Disruptive conduct that interferes with safe or fair competition
- Conduct that reflects disregard for animal welfare

11.2 Safety and Compliance

Competitors must ride and handle their animals in a controlled and responsible manner at all times. Any conduct that creates unnecessary, unreasonable, or avoidable risk to any person or animal is prohibited and may result in warning or immediate disqualification.

- Unsafe riding or handling is prohibited; this includes, but is not limited to:
  - Loss of control that endangers others
  - Excessive speed or riding beyond the horse's level of preparation
  - Aggressive or retaliatory handling
  - Failure to maintain appropriate spacing in warm-up areas
  - Disregard for posted rules or official instructions
- Facility rules and posted instructions must be followed
- Officials' directions must be obeyed promptly

11.3 Impairment

Handling or riding while impaired by alcohol or drugs is prohibited and will result in immediate removal from the event.

11.4 Dog Policy

Dogs are permitted on the grounds under the following conditions:

- All dogs must be on a physical leash and under control at all times.
- Dogs must remain attended at all times, unless securely contained.
- Loose dogs or dogs dragging a leash are strictly prohibited.
- Retractible leashes must be managed safely as to not impact others.

Any dog that:

- Makes excessive noise
- Chases, startles, or disrupts horses or burros
- Interferes with competition operations
- Creates a safety concern

will be required to be immediately removed from the area or contained appropriately.

Enforcement:

- First offense (loose dog or leash violation): $25 fine
- Second offense: $50 fine
- Subsequent violations may result in the dog being required to leave the grounds

Event Management reserves the right to require removal of any dog at any time in the interest of safety, animal welfare, or event integrity.

Dog owners are fully responsible for the behavior of their animals and any damage or injury caused.

12. Authority Structure

Clear authority ensures consistent and fair enforcement.

Event Management

- Authority anywhere on the grounds
- Defers to Judges for competitors in active competition
- Ultimate authority over necessary excusal from the grounds

Oversees documentation and enforcement consistency

Judges

- Full authority within competition arenas
- Full authority on scoring decisions and interpreting discipline rules as written
- May stop a competitor mid-class
- May issue warnings or eliminate competitors from any arena at any time

Arena Stewards

- Authority in warm-up areas, arena entrances/exits, and on the grounds
- Address safety, conduct, and welfare concerns in and outside competition
- Defers to Judges for competitors in active competition

Event Veterinarian

- Authority anywhere on the grounds
- May assess welfare or fitness at any time
- May recommend action to Judges, Stewards, or Management

13. Enforcement System

13.1 Purpose of Enforcement

Enforcement is designed to:

- Protect animal welfare
- Maintain safety for all
- Preserve fair competition
- Allow for education and correction when appropriate

When possible, issues will be addressed through instruction and correction before penalties escalate. However, welfare, safety, and integrity always take priority.

13.2 Informal Correction

Officials may address minor issues through verbal instruction or correction.

Informal corrections:

- Are not recorded as formal warnings
- Are intended to resolve minor issues promptly
- Do not count toward the formal warning limit

Examples may include:

- Equipment adjustment requests
- Spacing reminders in warm-up areas
- Minor procedural errors

13.3 Formal Written Warnings

A Formal Written Warning may be issued when:

- A competitor fails to correct an issue after instruction
- Conduct undermines safety, welfare, or sportsmanship
- An infraction warrants documentation

Formal warnings:

- Are documented with Event Management
- Clearly describe the violation
- Specify required corrective action
- Are provided to the competitor

13.4 Accumulation of Warnings

Receipt of **three (3) Formal Written Warnings during the event** will result in **automatic disqualification from further competition at that event.**

- Warnings accumulate across all divisions and classes
- Multiple warnings may be issued in a single day
- Warnings do not reset between classes

13.5 Immediate Elimination (No Warning Required)

Officials or Event management may excuse a competitor immediately, without prior warning, if:

- Animal welfare is at immediate risk
- Human or animal safety is endangered
- A competitor refuses to comply with an official instruction
- Conduct is aggressive, abusive, or severely unsportsmanlike
- A violation materially undermines fairness or integrity

Serious violations are not subject to the three-warning progression.

13.6 Elimination or Disqualification

Elimination may include:

- Removal from the current class

Disqualification may include:

- Removal from remaining classes
- Forfeiture of placings or awards
- Removal from the event grounds if warranted

13.7 Record of Disqualification & Future Eligibility

Disqualification from the event will be formally documented by Event Management.

Documented disqualifications may be considered when reviewing future entries. Event Management reserves the right to:

- Place a competitor on probation for future events
- Require additional conditions for participation
- Refuse entry to future MHF events

Decisions regarding future eligibility are at the sole discretion of Event Management and will be based on welfare, safety, and integrity considerations.

14. Administrative & Legal Provisions

14.1 Schedule Changes & Class Adjustments

Event Management will determine the official schedule of competition.

Event Management reserves the right to:

- Adjust class order or start times
- Combine or divide classes or divisions
- Modify class formats if necessary
- Substitute judges if required
- Delay, suspend, or reschedule competition due to weather, facility conditions, animal welfare concerns, safety considerations, or other circumstances beyond reasonable control

All schedules and schedule changes will be communicated as promptly as possible through the event page on HorseSpot.

Entry fees will not be refunded due to schedule adjustments, class combinations, delays, or cancellations resulting from circumstances beyond Event Management's control.

Event Management decisions regarding scheduling and class structure are final.

14.2 Media, Photography & Promotional Release

The Wild Mustang & Burro Finals is a public event and may be photographed, recorded, live streamed, or otherwise documented.

By entering or attending the event, competitors and participants grant the Mustang Heritage Foundation permission to:

- Photograph or record them and their animals
- Use images, video, audio, names, likenesses, and competition results
- Publish and distribute such materials for educational, promotional, archival, or fundraising purposes

This use may occur in print, digital, broadcast, or social media formats without further notice or compensation.

Participants who do not wish to appear in media coverage must notify Event Management in writing prior to the event. Event Management will make reasonable efforts but cannot guarantee exclusion from incidental background capture at a public event.

14.3 Assumption of Risk & Liability

> **WARNING**
> Under Indiana law, an equine professional is not liable for an injury to, or the death of, a participant in equine activities resulting from the inherent risks of equine activities.

Participation in equine activities involves inherent risks, including but not limited to risks associated with horses and burros behaving in ways that may result in injury, harm, or property damage.

By entering or participating in the Wild Mustang & Burro Finals, competitors acknowledge and accept the inherent risks associated with equine activities, event operations, and facility conditions.

Competitors are responsible for:

- The safety and control of their animals
- Their own actions and decisions
- The actions of their guests, family members, employees, assistants, or representatives

The Mustang Heritage Foundation, event staff, officials, volunteers, sponsors, and facility partners will not be responsible for injury, loss, damage, or accident to any person, animal, or property except as required by law.

Submission of an entry constitutes acknowledgment of and agreement to these conditions.

Freestyle

Discipline Rules

1. Overview

The Freestyle Division is designed to showcase the partnership, creativity, and training of eligible mustangs and/or burros through a choreographed performance set to music.

This division highlights engaging performances that demonstrate intentional composition, thoughtful timing and flow, originality of theme, and confident, willing execution. Successful entries reflect clear communication, emotional connection, and harmony between the competitor(s) and their equine partner(s), while creating a cohesive and memorable overall presentation.

The Freestyle Division at the Finals is by invitation only.

2. Eligibility

2.1 Animal Eligibility

Only mustangs and burros eligible under the General Rules may compete in this division. Outside breeds, crossbreds, or non-eligible horses may not be incorporated into the performance in any capacity.

Multiple eligible mustangs and/or burros may perform together as part of a single entry with a maximum of 6 animal(s) total.

Non-equine animals may be included in a performance, as long as they are led to/from the arena entrance on a leash. Any uncommon species must be approved by event management.

2.2 Divisions & Ages

The Freestyle Division is offered in three categories:

- **Youth** — Open to competitors ages 8–17 at the time of competition.
- **Adult** — Open to competitors ages 18 and older at the time of competition.
- **Burro** — Open to competitors ages 8 and older at the time of competition. The competing animal must be an eligible burro.

2.3 Multi-Competitor Entries

A single entry may include up to three (3) competitors. All competitors within an entry perform together and are scored as a unit.

Mixed-age entries are permitted in the Adult and Burro Divisions. Youth competitors may be included in an Adult or Burro Division entry and compete alongside adult competitors.

Adult competitors may not enter the Youth Division. Youth Division entries are limited to youth competitors only.

3. Qualification & Invitation

3.1 Virtual Freestyle Challenge

The Virtual Freestyle Challenge serves as the primary qualification pathway for invitation to compete in the Freestyle Division at the Finals.

Virtual Challenge Entry fee: **$10 per submission.** All entries will be judged and scored with the top 10 from each division to receive a ribbon by mail. No refunds after submission.

Virtual Freestyle Challenge entries **open April 1, 2026** and **close on September 1, 2026**. Submissions must be received by that date through the official MHF Qualifier Hub at www.mustangheritagefoundation.org/qualifiers. Late submissions will not be accepted.

3.2 Invitation Process

Invitations will be extended **by September 15, 2026** as follows:

- Top 10 scoring entries from each category (Youth, Adult, and Burro) in the Virtual Freestyle Challenge.
- Two (2) additional high-scoring entries per category will be designated as alternates.
- Select invitation spots may be reserved for top freestyle competitors from specified mustang events, as determined by event management.

If an invited entry declines or cannot attend the Finals event, invitations will be extended to alternates in order of score.

4. Virtual Freestyle Challenge Video Requirements

- Performances must be **recorded between October 1, 2025** to **September 1, 2026**.
- Performance must be recorded in a single, continuous take.

- Videos must be submitted in an accepted format: .mp4, .mov, or a public link (i.e. YouTube). Editing, splicing, or performance-enhancing video effects are not permitted. Email submissions are not accepted as an entry.
- The performance area must remain clearly visible throughout the recording.
- Video production quality will not influence scoring as long as subjects can be clearly seen.
- All Freestyle rules for the Finals apply to the virtual challenge, **except**:
  - Set-up should NOT be included in the video recording
  - Music, while encouraged in virtual submissions, is not required

Submissions not meeting these standards will be rejected. In those cases, competitors can re-submit another video before the deadline as a new entry.

The performance presented at the Finals is not required to match the virtual submission. Finals performances will be evaluated by different judge(s).

5. Scoring

Freestyle is scored as a performance competition based on demonstrated skill, overall quality of execution and performance impact.

Total possible score: 100 points.

5.1 Choreography and Skill – 30 Points

- Thoughtful arrangement and sequencing of maneuvers
- Degree of difficulty and skill demonstrated by competitor(s)
- Depth of training and ability demonstrated by animal(s)

5.2 Creativity – 30 Points

- Originality and distinctiveness of performance concept
- Creative choices to enhance the animal(s)' strengths
- Strategic use of pace, energy, and maneuvers to support the theme

5.3 Communication – 30 Points

- Connection between competitor(s) and animal(s)
- Willingness, relaxation, and confidence of the animal(s)
- Clarity and subtlety of cues

5.4 Performance Impact – 10 Points

- Emotional and visual impact of the performance
- Harmony and cohesion of all performance elements
- Lasting impression of the partnership(s) presented

In the event of a tie, the higher Communication score will serve as the first tie-breaker. If still tied, the higher Choreography and Skill score will determine placing.

6. Time Limits

Each entry is allotted separate set-up and performance time. Time begins when the first element (horse, competitor, prop, music, or assistant) enters the arena.

6.1 Youth & Burro Divisions

- Set-up time: 3 minutes
- Performance time: 4 minutes

6.2 Adult Division

- Set-up time: 4 minutes
- Performance time: 5 minutes

Exceeding performance time will result in penalties.

The same performance time limits apply to the Virtual Freestyle Challenge, but set-up time does not apply as it is not included in the recording.

7. Performance Requirements

7.1 Music

Music is required for all Freestyle performances at the Finals.

> For the **Virtual Freestyle Challenge**, music is encouraged but **not required**. Sound quality will not affect scoring in the virtual qualification round.

For Finals performances, music must be submitted in mp3 file format and cropped to the required performance time.

All music must be appropriate for a family audience and submitted according to published event specifications.

7.2 Permitted & Restricted Maneuvers

Horses ridden during a performance must be a minimum of 4 years of age at the time of competition. Any competitor who rides a horse under 4 years of age will be eliminated.

Controlled rearing is permitted in the **Adult Division only** and must be initiated by an adult. Any rearing must be deliberate, balanced, and clearly cued. Uncontrolled, unsafe, coercive, or reactive behavior will result in elimination if not resolved.

Mustangs or Burros are not allowed to go onto or into any vehicle, trailer, or prop that is traveling or moving through the arena. Props that move within a fixed position — such as rocking, wobbling, or pivoting items — are permitted.

Competitors are not allowed to stand or kneel on a horse that is standing, sitting, or lying

on any object (i.e. tarps, bridges, platforms, chairs, etc).

Mustangs or Burros under 4 years of age are not allowed to be ridden or directly pull any items (i.e. carts, sleds, etc.). However, the competitor may pull an item while leading the animal.

All maneuvers must reflect humane training, cohesive partnership, and appropriate preparation for a public competition environment.

7.3 Props & Supporting Elements

Props and costumes are permitted and even encouraged to enhance the performance.

Competitors are responsible for providing props and costumes that comply with the safety requirements and competition rules. All items are subject to final review by event management or judges and it is the competitors responsibility to confirm the use of any items in question prior to their performance.

Adult competitors may drive a golf cart or similar utility vehicle during their performance; no one else may operate a vehicle during a performance. Cars, trucks, and all other motor vehicles may not be driven in the arena during a performance. Any vehicle left in the arena during a performance must have its engine turned off.

Youth competitors are not permitted to drive or operate any vehicle, including any open cab vehicles (i.e. golf cart, ATV, etc.)

Competitor(s) named on the entry may participate in any capacity — mounted, in-hand, handling props, or otherwise — as suits the performance. No other individuals may enter the arena during a performance except to hand a prop to a competitor from outside the arena or to release additional animals included in the same entry at the gate.

All elements must be freestanding, nothing driven into the ground, safe, stable, and appropriate for an equine environment. Structural props may not be physically supported or held in place by anyone during the performance.

It is competitors' responsibility to make sure all props and debris are cleared from the arena immediately following the conclusion of their performance. Not completely clearing the arena can result in penalties.

Competitors are encouraged to be thoughtful and respectful in their choice of music, costumes, themes, and props. All performance elements must be appropriate for a family audience. Performances that draw on cultural traditions or identities should do so with care and genuine respect for those communities.

7.4 Prohibited Elements

The following are **prohibited**:

- Pyrotechnics or open flames
- Firearms (real or simulated)

- Hazardous materials
- Any prop or device deemed unsafe by event management
- Electronic collars or other electronic devices
- Neck ropes or whips/sticks fitted with tacks, screws, or any object intended to cause discomfort

Event management reserves the right to restrict or deny any element that compromises safety, welfare, or event flow.

See also General Rules Section 9.2 regarding official authority over equipment.

7.5 Welfare & Horsemanship

All performances must reflect humane, ethical training and respectful handling.

Animals must appear physically sound, mentally prepared, and willing. Visible distress, excessive force, unsafe handling, or compromised welfare will result in elimination if not resolved.

Entertainment value does not excuse poor horsemanship.

Judges or event management may stop or excuse a performance at any time for safety or welfare concerns.

7.6 Attire

Appropriate footwear must be worn by all competitors at all times during a performance. Bare feet are **prohibited**.

Youth competitors must wear a **helmet** meeting current safety standards while mounted at all times, including during performance and warm-up.

All competitors who jump any objects exceeding 2 feet (0.6m) in height during their performance or warm-up must wear a **helmet** meeting current safety standards while jumping.

8. Penalties

Infraction	Consequence
Failure to clear arena promptly after performance	−5 points from final score
Exceeding performance time limit	−5 points from final score
Not following Helmet requirements (7.6)	Elimination
Bare feet during performance	Elimination

Virtual challenge requirements not met	Submission rejected
Riding an animal under 4 years of age	Elimination
Youth competitor operating a vehicle	Elimination
Standing or kneeling on a horse positioned on an object	Elimination
Loss of control or unsafe behavior creating danger to animal or participants	Elimination
Inhumane handling, excessive force, or visible distress	Elimination
Use of pyrotechnics, firearms, hazardous materials, or prohibited equipment	Disqualification

Green Horse

Discipline Rules

1. Overview

1.1 Division Levels

The Green Horse discipline consists of two divisions:

- **Green Horse – 1-Year Adopted**
- **Green Horse – 2-Year Adopted**

“Adopted year” refers to the number of full years since the horse’s official adoption or sale date as recognized by the governing agency.

1.2 Purpose

The Green Horse discipline exists to showcase the development of a young or recently gentled mustang progressing toward becoming a reliable, confident riding partner. Emphasis is placed on foundational correctness, steadiness, and thoughtful training progression appropriate to each division level.

A horse that is compliant but appears mentally disconnected will not be rewarded over a horse that demonstrates attentiveness, curiosity, and active partnership.

2. Eligibility

2.1 Competitor Eligibility & Age

Competitors must be a minimum of **15 years of age** at the time of competition. There is no maximum age limit.

2.2 Horse Eligibility & Age

Horses must meet division-specific adopted or sale year requirements.

1-Year Adopted Division
Original adoption or sale date must fall between **October 1, 2025 – July 15, 2026 (extended)**

2-Year Adopted Division
Original adoption or sale date must fall between **October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025**

For either division, horses must be at least **4 years of age** at the time of competition with no maximum age. Age of the horse will follow standard industry convention, with age incrementing on January 1.
Refer to general rules for full eligibility and welfare requirements.

3. Classes Offered

3.1 Required Classes

Each Green Horse division will consist of three scored classes:

- **Horsemanship** - focused on the rider's ability
- **Ridden Pattern** - focused on the horse's ability
- **Trail** - focused on the partnership with obstacles

All three classes will count equally toward overall division standings.

4. Equipment

4.1 General Standards

Horses may be exhibited in English or Western equipment. Competitors must wear attire appropriate to the style of riding presented. Decorative elements or adornments will not influence scoring.

Equipment must reflect humane training progression appropriate to the horse's level of development. The judge or steward may prohibit the use of any equipment deemed inhumane, excessively severe, or providing an unfair advantage.

4.2 Permitted Bits and Headgear

Snaffle bits, bosals, and curb bits are permitted. Horses shown in a snaffle bit or bosal may be ridden with two hands. Horses shown in a curb or shank-type bit must be ridden with one hand on the reins. Use of two hands on a curb bit will result in penalties as defined in Section 7.

All bits must:

- Have a smooth mouthpiece
- Be at least 5/16 inch in diameter at the mouthpiece
- Not be twisted, wire, chain, or non-smooth in construction

Curb bits must also:

- Not exceed 8.5 inches in shank length
- Use curb straps or chains that are flat or smooth and lie flat against the jaw

Bosals must:

- Be constructed of rawhide, leather, or rope with a flexible core
- Contain no metal

It is the competitor's responsibility to seek written clarification from event management regarding any questionable equipment prior to competition.

4.3 Prohibited Equipment

The following equipment is prohibited and will result in elimination from the class in which it is used:

- Snaffle bits smaller than 5/16 inch in diameter
- Twisted, wire, or non-smooth mouthpieces
- Stud chains
- Bosals containing metal
- Any bit or equipment determined by the judge or steward to be excessively severe

Wearing guns (real or toy), or discharging any firearm or blank, anywhere on the show grounds is prohibited and will result in automatic disqualification.

See also General Rules Section 9.2 regarding official authority over equipment.

4.4 Training Aids

Whips, crops, or similar training aids are permitted where appropriate to the discipline. Horses shown with visible reliance on training aids will be judged accordingly.

Excessive use of any training aid, including striking the horse, will result in a penalty as defined in Section 7. Continued excessive use may lead to the judge excusing the competitor from the arena, resulting in elimination from the class.

5. Class Procedures

5.1 Horsemanship Class

The Horsemanship class will consist of rail work followed by an individual pattern. Rail work will be conducted at the walk, trot/jog, and lope/canter in both directions. The individual pattern will test accuracy, preparation, and effectiveness of the rider.

When a class reaches fifteen (15) or more exhibitors, management reserves the right to divide the class into sections. Sections will complete rail work separately, but all exhibitors will perform the same posted pattern regardless of section. Class placings will be determined by score, not by section.

Rail work is intended to evaluate consistency of rider effectiveness and quality of each gait, responsiveness to transitions, rider organization and communication in a group setting, and emotional steadiness of the horse.

Rail work supports the overall score; the individual pattern will carry primary influence.

In the Horsemanship class, primary emphasis is placed on the rider's effectiveness in guiding and developing the horse. Judges will evaluate:

- Preparation and timing of aids
- Clarity and consistency of communication
- Appropriate application and release of pressure
- Ability to maintain rhythm and direction through effective guidance
- Organization and accuracy of pattern execution
- Rider balance and body control sufficient to support the horse

The horse's quality of movement will be considered as a reflection of the rider's effectiveness, not as an independent performance evaluation.

5.2 Ridden Pattern Class

Each exhibitor will perform an individual pattern. Rail work is not required. Patterns will evaluate maneuver execution, flow, and progression relative to division level.

Division Progression

1-Year Adopted

Patterns will emphasize clarity, forward motion, and foundational control. Maneuvers may include transitions, circles, turns, backing, side pass, and stops from trot.

2-Year Adopted

Patterns may require increased precision and adjustability, including walk–lope/canter transitions, 360-degree turns or pivots, stride length adjustments, simple lead changes, stops from lope/canter, and introductory rollback elements.

Flying lead changes are not required.

5.3 Trail Class

Each exhibitor will complete an individually scored obstacle course. Obstacles will test practical rideability, confidence, and technical accuracy.

Division Progression

1-Year Adopted

Obstacles will prioritize confidence-building elements and forward willingness. High technical difficulty and heavy drag elements will not be required.

2-Year Adopted

Obstacles may require increased precision, adjustability within obstacles, light drag elements, and more advanced backing or directional control.

6. Scoring

6.1 General Scoring Format

Each class is scored on a maneuver-by-maneuver basis. Each maneuver is assigned an individual score using the following scale:

Score	Description
10	Excellent
9	Very Good
8	Good
7	Above Average
6	Satisfactory
5	Average
4	Below Average
3	Poor
2	Very Poor
1	Extremely Poor
0	Not Performed or Demonstrated

Half-point increments (0.5) are permitted at the judge's discretion.

The final score for each class is the sum of all maneuver scores, plus a Connection mark as described in 6.2. Maneuvers are weighted equally unless otherwise specified on the posted pattern or course.

Scores reflect quality of execution, harmony, progression, and overall effectiveness relative to the division level.

6.2 Connection Score

At the conclusion of each class, the judge will award a single collective mark for Connection. Connection evaluates the overall relaxation, confidence, and partnership between horse and rider as demonstrated throughout the class. The Connection mark is scored on the same 0–10 scale, half-point increments permitted, and is added to the maneuver total to determine the competitor's final class score.

7. Penalty Infractions

7.1 Application of Penalties

Most execution faults — including breaks of gait, refusals, loss of straightness, wrong leads, and hesitations — are addressed through the maneuver score and do not carry a separate penalty.

7.2 Objective Penalties

The following infractions cannot be captured by a maneuver score and are handled as follows:

Infraction	Point Deduction from Class Score
Two hands on a curb bit	-2 each time
Equipment failure - if permitted to continue	-2
Dismounting during a ridden class	-3 each time
Excessive use of aid - if permitted to continue	-5
Off pattern - Judge may stop & allow to correct	0 for affected maneuver
Fall of horse or rider	Elimination from class
Illegal or prohibited equipment	Elimination from class
Excused from arena by Judge	Elimination from class
Abuse or inhumane handling	Disqualification from competition

Excusal from a class by the judge is final. Elimination from a class results in no score and no placing for that class. All are subject to further review under the General Rules enforcement system.

Western Versatility

Discipline Rules

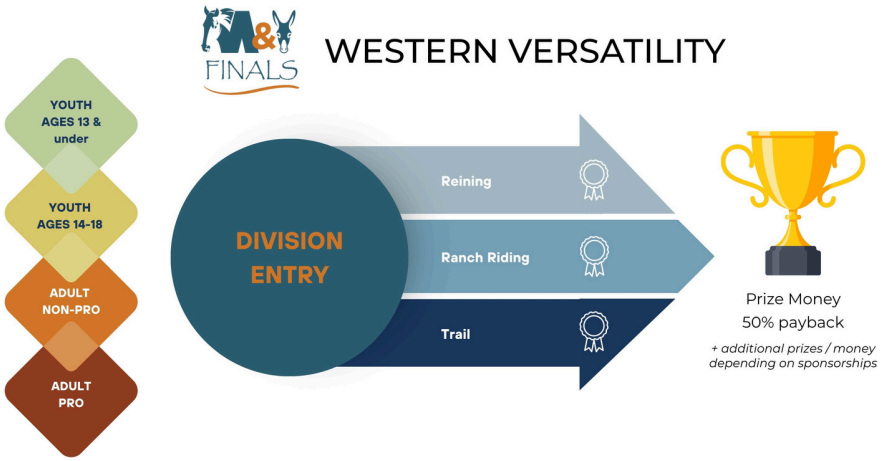
1. Overview

1.1 Purpose

The Western Versatility Division evaluates the all-around ability of horse and rider across three distinct classes: Reining, Ranch Riding, and Trail. Competitors are judged on quality of movement, accuracy of maneuvers, responsiveness, and the overall partnership between horse and rider.

1.2 Division Levels

- Youth 13 & Under
- Youth 14–18
- Adult Non-Pro
- Adult Pro



2. Eligibility

2.1 Horse Eligibility

Horses must be a minimum of 4 years of age at the time of competition. All horses must meet the general eligibility requirements outlined in the General Rules.

2.2 Competitor Eligibility

Competitors must meet the age requirements for their respective division as of the date of competition. All competitors must meet the general eligibility requirements outlined in the General Rules.

2.3 Adult Division Eligibility — Non-Pro vs. Pro

The Adult divisions are offered in two categories: Adult Non-Pro and Adult Pro.

Adult Pro

A competitor must enter the Adult Pro division if they are paid directly by clients for any under-saddle training, riding instruction, or training clinics.

Competitors who are employed by a trainer but not paid directly by clients (i.e. assistants or working students) may voluntarily enter the Adult Pro division at their discretion, but are not required to do so.

Adult Non-Pro

A competitor may enter the Adult Non-Pro division if they do not have any clients paying for any under-saddle training, riding instruction, or training clinics. Non-Pro competitors will be required to sign a declaration at the time of entry confirming their eligibility.

Intentional misrepresentation of division eligibility may result in elimination from the division and is subject to further review under the General Rules enforcement system.

3. Classes Offered

3.1 Required Classes

Each division entry must compete in three classes:

- Reining
- Ranch Riding
- Trail

All three classes will count equally toward overall division standings. Division Championship standing is determined by the cumulative score across all three classes.

4. Equipment

4.1 Saddle

A Western type saddle is required for all Western Versatility classes.

Breast collars are permitted.

4.2 Bridle & Bits

Horses may be shown in any of the following:

- Snaffle bit with a Western headstall
- Curb bit with a Western headstall
- Bosal or hackamore

Two hands are permitted with a snaffle or bosal. Horses shown in a curb or shank-type bit must be ridden with one hand on the reins. Use of two hands on a curb bit will result in penalties as defined in Section 7.

All bits must:

- Have a smooth mouthpiece (meaning, no pointed or sharp edges)
- Be at least 5/16 inch in diameter at the mouthpiece
- Not be ~~twisted, wire~~, chain, or non-smooth in construction

Curb bits:

- Must not exceed 8.5 inches in shank length
- Curb straps and curb chains are allowed. They must be properly worn as intended.

Bosals must:

- Be constructed of rawhide, leather, or rope with a flexible core
- Contain no metal across the nose

~~Mechanical hackamores and gag bits are not permitted.~~ It is the competitor's responsibility to seek written clarification from event management regarding any questionable equipment prior to competition.

4.3 Reins

~~Split reins or romal reins are permitted. Closed/loop reins are permitted with a snaffle or bosal only. No tied or knotted reins and no reins with chains, rings, or other attachments.~~

Rein setups should be appropriate for the bridle and bit being used. Judges can request changes if there are any welfare concerns.

4.4 Protective Boots & Leg Protection

Splint boots, sport boots, and bell boots are permitted. Leg wraps are permitted. No weighted boots or chains.

4.5 Attire

Competitors should present a neat, workmanlike appearance appropriate to Western riding. ASTM/SEI-certified helmets are required for all Youth competitors and encouraged for Adult competitors.

4.6 Spurs

Spurs are optional. If worn, spurs must have a smooth band, and the shank must point directly back or downward. Rowels, if present, must be blunt and free to rotate. No locked rowels, sharpened edges, or spurs designed to cause injury. **Spurs are not permitted in the Youth 13 & Under division.**

4.7 Training Aids

~~Whips, crops, bats, and similar training aids are not permitted during competition.~~ Excessive use of any aid, including spurs or reins, will result in a penalty as defined in Section 7. Continued excessive use may lead to the judge excusing the competitor from the arena, resulting in elimination from the class.

4.8 Prohibited Equipment

The following are prohibited in all Western Versatility classes: tie-downs, draw reins, martingales, ~~nosebands~~ used in conjunction with a curb bit, any training device or artificial aid not specifically permitted above. Use of prohibited equipment will result in elimination from the class. See also General Rules Section 9.2 regarding official authority over equipment.

5. Class Procedures

Patterns and courses for all Western Versatility classes will be posted and made available to competitors prior to competition. Patterns and courses may vary by division to reflect appropriate levels of difficulty. Youth divisions may feature fewer or less complex maneuvers and obstacles than Adult divisions.

5.1 Reining

Competitors individually perform an assigned pattern consisting of required maneuvers. Each maneuver is scored individually using a 0–10 scale.

Required maneuvers may include: spins, circles (large and small at varying speeds), lead changes, rollbacks, sliding stops, and backups. The specific combination and order of maneuvers is determined by the pattern assigned to each division.

The judge evaluates each maneuver on willingness, smoothness, finesse, quickness, and authority of the horse, as well as the rider's control and use of aids. Credit is given for maneuvers performed with controlled speed and precision.

5.2 Ranch Riding

Competitors individually perform an assigned pattern that demonstrates the horse's ability as a pleasure to ride. Each maneuver or element is scored individually using a 0–10 scale.

Required elements may include: walk, trot, lope, extended trot, extended lope, stops, backups, side passes, and lead changes. The pattern is designed to simulate practical ranch-type riding scenarios and may include transitions between gaits, changes of direction, and ground-covering movement.

The judge evaluates quality of movement, correct gait and cadence, smooth transitions, responsiveness to the rider, and overall willingness. A long, relaxed frame with forward movement is preferred over an artificial or overly collected frame.

5.3 Trail

Competitors individually navigate an assigned course of obstacles. Each obstacle is scored individually using a 0–10 scale.

Obstacles may include: natural elements, gates, poles (walk-over, trot-over, lope-over), bridges, drags, backing elements, side passes, and other obstacles designed to test the horse's trust, responsiveness, and willingness to navigate unfamiliar or challenging tasks.

The judge evaluates the horse's approach, negotiation, and completion of each obstacle, as well as the rider's guidance and use of aids. Credit is given for calm, willing negotiation of obstacles with minimal hesitation or resistance.

6. Scoring

6.1 General Scoring Format

Each class is scored on a maneuver-by-maneuver basis. Each maneuver is assigned an individual score using the following scale:

Score	Description
10	Excellent
9	Very Good
8	Good
7	Above Average
6	Satisfactory
5	Average
4	Below Average
3	Poor
2	Very Poor
1	Extremely Poor
0	Not Performed or Demonstrated

Half-point increments (0.5) are permitted at the judge's discretion.

The final score for each class is the sum of all maneuver scores, plus a Connection mark as described in 6.2. Maneuvers are weighted equally unless otherwise specified on the posted pattern or course.

Scores reflect quality of execution, harmony, and overall effectiveness relative to the division level.

6.2 Connection Score

At the conclusion of each class, the judge will award a single collective mark for Connection. Connection evaluates the overall relaxation, confidence, and partnership between horse and rider as demonstrated throughout the class. The Connection mark is scored on the same 0–10 scale, half-point increments permitted, and is added to the

maneuver total to determine the competitor's final class score.

7. Penalty Infractions

7.1 Application of Penalties

Most execution faults — including breaks of gait, refusals, loss of straightness, wrong leads, and hesitations — are addressed through the maneuver score and do not carry a separate penalty.

7.2 Objective Penalties

The following infractions cannot be captured by a maneuver score and are handled as follows:

Infraction	Point Deduction from Class Score
Two hands on a curb bit	-2 each time
Equipment failure - if permitted to continue	-2
Dismounting during a ridden class	-3 each time
Excessive use of aid - if permitted to continue	-5
Off pattern - Judge may stop & allow to correct	0 for affected maneuver
Fall of horse or rider	Elimination from class
Illegal or prohibited equipment	Elimination from class
Excused from arena by Judge	Elimination from class
Abuse or inhumane handling	Disqualification from competition

Excusal from a class by the judge is final. Elimination from a class results in no score and no placing for that class. All are subject to further review under the General Rules enforcement system.

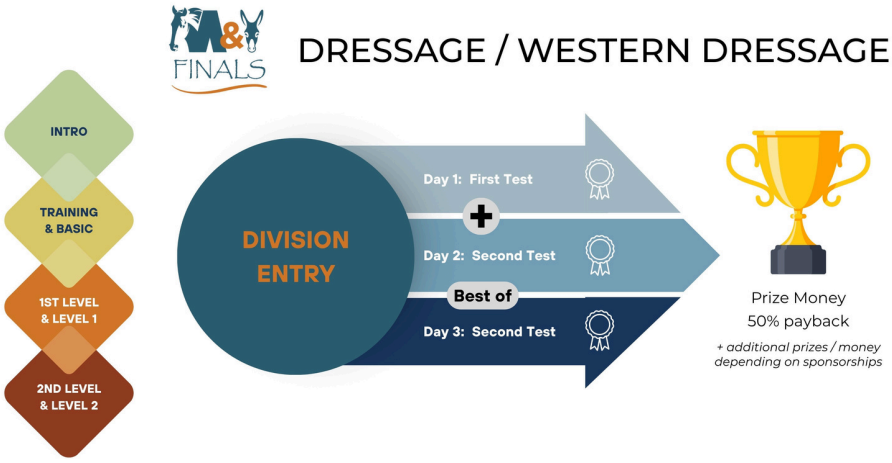
Dressage/ Western Dressage

Discipline Rules

1. Overview

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Dressage and Western Dressage divisions are to showcase the development of the horse as a willing, harmonious, and supple athlete. Dressage evaluates the quality of the horse's gaits, the harmony between horse and rider, and the horse's acceptance of contact and forward movement. The mustang's ability to demonstrate calm responsiveness and progressive training is central to evaluation at all levels.



1.2 Divisions Offered

Four divisions are offered:

- Introductory
- Training / Basic
- First Level / Level 1
- Second Level / Level 2

Both **Dressage and Western Dressage will be competing together** at each division level. Event Management reserves the right to split divisions by discipline if entry numbers and the schedule allows.

Competitors must declare Dressage or Western Dressage at entry, and that declaration is fixed for all rides within that division.

Each division consists of three scored classes:

- First Test (Score 1)
- Second Test – Ride 1 (Score 2a)
- Second Test – Ride 2 (Score 2b)

The scoring structure for Dressage and Western Dressage divisions operates as a discipline-specific exception to the cumulative scoring method described in General Rules Section 7.2. Division standings are calculated using Score 1 plus the higher of the two Score 2 rides; the lower Score 2 ride is dropped.

1.3 Division Objectives

Introductory:

To introduce the horse and rider to dressage fundamentals. The horse should move freely forward in a steady tempo and clear rhythm, accepting contact with the bit. Accurate geometry and test execution should be demonstrated.

Training / Basic:

To confirm that the horse demonstrates correct basics: suppleness both laterally and longitudinally, free forward movement in a clear rhythm with steady tempo, and willing acceptance of the bit. Correct geometry and lines of travel should be shown.

First Level / Level 1:

To confirm correct basics with improved balance, lateral suppleness, and throughness. The horse should demonstrate the thrust required to perform lengthenings of stride and should be consistently on the bit.

Second Level / Level 2:

To confirm correct basics while beginning to accept more weight on the hindquarters as collected and medium gaits develop. A greater degree of straightness, suppleness, throughness, and balance are required. The horse should demonstrate self-carriage.

2. Eligibility

2.1 Animal Eligibility

All horses and burros competing in the Dressage division must meet the eligibility requirements stated in the General Rules.

Minimum age requirements:

Horses ridden under saddle must be a minimum of 4 years of age at the time of competition.

Mares may not compete during or after their eighth month of pregnancy or within three months of foaling.

2.2 Competitor Eligibility

Competitors must be a minimum of 13 years of age to compete.

No formal age/amateur/professional designation applies to this event. The divisions are only categorized by level.

3. Tests

3.1 Test Selection

Competitors will ride the tests published on HorseSpot for their declared division. Tests are based on the standard published tests for each corresponding level in Dressage (USDF) and Western Dressage (WDAA).

3.2 Calling the Test

Tests may be called (read aloud by a designated person) at all levels. It is the competitor's responsibility to arrange for their own caller. Calling is limited to reading the movement once as written. Event management will not be responsible for providing callers.

Calling errors or late calls do not relieve the competitor of error penalties. The bell will be sounded to indicate an error of course.

3.3 Test Execution

The test begins when the competitor enters the arena at A after the judge has signaled the rider. The test ends after the final salute.

Competitors must enter the arena within 45 seconds of the judge's signal or they will be eliminated.

4. Equipment

4.1 Saddles and accessories

Any English-type saddle is required for the Dressage tests. Any Western-type saddle is required for the Western Dressage tests.

Martingales are **prohibited** in competition. In warm-up, a running martingale may be used on a snaffle rein only. A running martingale consists of a divided strap attached to the girth, with each strap connecting from the point of division to the rein on the same side. The reins must slide freely through the rings.

Draw reins are **prohibited**.

4.2 Bridles

A plain snaffle bridle or a western headstall is permitted for all division levels. Double bridles are **prohibited** at these levels.

Nosebands or cavessons, if used, must be adjusted loose enough to allow for two fingers to comfortably fit under the noseband on the side of the face.

All bridles must be made of leather or leather-like, flexible, non-metallic material.

A bitless bridle of any style may be used in place of a bitted bridle by competitors in either dressage or western dressage.

Mechanical hackamores — those incorporating shanks and a curb chain or strap — are **prohibited**.

4.3 Reins & Hand positions

Reins must connect the bit or bitless bridle to the rider's hand without mechanical additions or attachments.

Hand Position — *Western Dressage riders only*

The following hand position rules apply to Western Dressage riders. A rider may not switch between one and two hands during a test.

- Riders using a bitless bridle may ride with one or two hands.
- Riders using a snaffle bit with split reins may ride with one or two hands.
- Riders using a curb bit may ride with one or two hands.
- Riders using Romal reins must use one hand only.

4.4 Bits

Snaffle Bits — Dressage or Western Dressage

A snaffle bit may be used by competitors in either discipline. A snaffle is a non-leverage bit in which the rein attaches at the same ring as the cheekpiece.

All snaffle bits must be:

- Smooth with a solid surface
- Made of metal, rubber, or synthetic material
- A minimum of 10mm in diameter where the mouthpiece meets the rings

Snaffle bits may be unjointed, single-jointed, or double-jointed. In double-jointed snaffles, the center link must be smooth and curved on all surfaces (lozenge-shaped). French link and Dr. Bristol center links are **not permitted**.

The following snaffle bits are **prohibited** in both dressage and western dressage:

- Twisted bits or bits with wire, cable, or non-smooth surfaces
- Bits with mechanical restraint on the tongue
- Bits with joints that can pinch or trap oral tissue
- Any bit with separate attachment points for the cheekpiece and rein

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Curb Bits — *Western Dressage only*

Standard Western curb bits are permitted for Western Dressage riders only. A standard

Western curb bit must meet the following specifications:

- Shank length: maximum 8½ inches (215.9mm) overall
- Mouthpiece diameter: 5/16 inch (7.9mm) to ¾ inch (19.05mm), measured one inch from the shank
- Port height: maximum 3½ inches (88.9mm)
- Mouthpiece must be smooth; jointed mouthpieces are permitted
- Nothing may protrude below the mouthpiece (no extensions, prongs, or rivets)

A curb chain or curb strap is required with any curb bit. It must be flat, a minimum of ½ inch (12.7mm) wide, and lie flat against the jaw of the horse. Round, rolled, braided, or rawhide curb straps are **prohibited**.

The following are **prohibited** for Western Dressage riders:

- Slip or gag bits
- Kimberwicks
- Bits with hooks, slots, or flat/donut/polo mouthpieces
- Any device that increases the effective leverage of the shank
- Prongs, extensions, or rivets below the mouthpiece

4.5 Protective Headgear or Hat

Dressage riders must wear a helmet meeting current safety standards while mounted, including in warm-up areas.

Western Dressage riders may wear a suitable western hat in lieu of a helmet.

4.6 Attire & Spurs

Competitors should wear neat, appropriate riding attire for their discipline.

Spurs are optional. If worn, spurs must be:

- Made of metal
- One spur worn on each boot
- Pointed directly back from the center of the spur when on the rider's boot
- If curved, worn with the shank directed downward

Rowels, if present, must be blunt and free to rotate. The inside arm of the spur must be smooth. The maximum shank length is 5 cm (2 inches), including rowels.

4.7 Whips

One whip, bat, or crop no longer than 120cm (approximately 47 inches) including the lash may be carried during competition. This applies to both Dressage and Western Dressage riders.

5. Judging & Scoring

5.1 Scale of Marks

All movements and collective marks are scored on the following scale. Half-point increments (0.5 through 9.5) are permitted at the judge's discretion. All scores must be recorded with a decimal (e.g., 6.0 rather than 6).

Score	Description
10	Excellent
9	Very Good
8	Good
7	Fairly Good
6	Satisfactory
5	Marginal
4	Insufficient
3	Fairly Bad
2	Bad
1	Very Bad
0	Not Executed

A score of 0 means the movement was essentially not performed.

5.2 Collective Marks

After the competitor has completed their test, the judge will award collective marks (0–10, including half marks) in the following categories:

- **Gaits:** Freedom, regularity, and elasticity of steps.
- **Impulsion:** Engagement of the hindquarters; transmission of forward energy through the horse's back; suppleness.
- **Rider's Position, Seat & Hands:** Balance, depth of seat, independence of hand from seat.
- **Rider's Use of Aids:** Correctness and effectiveness of aids; accuracy of figures and transitions.
- **Harmony:** The horse's willing acceptance of the rider's aids; relaxation, confidence, and partnership between horse and rider.

5.3 Class Structure & Division Scoring

Each division consists of three scored classes:

- **First Test (Score 1):** Competitors ride the first published test for their declared level and discipline. This score counts in full toward the division total.

- **Second Test – Ride 1 (Score 2a):** Competitors ride the second published test for their declared level and discipline.
- **Second Test – Ride 2 (Score 2b):** Competitors ride the same second test a second time.

The division standing is calculated as follows:

Division Score = Score 1 + the higher of Score 2a or Score 2b

The lower of the two Score 2 rides is dropped. This structure gives competitors the opportunity to improve on the second test, rewarding consistency and development across the event.

This scoring method operates as a discipline-specific exception to the cumulative scoring method described in General Rules Section 7.2.

5.4 Scoring & Results

Scores are multiplied by the applicable coefficient where indicated on the test sheet, then totaled. Penalty points for errors of course are deducted from the total on the judge's sheet.

Division standings are calculated using Score 1 plus the higher of the two Score 2 rides. The lower Score 2 ride is dropped.

Final results are expressed as a percentage, calculated to three decimal places. Scores must be posted as soon as possible after each ride and no later than one hour after the ride is completed.

5.5 Tie-Breaking

In the event of a tie in division standings, the following procedure applies in order:

1. The competitor with the higher total collective marks score is declared the winner.
2. If a tie remains, the competitor with the higher free walk score is declared the winner.
3. If a tie remains, the competitor with the higher sum of scores carrying a coefficient greater than one is declared the winner.
4. If a tie still remains, the judge will break the tie.

6. Arena & Test Procedures

6.1 Arena Specifications

The standard dressage arena is 60 meters long and 20 meters wide. The small arena is 40 meters long and 20 meters wide. Arena measurements refer to the interior of the enclosure.

The small arena is used for Introductory and Training/Basic divisions. The large arena is required for First Level/Level 1 and Second Level/Level 2 divisions.

The arena enclosure must be completely closed except for the entrance at A, which must be at least two meters wide. The enclosure fence should be approximately 0.3 meters high and must not present an entanglement hazard to horses.

6.2 Test Procedures

The test begins when the competitor enters the arena at A after the judge has signaled. The test ends after the final salute, when the horse moves forward. The competitor should leave the arena at A at a walk on a long or loose rein.

Competitors must enter the arena within 45 seconds of the judge's signal. Failure to enter within this window is grounds for penalties.

Any action taken before the entry at A or after the final salute does not affect scoring.

6.3 Falls

A fall of the horse and/or rider results in elimination.

6.4 Leaving the Arena

If the horse leaves the arena — all four feet outside the fence or line marking the arena perimeter — between the beginning and end of the test, the competitor is eliminated.

7. Errors & Penalties

7.1 Penalties

The following penalties are deducted from the competitor's total score:

Infraction	Penalty
First error of course	2 points deducted
Second error of course	4 points deducted
Third error of course	5 points deducted
Each subsequent error	5 points deducted
Switching between one and two hands during a test (Western)	2 points deducted
Unauthorized assistance	5 points deducted

Unauthorized assistance is obvious or repeated intervention by a person outside the arena intended to assist the competitor, including coaching, voice signals, or gestures. A single incidental remark does not constitute unauthorized assistance. Calling the test as permitted under Section 3.2 does not constitute unauthorized assistance.

An error of course occurs when a competitor takes the wrong turn, omits a movement, or otherwise deviates from the prescribed test. The judge will sound the bell and indicate where the competitor should resume. If the same error is repeated immediately after correction, only one error is recorded.

7.2 Voice Cues

The quiet use of the voice and clicking of the tongue is permitted for all competitors in both disciplines.

7.3 Entering the Arena Early

If a competitor enters the arena before the judge has signaled, the judge can sound the bell, the competitor must leave the arena, and the test will restart from the beginning. No penalty is applied provided the competitor complies promptly.

7.4 Eliminations

A competitor is eliminated from the current test under the following circumstances:

- Fall of horse and/or rider
- Horse leaves the arena with all four feet outside the arena perimeter
- Failure to enter the arena within 45 seconds of the judge's signal
- Resistance that endangers the rider, horse, judge, or the public
- Use of prohibited equipment
- Horse's tongue tied down
- Evidence of blood on the horse's mouth or sides in the competition arena
- Marked lameness, as determined by the judge
- Cruelty or excessive use of spurs
- Misrepresentation of entry

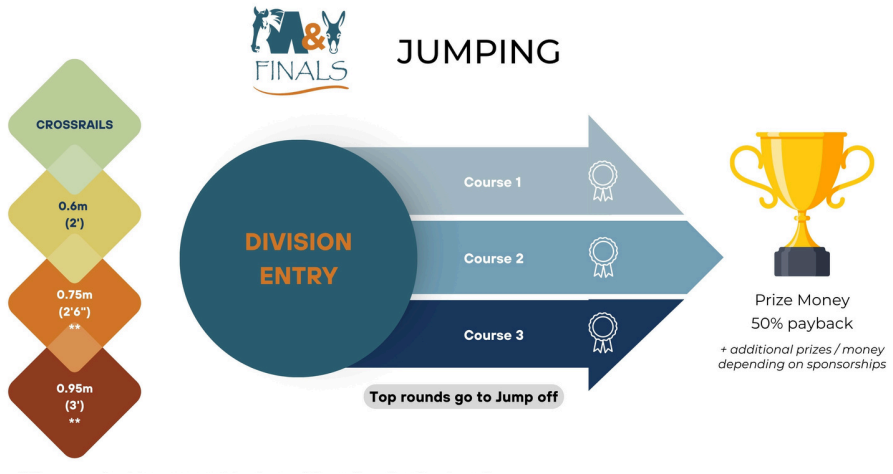
Elimination from one class does not automatically withdraw the competitor from remaining classes in the division unless the grounds involve welfare, cruelty, or prohibited equipment, in which case event management retains authority to withdraw the entry entirely.

Jumping

Discipline Rules

1. Overview

Jumping tests the horse and rider's ability to complete a set course of obstacles within a defined time, with the fewest possible faults. Results are determined objectively by fault count and time; no subjective judging of style or way of going is applied.



2. Divisions & Heights

The Jumping division is divided into four height sections. Each section is defined by the maximum height of fences on course. All fence heights are measured at the highest point of the obstacle.

- **Crossrails** — Maximum apex height of 0.50 m (20″). Fences are constructed in an X formation. All fences on course must be crossrails; no verticals or oxers are permitted in this section.
- **0.60 m (2′0″)** — Maximum fence height of 0.60 m (2′0″). Verticals and oxers permitted.
- **0.75 m (2′6″)** — Maximum fence height of 0.75 m (2′6″). Verticals and oxers permitted.
- **0.95 m (3′0″)** — Maximum fence height of 0.95 m (3′0″). Verticals and oxers permitted.

All four height divisions are open to any eligible competitor regardless of experience or prior winnings. A competitor may enter more than one height division. A competitor may not move to a lower division after competing in a higher division during the same competition. Divisions will not be combined regardless of entry numbers.

3. Eligibility

3.1 Horse Eligibility

All horses competing in Jumping must meet the general animal eligibility requirements set forth in the General Rules. Additional requirements specific to this division:

- Horses must be a minimum of 4 years of age at the time of competition
- Burros are not eligible to compete in Jumping

3.2 Competitor Eligibility

All competitors must meet the general competitor eligibility requirements set forth in the General Rules. All four height divisions are open to Youth and Adult competitors with no restrictions based on experience or prior winnings.

3.3 Qualifying

Competitors and horses must complete **two qualifying classes** at separate horse shows. The jumps must be at least the same height or higher as the Finals division.

For the Jumping Divisions at 0.75m (2'6") and 0.95m (3'), the competitor must place in the **top 50%** of the class in order to count that event as a qualifier. *If the number of competitors is odd, rounding should go **down**. (i.e. in a class with 7 competitors, top 50% = 3.5, so results must be in top 3 to qualify)*

If competitors complete 2'6" or 3' classes and *do not* finish in the top 50%, those qualifiers can be applied to the crossrails or 0.6m (2') divisions instead.

4. Classes Offered

Each height division is run across three classes, completed in the following order. All three classes must be completed to be eligible for division placings.

4.1 Class 1 — Optimum Time

Scored under Table IV. Competitors are penalized for jumping faults and for finishing with a time furthest from the posted Optimum Time. The Optimum Time is set at 4 seconds less than the Time Allowed and posted on the course diagram before competition begins. In the case of equal faults, the competitor whose time is closest to the Optimum Time — over or under — places higher.

4.2 Class 2 — Table II, Section 2(b)

Scored on faults and time. Competitors with a clear first round proceed immediately, without leaving the ring, to a shortened jump-off course upon the audible signal. The jump-off is timed; in the case of equal faults, the faster time places higher. If no clear rounds are recorded, placings are determined by faults and time from the first round.

4.3 Class 3 — Table II, Section 2(a)

Scored on faults and time. All competitors complete the first round before any jump-off is

held. In the case of equality of faults after the first round, a jump-off is held for first place only. Time decides in the event of equal faults in the jump-off.

4.4 Division Placings

Division placings are determined by adding each competitor's final place number across all three classes. The competitor with the lowest cumulative total (higher placings) wins the division. In the event of a tie, refer to General Rules Section 7.3. Competitors who do not complete all three classes are ineligible for division placings.

5. Equipment & Attire

5.1 Saddle

Any style of english saddle is permitted, except dressage saddles are not permitted. Bareback riding is not permitted.

5.2 Bridle & Bit

Any safe and humane bit or bitless bridle is permitted. Equipment that causes or risks injury to the horse is prohibited. The judge or event management may require removal or replacement of any equipment deemed unsafe or inhumane. See also General Rules Section 9.2.

5.3 Martingales & Auxiliary Equipment

- Running and standing martingales are permitted
- No equipment may be used that restricts the natural movement of the horse's head and neck in a manner that compromises safety or welfare

5.4 Attire & Spurs

Required:

- Properly fitted and fastened helmet meeting ASTM/SEI safety standards
- Boots with a defined heel
- If used, spurs must be smooth metal. Rowel spurs with serrated edges are not permitted.

Attire should be neat, well-fitted, and appropriate for jumping. A back number should be worn, as assigned by event management.

If a competitor loses their helmet during a round, they must recover and replace it before jumping the next obstacle. The clock does not stop.

5.5 Whips

A single whip not exceeding 75 cm (30") is permitted. Weighted whips are prohibited.

5.6 Prohibited Items

- Tie-downs
- Draw reins and German martingales are prohibited
- Wire, cable, or chain of any kind on the horse's head or legs
- Any device intended to cause pain or distress

6. Course Design

6.1 General Requirements

All courses must:

- Be designed to suit the skill level of the division
- Include at least one change of direction
- Have a clearly marked start line and finish line set a minimum of 3.65 m (12′) apart
- The start line must be set a minimum of 3.65 m (12′) from the first obstacle; the finish line must be set a minimum of 7.30 m (24′) from the last obstacle
- Be accurately set to the height specified for the division before competition begins
- All obstacles must be flagged — red flag on the right, white flag on the left as approached. Only material between the flags may be scored.
- Be reset to original specifications between competitors
- Obstacles must be capable of being knocked down. They must not be so light that they fall at a slight touch, nor so heavy or firmly supported that they cannot be dislodged.

6.2 Fence Count & Types

The first fence on course must be inviting and straightforward. It should be:

- Set at or below the maximum height for the division
- Approached on a straight line with adequate distance from the start line
- Free from distracting fillers, sharp angles, or difficult related distances immediately following

Course fence requirements by division:

Division	Fences	Fence Types	Combinations
Crossrails	8 to 10	Crossrails only	Not permitted
0.60 m (2′0″)	8 to 12	Verticals, oxers	Not permitted
0.75 m (2′6″)	8 to 12	Verticals, oxers	Not permitted
0.95 m (3′0″)	8 to 12	Verticals, oxers	Not permitted

For course design purposes, any two obstacles set within 39′5″ (12 m) of each other — measured from the base of the landing side of the first obstacle to the base of the take-off side of the next — are considered a combination and must not be used. Combinations are not permitted at any height.

6.3 Spreads

- Oxer spread should not exceed the fence height by more than 0.15 m (6″) at 0.60 m and 0.75 m divisions
- Oxer spread should not exceed the fence height by more than 0.20 m (8″) at the 0.95 m division
- Square oxers are permitted; Swedish oxers are not permitted

6.4 Course Posting & Walk

- The course diagram must be posted a minimum of 30 minutes before the scheduled start of the class
- Competitors may walk the course on foot during this period
- The class may not begin before the 30-minute posting period has elapsed
- Mounted schooling over competition fences is not permitted at any time

6.5 Course Substitution

If an obstacle becomes unusable during competition, event management must substitute a comparable obstacle that approximates the original as closely as possible in height and type.

7. Time, Speed & Time Allowed

7.1 Speed

The speed for each division determines the Time Allowed for the course. Speed must be selected within the following ranges and posted on the course diagram before competition begins:

Division	Speed Range
Crossrails	250–300 m/min
0.60 m (2′0″)	275–325 m/min
0.75 m (2′6″)	300–350 m/min
0.95 m (3′0″)	325–375 m/min

Speed selection should account for ring size, course length, and footing conditions.

7.2 Time Allowed

The Time Allowed is calculated by dividing the measured course length by the selected speed. The Time Allowed must be announced and posted before the first competitor begins. After the first competitor completes the course, the Time Allowed and that competitor's time must be announced.

7.3 Optimum Time

For Class 1, the Optimum Time is set at 4 seconds less than the Time Allowed and must be posted on the course diagram before competition begins.

7.4 Time Faults

One time fault is charged for each commenced second by which a competitor exceeds the Time Allowed.

7.5 Time Limit

The Time Limit is double the Time Allowed. Any competitor whose elapsed time exceeds the Time Limit is eliminated.

7.6 Timing

- Time begins when the horse crosses the start line in the correct direction
- Time ends when the horse crosses the finish line with the rider mounted
- The clock does not stop for knockdowns or disobediences
- Where an obstacle must be reset following a disobedience, a 6-second correction is added to the competitor's elapsed time
- Where an obstacle must be reset due to a cause other than the competitor's disobedience, time is stopped while the obstacle is reset and restarted with no correction added

8. Judging Format

8.1 Judge Authority

A single judge officiates all Jumping classes. The judge's decisions on all matters occurring in the competition ring are final, including but not limited to:

- Whether an obstacle was knocked down
- Whether a disobedience occurred
- Whether a fall of horse or rider occurred
- Whether a competitor was off course
- Time taken to complete the round

The judge may address any point of class procedure, conduct, or scoring not explicitly covered in these rules. See also General Rules Section 9.2.

8.2 Audible Signal

An audible signal is used for the following purposes:

- To signal the competitor to start
- To stop a competitor due to an unforeseen incident
- To indicate an obstacle must be reset before the competitor continues
- To signal the competitor to resume after an interruption
- To indicate elimination by repeated and prolonged signal

The competitor has 60 seconds from the audible start signal to cross the start line. If the competitor does not cross the start line within 60 seconds, the clock starts automatically at that point.

8.3 Timing Equipment

Automatic timing equipment will be used. Manual backup timing must be available at all times during competition. In the event of timing equipment failure, manual times recorded by the backup timer will be used.

8.4 Scoring & Results

- The judge's card is the official record for each class
- Results must be posted promptly at the conclusion of each class
- Division placings will be posted at the conclusion of the event
- Scoring irregularities must be reviewed and resolved as soon as possible after they are identified

8.5 Courtesy Fence

An eliminated competitor has the right to attempt one additional obstacle designated by the judge, but may not continue thereafter. This does not apply in the case of a fall of horse or rider.

8.6 Competitor Conduct

Competitors must conduct themselves appropriately within the arena at all times. Any competitor who receives outside assistance while on course, or who fails to exit through the designated gate at the conclusion of their round, will be eliminated. Any action against a horse deemed excessive by the judge — including but not limited to excessive use of whip, spurs, or reins — may result in elimination and is subject to further disciplinary action under the General Rules.

9. Faults & Penalties

9.1 Jumping Faults

Infraction	Penalty
Knockdown of any obstacle or element between the flags	4 faults
Knockdown of start or finish line markers	4 faults
First disobedience anywhere on course	4 faults
Second cumulative disobedience anywhere on course	4 faults
Third cumulative disobedience anywhere on course	Elimination
Exceeding the Time Allowed (per commenced second)	1 time fault
Exceeding the Time Limit	Elimination
Fall of horse and/or rider	Elimination
Horse resisting for 45 consecutive seconds	Elimination
Taking more than 60 seconds to cross the start line	Clock starts automatically
Off course or jumping an obstacle not designated as part of the course	Elimination
Jumping an obstacle before crossing the start line	Elimination
Leaving the arena before completing the course	Elimination
Excessive action against the horse	Elimination

9.2 Knockdown Definition

An obstacle is considered knocked down when, in the act of jumping, the horse or rider causes any part of the obstacle that establishes its height to fall or shift to a lower position. Narrowing the width of a spread without altering the height is not considered a knockdown.

9.3 Disobedience Definition

A disobedience includes:

- Refusal — stopping in front of an obstacle, whether or not it is knocked down, unless the horse jumps immediately from a standstill without backing or circling
- Run-out — evading or passing the obstacle to be jumped
- Circling — crossing the original track between two consecutive obstacles except to retake an obstacle after a disobedience

9.4 Fall Definition

- A rider is considered to have fallen when separated from the horse in a manner requiring remounting
- A horse is considered to have fallen when the shoulder and haunch on the same side touch the ground or an obstacle and the ground

9.5 No Penalty

No penalty is incurred when:

- An obstacle is knocked down or displaced by a cause other than jumping or an attempt to jump
- A competitor jumps an obstacle that was improperly reset due to a prior competitor or external cause, provided they do not knock it down

9.6 Off Course Definition

A competitor is considered off course when they deviate from the posted course diagram and jump an obstacle before correcting the deviation.

10. Jump-Off Rules

10.1 When Jump-Offs Apply

Jump-offs apply in Class 2 and Class 3 only, as defined in Section 4. Jump-offs do not apply in Class 1.

10.2 Jump-Off Course

The jump-off course:

- Is set using a selection of obstacles from the original course
- Must include at least one change of direction and at least one vertical
- May not be fewer than 6 jumping efforts
- Must be shown on the posted course diagram before competition begins
- Obstacles may be adjusted but may not exceed the maximum height for the division

10.3 Scoring

Jump-offs are decided by faults and time. In the event of equal faults, the faster time places higher. All faults from the jump-off table in Section 9 apply.

10.4 Withdrawing from a Jump-Off

A competitor who chooses not to participate in a jump-off must notify the judge before the jump-off begins. That competitor will be placed after all competitors who attempted the jump-off, in the order of their first round result.

10.5 Falls in the Jump-Off

A fall of horse or rider in the jump-off results in elimination from that class. As all three classes must be completed to be eligible for division placings, the competitor is ineligible for division placings.

10.6 Starting Order

The jump-off starting order follows the original first round order unless otherwise posted by event management.

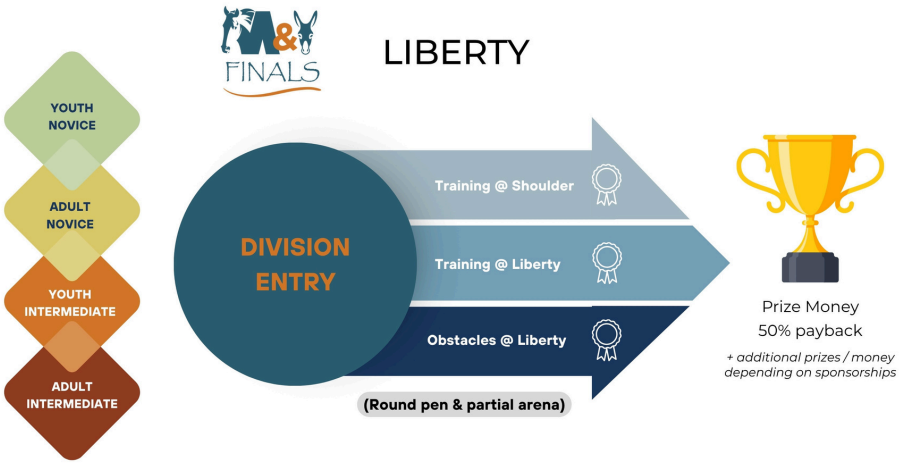
Liberty

Discipline Rules

1. Overview

1.1 Purpose

The Liberty divisions evaluate the quality of the partnership between horse and handler when the horse works free of physical restraint. Across three classes, competitors are judged on the horse's responsiveness and connection, the handler's skill and communication, the difficulty of what is attempted, and the overall harmony shown throughout the performance.



1.2 Division Levels

- Youth Novice
- Adult Novice
- Youth Intermediate
- Adult Intermediate

2. Eligibility

2.1 Horse Eligibility

There is no minimum or maximum age for horses competing in the Liberty division. All horses must meet the general eligibility requirements outlined in the General Rules.

2.2 Competitor Eligibility

Competitors must meet the age requirements for the respective division:

- Youth divisions: under 18 years of age at time of competition
- Adult divisions: 18 years and over at time of competition

All competitors must meet the general eligibility and qualification requirements outlined in the General Rules.

3. Classes Offered

3.1 Required Classes

Each division entry includes three (3) classes:

1. Training at the Shoulder - a round pen pattern class
2. Training at Liberty - an arena pattern class
3. Obstacles at Liberty - a trail pattern class

All three classes count equally toward overall division standings and are required for final placing. Division Championship standing is determined by the cumulative score across all three classes.

4. Equipment & Attire

4.1 Attire

Competitors must wear clean jeans or breeches and a clean polo shirt, button-down shirt, or long-sleeved shirt with a collar. Equine-appropriate, closed-toe footwear is required. Competitors should present a neat, workmanlike appearance.

A helmet or hat is recommended but not required.

4.2 Aids

Horses will perform at liberty without tack.

Permitted aids include a neck rope, dressage whip or stick, and treats. All aids must be used appropriately and humanely. Treats are allowed, but excess use or treats that distract the horse, will result in deductions.

4.3 Whips & Sticks

Whips or sticks of any length and style may be used for communication and direction. Any excessive use of a whip that does not cause harm will result in a **penalty deduction**. Repeated use of a whip that causes high distress in a horse can result in **elimination** at the judge's discretion.

Use of a whip in a manner that causes harm (welts or broken skin), including concealing inflicted harm with any substance (i.e. paint or powder) can result in **disqualification** per the General Rules. If a competitor's whip or stick has any obtrusive object attached that could injure the horse (i.e. rigid or sharp lash ending), they will be **disqualified** from all

classes.

4.4 Neck Ropes

Any style of neck rope is permitted but may not include any obtrusive object or material that could injure or cause pain to the horse. If any obtrusive object or material is found, the competitor will be **disqualified** from all classes.

4.5 Hoof Boots & Leg Protection

Hoof boots of any type are permitted if needed. Polo wraps, support boots, or sport boots are permitted. Making the horse comfortable and protected is paramount.

4.6 Prohibited Equipment

The following are prohibited in all Liberty classes:

- Electronic collars or other electronic devices
- Any propelling device such as BB guns, pump rifles, or any device meant to mimic the sound of propelling devices
- Neck ropes or whips/sticks fitted with tacks, screws, or any object intended to cause discomfort
- Tail wraps covering the horse's tail bone (permitted outside of arenas, if needed to protect tail)
- Any equipment or device that causes extreme distress or physical harm to a horse

All equipment is subject to random inspection by officials or show staff. An official or show staff can issue a warning and a competitor will be asked to remove any equipment to be examined. If a prohibited tool is found, the competitor will be **disqualified** from all classes.

5. Class Procedures

All liberty classes will use Equine Liberty Organization (ELO) patterns and courses, to be posted prior to competition. Patterns and courses for the Intermediate divisions will be a higher degree of difficulty than the Novice divisions. Patterns and courses may also vary between Youth and Adult divisions to reflect appropriate levels of challenge.

All patterns and courses are allotted 5 minutes, unless stated otherwise on the posted course.

5.1 Training at the Shoulder (Round Pen class)

Competitors individually perform an assigned pattern at liberty within a defined round pen. The class showcases the connection and communication between horse and handler in a contained space, with the handler directing the horse through the required maneuvers without physical restraint.

5.2 Training at Liberty (Arena class)

Competitors individually perform an assigned pattern at liberty in an arena. The pattern tests the handler's ability to direct the horse through a sequence of maneuvers across the larger space while maintaining attentiveness, responsiveness, and harmony at liberty.

5.3 Obstacles at Liberty (Trail class)

Competitors individually navigate an assigned course of obstacles at liberty. Obstacles test the horse's trust, confidence, and willingness to negotiate unfamiliar or challenging tasks while working free of restraint, and the handler's ability to guide and communicate through each element.

6. Scoring

6.1 Scoring Format

Each class is judged on a percentage basis, combining a Maneuver (technical) score and a Foundational (non-technical) score. The two are added together for a final percentage score for the class.

Maneuvers account for 40% of the score; the Foundational categories account for 60%. The breakdown is as follows:

Category	Weight
Maneuvers (technical)	40%
Relationship & Connection	20%
Horsemanship Skill	20%
Cheerfulness	10%
Degree of Difficulty	10%

6.2 Maneuvers (technical) - 40%

Each maneuver is judged on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is the lowest score and 5 is the highest score. Half-points are permitted. The total scores earned are converted to a percentage of the total scores available for that pattern.

Example: a score of 50 out of a possible 70 total converts to 71.43% for the maneuver portion.

Any penalty deductions incurred are recorded in the penalties section under maneuvers

on the score card. (see Section 7)

6.3 Foundational (non-technical) - 60%

Foundational scores include:

- Relationship & Connection - scored out of 20.
- Horsemanship Skill - scored out of 20.
- Cheerfulness - scored out of 10.
- Degree of Difficulty - scored out of 10.

The maneuver percentage and the foundational percentage are added together to produce the final pattern percentage score for the class.

6.4 Division Championship

Division Championship is determined by the cumulative scores across all three classes. All three classes count equally. A competitor who does not complete all three classes is ineligible for a division standing.

7. Penalty Infractions

7.1 Application of Penalties

All penalties incurred must be explained by the judge in the score card comments so competitors understand why a penalty was applied. Penalty deductions are recorded in the maneuver section of the score card under penalties. The Judge's decisions are final.

7.2 Penalty Deductions

Infraction	Penalty
Horse leaves handler	– 1 point (increasing each time)
Improper attire	– 4 points
Improper equipment	– 4 points, unless prohibited
Over allotted time in a pattern (5 min.)	– 10 points
Incorrect pattern calling / coaching in class	– 10 points
Overuse of whip, training aids; or treats (distraction)	– 10 points, unless eliminated

7.3 Horse Leaves Handler

A horse is considered to have left the handler when it physically and mentally commits to leaving – running away, completely leaving the designated area or pattern, or going straight to the gate or wall without looking at the handler. A horse that drifts from the handler within the general guidelines of a pattern while still paying attention is NOT considered to have left.

A one point deduction is applied each time the horse leaves, increasing with each separate departure (1st time = – 1 point; 2nd time = – 2 points; 3rd time = – 3 points; etc.). If the horse returns and completes the maneuver, it is still scored on that maneuver, with the deduction recorded in the penalty section.

7.4 Pattern Calling

Competitors may have someone call the pattern for them. Callers must call the pattern only as written and may not give coaching advice. Calling a pattern incorrectly or coaching from the sidelines during a class results in a 10-point penalty deduction.

7.5 Disqualification & No Score

The following result in **disqualification** from competition:

- Any inhumane treatment of the horse
- Excessive use of whips, spurs, or other training aids that causes harm (welts or breaking of the skin), including concealing inflicted harm with any substance.
- Use of any prohibited tool

Refer to General Rules for additional requirements.

In-Hand

Discipline Rules

1. Overview

1.1 Purpose

The In-Hand Division evaluates the quality of the ground-based partnership between competitor and horse or burro across three classes: Horsemanship, Showmanship, and In-Hand Trail. Competitors are judged on the horse's responsiveness, the handler's skill and communication, and the overall partnership demonstrated throughout each class.

1.2 Divisions Offered

- Youth (Ages 8 - 17 years)
- Adult
- Burro

2. Classes & Division Championship

2.1 Required Classes

Each division consists of three scored classes:

- Horsemanship
- Showmanship
- Trail

A competitor must enter all three classes to be eligible for Division Championship standing. Division Championship is determined by cumulative score across all three classes.

3. Eligibility

3.1 Animal Eligibility

All horses must meet the general eligibility requirements outlined in the General Rules. Burros will all compete in the Burro division regardless of handler's age.

The minimum age for any equine is one year or more. There is no maximum age.

3.2 Competitor Eligibility

Competitors must meet the age requirements for their division as of the date of competition. All competitors must meet the general eligibility requirements outlined in the General Rules.

4. Equipment & Attire

4.1 Halter & Lead Rope

A well-fitted halter is required for all In-Hand classes. Leather, nylon, or rope halters are permitted. Nose chains, lip chains, and stud chains used over the nose or under the chin are not permitted.

A standard lead rope is required. Lunge lines are not permitted in the competition arena.

4.2 Handler's Whip or Stick

A handler's whip, stick, or carrot stick with no lash attachment may be carried for communication and direction. Maximum length: 48 inches. Lunge whips and any implement with a lash more than 6 inches are not permitted in the competition arena.

4.3 Attire

Competitors should present a neat, workmanlike appearance appropriate to horse handling. Appropriate closed-toed shoes are also required.

4.4 Prohibited Equipment

The following are prohibited in all In-Hand classes: nose chains, lip chains, stud chains used over the nose or under the chin, lunge lines, lunge whips, any whip or implement with a lash more than 6 inches long, and any device designed to cause pain or coerce compliance. Use of prohibited equipment will result in elimination from the class.

5. Class Procedures

5.1 Horsemanship

The Horsemanship class evaluates the horse's quality of movement, turnout, and overall

conditioning. The judge will also consider the horse's compliance and relaxation in a group setting.

The judge will evaluate:

- How the animal leads at walk and trot
- Picking up and holding feet for inspection
- Conditioning of the animal's body condition, coat, and appearance
- Collective rail work and individual short pattern

The specific pattern and tasks will be called or posted at the competition.

5.2 Showmanship

The Showmanship class evaluates the handler's skill and technique in presenting the horse and the horse's responsiveness to handler cues.

The judge will evaluate:

- Handler position and handling technique
- Accuracy and smoothness of transitions and maneuvers
- Horse's attentiveness and responsiveness
- Overall presentation and turnout of animal and handler

Pattern elements may include: square set-ups, pivots (90°, 180°, 270°, 360°), walk, trot, backing, and side pass. The specific pattern will be posted at the competition.

5.3 In-Hand Trail

The In-Hand Trail class evaluates the horse's willingness and the handler's ability to guide the horse through a series of ground obstacles. The judge will evaluate the horse's confidence, quality of handler's communication, and accuracy through the obstacles.

Obstacles may include, but are not limited to:

- Walk-over poles, logs, or ground rails
- Backing through or around markers
- Side-passing along a pole or rail
- Tarps, unusual surfaces, or novel objects
- Gate navigation
- Ground-level bridge or platform

The course will be tailored to the appropriate level and posted at the competition.

6. Scoring

6.1 General Scoring Format

Each class is scored on a maneuver-by-maneuver basis using the following scale:

Score	Description
10	Excellent
9	Very Good
8	Good
7	Above Average
6	Satisfactory
5	Average
4	Below Average
3	Poor
2	Very Poor
1	Extremely Poor
0	Not Performed or Demonstrated

Half-point increments (0.5) are permitted at the judge's discretion. The final score for each class is the sum of all maneuver scores, plus the Connection mark as described in Section 6.2.

6.2 Connection — Collective Mark

At the conclusion of each class, the judge will award a single collective mark for Connection. Connection evaluates the overall relaxation, confidence, and partnership between horse and handler as demonstrated throughout the class. The Connection mark is scored on the same 0–10 scale, half-point increments permitted, and is added to the maneuver total to determine the competitor's final class score.

7. Penalty Infractions

Infraction	Point Deduction from Class Score
Use of prohibited equipment	Elimination from the class
Equipment failure - if permitted to continue	-2
Excessive use of aid - if permitted to continue	-5
Off pattern - Judge may stop & allow to correct	0 for affected maneuver

Excusal from a class by the judge is final. Elimination from a class results in no score and no placing for that class. All are subject to further review under the General Rules enforcement system.

Speed Events

Discipline Rules

1. Overview

1.1 Purpose

The speed events demonstrate the athletic ability and training of horse and rider across three timed pattern classes: Poles, Barrels, and Flags. Placings are determined solely by time; runs are not judged on style.

1.2 Ages & Levels

- Youth (under 18 years)
- Adult (18 years & older)
- Burro (All ages)

Levels are determined by the age at date of competition.

2. Eligibility

2.1 Horse Eligibility

Horses must be a minimum of 4 years of age at the time of competition. All horses must meet the general eligibility requirements outlined in the General Rules.

2.2 Competitor Eligibility

Competitors must meet the age requirements for their respective level as of the date of competition. All competitors must meet the general eligibility and qualification requirements outlined in the General Rules.

3. Equipment

3.1 Attire & Safety

Competitors must wear appropriate riding attire: a tucked-in shirt, riding pants or jeans, boots, and either a western hat or a helmet. **ASTM/SEI-certified helmets are required for all Youth competitors** and encouraged for Adult competitors. A western hat may be worn in place of a helmet by Adult competitors.

3.2 Tack

Any standard bridle, snaffle, curb, or bosal is permitted. Bits should be acceptable under welfare standards noted in the General Rules. Leg protection including splint boots and bell boots are permitted.

3.3 Prohibited Equipment

~~Tie-downs,~~ Draw reins, and weighted boots are not permitted. Use of prohibited equipment will result in elimination from the class. See also General Rules Section 9.2 regarding official authority over equipment.

4. Class Procedures

4.1. Classes & Order

Speed events shall consist of three (3) classes run in the following order: Poles, Barrels, Flags. The same scoring rules apply equally to all three classes.

4.2 Start & Finish

Timing begins when the animal's nose crosses the start/finish line. Timing ends when the animal's nose crosses the same line at the conclusion of the run. A competitor who enters the arena and does not cross the start line shall be considered a scratch for that class unless a rerun is granted under Section 7.

4.3 Poles

Six (6) poles shall be set in a straight line, each 21 feet apart, with the first pole 21 feet from the start/finish line. Poles must be a minimum of 6 feet in height with a base no more than 14 inches in diameter. The competitor may start to the left or right of the first pole and must weave the remaining poles accordingly. Knocking over a pole incurs the penalty described in Section 5.

4.4 Barrels

Three (3) barrels shall be set in a cloverleaf pattern. Barrels must be metal or approved plastic and may not be weighted. Competitors may elect to begin the pattern turning left or right; the pattern must be completed consistently in the chosen direction. Touching a

barrel is permitted without penalty. Knocking over a barrel incurs the penalty described in Section 5.

4.5 Flags

Two (2) flag containers shall be set in the arena. The competitor must transfer the flag from the first container to the second within a single run. Dropping the flag constitutes an elimination infraction as described in Section 6. Knocking over a flag container incurs the penalty described in Section 5.

4.6 Burro Modifications

Burro competitors run the same three classes and patterns as mounted divisions. The following modifications apply:

- Competitors may handle their burro on foot for the duration of each run.
- Pattern distances shall be shortened.

5. Timing & Penalties

5.1 Time Recording

All times shall be recorded to the thousandth of a second (e.g., 21.345).

5.2 Knockdown penalty

A five-second (5.000) penalty shall be added to a competitor's raw time for each knockdown of a barrel, pole, or flag container as determined by the judge.

5.3 Adjusted Time

The adjusted time (raw time + all knockdown penalties) shall be used for all scoring calculations.

6. Eliminations & No-Times

6.1 Elimination

A competitor shall be marked **Eliminated (EL)** for any rule violation including but not limited to: running the pattern incorrectly, turning a barrel the wrong direction, holding up a barrel or pole by hand, stepping out of lane boundaries, dropping a flag, hitting the horse/burro with equipment, or any other infraction as determined by the judge.

6.2 No Time

A competitor shall be marked **No Time (NT)** when the run cannot be completed or recorded including but not limited to: rider or handler falling or separating from their animal after crossing the start line, horse or burro falling during the run, failure to finish the

course, or timer malfunction where no rerun is granted.

6.3 Removal from Scoring Pool

Competitors marked EL or NT shall be removed from the scoring pool for that class and shall not receive a division placement or field placing in that class.

6.4 Fall Before Start

A competitor who falls from the horse or loses control of their animal before crossing the start line may be granted a rerun at show management's discretion.

7. Reruns

7.1 Grounds for a Rerun

A rerun may be granted at show management's discretion in the event of timer malfunction, course setup error, or a fall before the start line.

7.2 Rerun Procedure

When a rerun is granted, the original time is discarded and the competitor shall run the course again for a new time.

8. Divisions / Splits

8.1 Division Threshold

Divisions shall only be applied when there are fifteen (15) or more valid competitors in a class. Valid competitors are those with a recorded adjusted time who have not been marked EL or NT.

8.2 Single Pool Scoring

When the valid competitor count is fewer than fifteen (15), all competitors shall be scored in a single open pool with no division designations.

8.3 Division Structure

When divisions apply, competitors shall be sorted by adjusted time (fastest to slowest) and divided into three (3) divisions: 1D, 2D, and 3D.

8.4 Division Sizing

Division sizes shall be determined by dividing the number of valid competitors evenly by three. Any remainder shall be distributed to the lowest (slowest) division(s) first.

- Example: 15 competitors = 5 / 5 / 5

- Example: 16 competitors = 5 / 5 / 6
- Example: 17 competitors = 5 / 6 / 6

8.5 Tied Competitors at Division Boundaries

When two or more competitors at a division boundary share the same adjusted time, all tied competitors shall be placed in the higher (faster) division.

9. Placings & Awards

9.1 Class Placings

Placings of 1st through 6th shall be awarded within each division. If fewer than fifteen (15) valid competitors exist (no divisions), placings of 1st through 6th shall be awarded from the single open pool.

9.2 Tied Competitors within a Division

When two or more competitors within a division share the same adjusted time, they shall receive the same placing and the corresponding number of subsequent placings shall be skipped. (Example: two competitors tie for 2nd place; both receive 2nd, and the next competitor receives 4th.)

10. Field Placing

10.1 Field Placing Assignment

Each valid competitor shall receive a field placing representing their rank across the entire class, numbered continuously from 1 starting with 1D through 3D. (Example: in a class with 6 competitors per division, the 1st place finisher in 2D receives a field placing of 7th.)

10.2 Purpose of Field Placing

Field placings are used exclusively for the Overall calculation described in Section 11 and are not used for class awards.

11. Overall Champion

11.1 Eligibility

To be eligible for the Overall placing, a competitor must have a recorded field placing in all three (3) classes (Poles, Barrels, and Flags). Competitors marked EL or NT in any class are ineligible for Overall.

11.2 Overall Score Calculation

The Overall score shall be the sum of the competitor's field placings across all three classes. The lowest Overall score shall be the Overall Champion.

The Overall calculation shall be performed after all three classes are complete.

11.3 Overall Tie-breaking Procedure

In the event of a tie in Overall score, the tiebreaker shall be applied in the following order:

- (a) The competitor with the better (lower) field placing in Flags shall prevail.
- (b) If still tied, the competitor with the better field placing in Barrels shall prevail.
- (c) If still tied, the competitor with the better field placing in Poles shall prevail.

12. Live Scoring

12.1 Real-time Recalculation

Division assignments and placings shall be recalculated in real time as each competitor completes their run. Division assignments are not final until all competitors in a class have completed their runs.

12.2 Notice to Competitors & Spectators

Competitors and spectators should be aware that division placements may shift as additional runs are recorded.