

# NSBA

NATIONAL SNAFFLE BIT ASSOCIATION

2025 OFFICIAL HANDBOOK

## 2025 NSBA Rule Changes

The following pages contain rule changes to the 2025 NSBA Official Rulebook. Underlined text indicates new additions to the rules, while strike-through text indicates a deletion in the wording.

6. Any member or non member may be suspended and denied privileges of the NSBA by the appropriate committee of the NSBA for failure to pay when due any obligation owing to the NSBA, or to an approved show or for giving a worthless check for entry fees, stall fees, office charges, feed bills incurred at the NSBA approved event or any fees or charges including bank charges for returned check connected with the exhibition of NSBA entries; provided, however, that fifteen (15) days before action by written notice of account due and the intention to suspend or withholding privileges of the NSBA shall be mailed to such member or non member. Upon suspension, the name of the member or non member may be published in the NSBA magazine, "The Way To Go", or other such publication beginning with the next available issue from date of suspension. Any suspension and denial of privileges under this section shall terminate upon full payment of the obligation due the NSBA or NSBA approved event's show management. Show management must notify the NSBA office of any uncollectible accounts due within 90 days of the closing of the show.
11. d) Failure to pay services. The financially responsible party and/or show management (individual or entity) of any NSBA approved show which fails to pay for any services rendered by a third party (i.e. judges fees, facilities, or to pay premium prize money to exhibitors, etc.) in connection with the holding of an approved show will be denied NSBA approval for future shows until all fees are paid and may be suspended for lack of payment. All fees must be paid within 90 days of the completion of the event.
21. Only events that are NSBA approved may use the terms "NSBA Approved" or "NSBA Sanctioned."
- a) Ancillary classes are those classes, which conform to NSBA's list of approved categories but are not on NSBA's list of approved classes. These classes may be approved by NSBA and shall then be referred to as being NSBA Approved or NSBA Sanctioned. Ancillary classes will not be eligible for year end awards, but horse and rider (exhibitor) earnings shall be recorded and recognized for lifetime achievement awards. The intent of this rule is to more accurately reflect the earnings and achievements of horses and riders (exhibitors).
- b) Yearling Longe Line, Two Year Old Western Pleasure, Two Year Old Hunter Under Saddle, Three Year Old Hunter Hack and Three Year Old Working Hunter and Three Year Old Trail cannot be offered prior July 1st (Please refer to Rule #54).
- c) ~~Two Year Old and Longe Line~~ Yearling Longe Line, Two Year Old Western Pleasure, Two Year Old Hunter Under Saddle, Three Year Old Hunter Hack, Three Year Old Working Hunter and Three Year Old Trail events may show prior to the July 1 date when the approval dates include the weekend prior to July 1. It is not the intent of this rule to encourage shows to run these classes prior to July 1 date. The policy is implemented to provide flexibility to shows that are scheduling events around weekend breed circuits.
- d) Two or Three Year Olds shown in Longe Line or In Hand Trail may not show in any class under saddle at the same show.
54. Any age stallion, mare or gelding, registered with NSBA (refer to Rule #12) is eligible to be exhibited in any NSBA approved event except when specific class stipulations restrict participation. Ponies must be measured to compete in any class restricted by pony height. Unregistered horses may be registered for NSBA competition per Rule #55.
- a) Yearlings may not be shown in a Longe Line class prior to July 1st unless showing in a dual approved class.
- b) Two year olds may not be shown prior to July 1st in any class shown astride unless showing in a Dual Approved class.
- c) Three year olds may not be shown prior to July 1st in any Over Fences or Trail class unless showing in a Dual Approved class.
58. A rider's earning will be calculated by using all NSBA approved class results. Earnings from Longe Line, Walk Trot and Equestrians With Disabilities classes will not count in the rider's totals for calculation of the riders list and eligibility limitations. All money won will be calculated towards eligibility, sanctions or disciplinary actions notwithstanding. In the event a horse or rider is disciplined or sanctioned, their points or earnings will not count towards lifetime earnings.
66. a) 2) All Non Pro riders whose lifetime earnings exceed \$150,000 (all divisions and categories, except Longe Line, Walk Trot and Equestrians With Disabilities) are automatically in the Open Non Pro.
- 3) Riders whose lifetime earnings do not exceed \$150,000 (all divisions and categories, except Longe Line, Walk Trot and Equestrians With Disabilities) but are in the top 50 money earners in Non Pro Western Pleasure in the last three years.
- b) 1) All Non Pro riders are eligible for any Limited Non Pro class except those whose lifetime earnings exceed \$150,000 (all divisions and categories, except Longe Line, Walk Trot and Equestrians With Disabilities) or in the top 50 money earners in Non Pro Western Pleasure in the last three years.
68. a) 2) All Non Pro riders whose lifetime earnings exceed \$150,000 (all divisions and categories, except Longe Line, Walk Trot and Equestrians With Disabilities) are automatically in the Open Non Pro.
- 3) Riders whose lifetime earnings do not exceed \$150,000 (all divisions and categories, except Longe Line, Walk Trot and Equestrians With Disabilities) but are in the top 15 money earners in Non Pro Hunter Under Saddle in the last three years.

- b) 1)** All Non Pro riders are eligible for any Limited Non Pro class except those whose lifetime earnings exceed \$150,000 (all divisions and categories, except Longe Line, Walk Trot and Equestrians With Disabilities) or in the top 15 money earners in Non Pro Hunter Under Saddle in the last three years.
- 70. a) 2)** All Non Pro riders whose lifetime earnings exceed \$150,000 (all divisions and categories, except Longe Line, Walk Trot and Equestrians With Disabilities) are automatically in the Open Non Pro.
- 3)** Riders whose lifetime earnings do not exceed \$150,000 (all divisions and categories, except Longe Line, Walk Trot and Equestrians With Disabilities) but are in the top 15 money earners in Non Pro Trail in the last three years.
- b) 1)** All Non Pro riders are eligible for any Limited Non Pro class except those whose lifetime earnings exceed \$150,000 (all divisions and categories, except Longe Line, Walk Trot and Equestrians With Disabilities) or in the top 15 money earners in Non Pro Trail in the last three years.
- 72. a) 2)** All Non Pro riders whose lifetime earnings exceed \$150,000 (all divisions and categories, except Longe Line, Walk Trot and Equestrians With Disabilities) are automatically in the Open Non Pro.
- 3)** Riders whose lifetime earnings do not exceed \$150,000 (all divisions and categories, except Longe Line, Walk Trot and Equestrians With Disabilities) but are in the top 15 money earners in Non Pro Western Riding in the last three years.
- b) 1)** All Non Pro riders are eligible for any Limited Non Pro class except those whose lifetime earnings exceed \$150,000 (all divisions and categories, except Longe Line, Walk Trot and Equestrians With Disabilities) or in the top 15 money earners in Non Pro Western Riding in the last three years.
- 80. a)** Horse must not have won more than \$1,000 in the event/discipline (i.e. Western Pleasure, Hunter Under Saddle, Trail, etc.) as of December 31, 2024. All monies are considered except earnings in Walk Trot and Equestrians With Disabilities as recorded by NSBA, any NSBA REA, any NGB, EquiStat and QData formerly Robin Glenn Pedigrees.
- 81. a)** Horse must not have won more than \$2,500 in the event/discipline (i.e. Western Pleasure, Hunter Under Saddle, Trail, etc.) as of December 31, 2024. All monies are considered except earnings in Walk Trot and Equestrians With Disabilities as recorded by NSBA, any NSBA REA, any NGB, EquiStat and QData formerly Robin Glenn Pedigrees.
- 82. a)** Horse must not have won more than \$25,000 in the event/discipline (i.e. Western Pleasure, Hunter Under Saddle, Trail, etc.) as of December 31, 2024. All monies are considered except earnings in Walk Trot and Equestrians With Disabilities as recorded by NSBA, any NSBA REA, any NGB, EquiStat and QData formerly Robin Glenn Pedigrees.
- 84. b)** Horse must not have won more than applicable amount of money for the class in which they are competing in the event/discipline (i.e. Western Pleasure, Hunter Under Saddle, Trail, etc.) as of December 31, 2024. All monies are considered except earnings in Walk Trot and Equestrians With Disabilities as recorded by NSBA, any NSBA REA, any NGB, EquiStat and QData formerly Robin Glenn Pedigrees.
- 85. a)** A color horse is one who is registered with IBHA, PHBA, PtHA, ABRA, ApHC, APHA, POA.
- b)** Beginning with horses born in 2019, a solid bred/breeding stock is considered a color horse only if the sire or dam has regular registry papers with one or more of the following associations: APHA, ApHC, ABRA, IBHA, PHBA and POA. The foal must be registered in the same color breed association as the parent that qualifies under this rule. PtHA solid registered is not considered a color horse unless it is also registered with one or more of the aforementioned breed associations.
- 86. c)** Any horse that has not earned more than 25 points in it's respective class (i.e. Western Pleasure, Hunter Under Saddle etc.) in any NSBA REA, or more than \$2,500 in earnings in it's respective class as of December 31, 2023. All monies are considered except earnings in Walk Trot and Equestrians With Disabilities as recorded by NSBA, any NSBA REA, any NGB, EquiStat and QData formerly Robin Glenn Pedigrees. Points from all divisions, cumulative – Youth, Amateur, Open and Green – will count. Novice, EWD and Walk Trot points will not count.
- 102. j) 3) a. (2)** Flunixin - The maximum permitted plasma concentration of Flunixin is 1.0 microgram per milliliter, and the maximum permitted trace level is 0.2 1.0 micrograms per milliliter. When Flunixin Meglumine (Banamine) is administered, the dose should be accurately calculated according to the actual weight of the animal. Each 24 hours, not more than 0.5 milligrams per pound of body weight should be administered. For a 1,000 pound animal, the maximum daily dose is 500 milligrams, which equals two 250 milligram packets of granules, or one 500 milligram packet of granules, or 500 milligrams of the oral paste (available in 1,500 milligram dose syringes), or 10.0 cc of the injectable (50 milligrams per milliliter). No part of a dose should be administered during the twelve (12) hours prior to competing. Any medicated feed must be consumed and/or removed at least twelve (12) hours prior to competing. The medication should not be used for more than five successive days. Flunixin is approved for emergency use for colic or an ophthalmic emergency. The flunixin must be administered by a veterinarian, a medication report form must be submitted and the horse withheld from competition for 24 hours.

**102. j) 3) a. (12) Dexamethasone** - The maximum permitted plasma concentration is 3.0 nanograms per milliliter at the time of competition. Guidelines: In order to help trainers, owners and their veterinarians achieve compliance with this rule in connection with the therapeutic use of dexamethasone, it should be administered in accordance with the guidelines below. These guidelines include several alternative scenarios for dose time and route of administration. Whenever dexamethasone is administered, the dose should be accurately calculated according to the actual weight of the animal. Alternative Number 1. (2-0 1.0 mg or less per 100 pounds orally, IV or IM at up to 12 or more hours before competition). Each 24 hours, not more than 2-0 1.0 milligrams of dexamethasone injectable solution per 100 pounds of body weight should be administered intravenously or intramuscularly, preferably less. For a 1,000 pound animal, the maximum daily intravenous or intramuscular dose of dexamethasone injectable solution is 20.0 milligrams, which equals 5.0 milliliters of the injectable solution (4.0 milligrams per milliliter). No part of this dose should be administered during the 12 hours prior to competing. Dexamethasone may be administered IV at 0.5mg/100lbs by a veterinarian for the treatment of acute hives up to six hours before competition with the submission of a medication report form. Dexamethasone should not be administered for more than five successive days. Alternative Number 2. (0.5 mg or less per 100 pounds IV at 6 or more hours before competition). Each 24 hours, not more than 0.5 milligram of dexamethasone injectable solution per 100 pounds of body weight should be administered intravenously, preferably less. For a 1,000 pound animal, the maximum daily intravenous dose of dexamethasone injectable solution is 5.0 milligrams, which equals 1.25 milliliters of the injectable solution (4.0 milligrams per milliliter). No part of this dose should be administered during the six hours prior to competing. Dexamethasone should not be administered for more than five successive days. Alternative Number 3. (1.0 mg or less per 100 pounds orally at 6 or more hours before competition). Each 24 hours, not more than 1.0 milligram of dexamethasone powder per 100 pounds of body weight should be administered orally, preferably less. For a 1,000 pound animal, the maximum daily oral dose of dexamethasone powder is 10.0 milligrams, which equals one packet of dexamethasone powder (10.0 milligrams per packet). No part of this dose should be administered during the 6 hours prior to competing. Any medicated feed should be either consumed or removed at least six (6) hours prior to competing. Dexamethasone should not be administered for more than five successive days.

**102. j) 3) c. Pergolide** - This medication is administered to horses that have been diagnosed with Equine Pituitary Pars Intermedia Dysfunction (Cushing's Disease).

Competition horses diagnosed with Cushing's Disease can request for a Pergolide Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE) to allow for continuous treatment without withdrawing medication 24 hours before competition. To apply for a TUE the owner/trainer must complete an on-line Medication Report Form and check the box that you would like to be considered for a Pergolide Therapeutic Use Exemption. If approved for the TUE, the horse can remain on Pergolide with no withdrawal of the drug prior to competition and no need to file a Medication Report Form each time they compete. A TUE is applicable for three years.

#### **HORSE FATALITY & NECROPSY REPORTING**

**103.** In the case of a Fatality (as defined below) at an NSBA approved show, NSBA may suspend the owner, trainer or exhibitor (Responsible Party), pending further investigation of the Fatality. In conjunction with such investigation, a Responsible Party hereby agrees to cooperate with NSBA by:

- 1) answering truthfully and promptly any inquiries;**
- 2) providing medical/treatment record and post death results (e.g. necropsy report) if any; and**
- 3) authorizing any third parties to answer NSBA inquiries and provide the aforementioned records.**

Fatality is defined as: a death of any horse or pony (hereinafter cumulatively referred to as "horse"), by any means, including euthanasia, at any time from when the horse(s) arrives at the venue until the completion of the NSBA approved event or after the NSBA approved event where such fatal injury or illness is related to the horse's presence at the NSBA approved event. This pertains to death that occurs on the grounds or death of a horse transported from the venue of the NSBA approved event. A Responsible Party must provide notice of any Fatality to Show Manager within one hour of the Fatality. When a Fatality occurs outside of competition hours, notification must occur as soon as possible, but no later than one hour after Show Manager reports to the show or returns to duty.

The Show Manager must report a Fatality to NSBA within 24 hours of Show Manager being notified of the Fatality. The written Fatality Report provided by Show Manager to NSBA shall include all known information regarding the situation that resulted in a Fatality, including, but not limited to name of and contact information for Responsible Party, date and time of all incidents related to the Fatality, current status of the horse, and name and contact information for any other individuals with information regarding the Fatality.

If an official show veterinarian is not available, an on-call veterinarian or a veterinarian on the grounds shall be appointed to collect samples (blood, urine and/or vitreous fluid) at the earliest opportunity and submit the samples for analysis to a veterinary pathology lab-

oratory. (If the Responsible Party refuses the collection of samples, they are subject to suspension pursuant to Rule # 103).

The Show Manager must post emergency veterinary contact information as well as identify prior to the start of the competition the nearest veterinary pathology laboratory to facilitate a rapid and accurate post-mortem (information available at [www.equinediseasecc.org](http://www.equinediseasecc.org)).

The NSBA President will immediately appoint a three-person panel from the Executive Committee to review the Fatality. In certain circumstances, as determined by the appointed panel, in conjunction with a licensed veterinarian, a necropsy may not be warranted.

#### Requirement for Necropsy

If a necropsy is required by NSBA, a gross postmortem examination including histopathology must be performed in all Fatality incidents, except where the nearest veterinary pathology laboratory is further than 200 miles from where the equine Fatality occurred. The Responsible Party as defined by NSBA rules, is responsible to transport the horse for the postmortem examination. If a horse is uninsured or a postmortem is not required by the owner's insurance, NSBA will cover the cost of the gross postmortem and transport costs to the appropriate veterinary facility, up to a maximum in total of \$1,000.00, unless a greater amount is preapproved by NSBA should the circumstances warrant. If NSBA covers the cost of the postmortem and the relevant postmortem report is provided to the owner's insurance, NSBA will only be responsible for half of the cost of the postmortem up to a maximum in total of \$500.00. If a postmortem is required by the owner's insurance, at no cost to NSBA, the horse's owner shall provide NSBA a copy of the postmortem report within 24 hours of receipt of such report. (List of pathology laboratories can be found at [www.equinediseasecc.org](http://www.equinediseasecc.org)) (If Responsible Party refuses the necropsy, they are subject to suspension).

Within 12 hours of the horse leaving competition grounds, Show Manager shall provide NSBA with the contact details of the applicable Veterinary Pathology laboratory.

The Responsible Party shall provide the preliminary and final reports of a postmortem to NSBA within 24 hours of the pathologist completing their report or the Responsible Party's receipt of the report. Failure to submit reports could result in the suspension to a Responsible Party.

The cause of death and, if relevant, the method of euthanasia should be included in the postmortem report. The competition or treating veterinarian shall submit all information regarding any treatment or substance(s) administered to the horse prior to or during competition and before or during death or euthanasia with owner's written permission to NSBA within 12 hours. Failure to submit reports could result in the suspension to a Responsible Party.

Once all medical and treatment records and post death reports/results are forwarded to the NSBA office, the three-person panel will have to review within 72 hours to determine if further investigation is necessary.

**104.** No person shall treat any horse in a cruel or inhumane manner, including, but not limited to, the prohibited conduct specified in the Handbook. Cruelty to horses included in this prohibition, as it indicates a general course of dealing with horses that is unacceptable for NSBA membership qualification. For violation of this rule, an NSBA member may be disciplined, suspended, fined and/or expelled from NSBA, and a non member may be denied NSBA privileges. This prohibition against cruelty may include NSBA members and/or owners of horses, their agents, representatives and employees, the actions for which a member or owner are also responsible.

**a)** NSBA may accept the conviction of an individual or judicial confiscation of a horse under state, federal, provincial or international law, for an offense of cruelty to or inhumane treatment of a horse, as a presumptive violation of this rule. NSBA may impose appropriate fines or suspensions.

**1)** NSBA may accept suspension ruling pertaining to cruel or inhumane treatment of horses from other recognized equine related associations and/or state racing commissions. NSBA jurisdiction is limited to activity at NSBA sanctioned events. NSBA will have jurisdiction at that event where any class(es) is NSBA approved.

**2)** Any suspension resulting from inhumane treatment will include denial of access or presence on NSBA show grounds during the period of suspension.

**107. a) SUSPENSION:** At such time as any person (member or nonmember) has been suspended, expelled or denied NSBA privileges, in addition to other provisions of this handbook or policy of the NSBA, the following restrictions shall apply:

**1)** That person shall not participate, and shall be ineligible to participate during the suspension/expulsion period, in any NSBA event, nor shall such person be eligible to hold approved judge's credentials or any other NSBA accreditation.

**2)** No horse which is recorded in the name of such person (including ownership jointly or ownership as part of a partnership or corporation) is eligible to participate in any event approved by the NSBA, NSBA National Award Programs, or event and/or awards program sponsored by an NSBA Affiliate Association.

**b) PROBATION:** Probation is a period of time during which a person (member or nonmember) will be subject to strict review, evaluation, supervision, and other terms and conditions because there has been a determination that the person has previously violated

an NSBA by-law, rule, or regulation, or because of reciprocity, as provided under NSBA Rule #106 b).

**1)** During Probation, if the person on Probation is determined to violate an NSBA by-law, rule, or regulation, the NSBA may take more severe disciplinary action than might otherwise occur.

**2)** During Probation, the person on Probation shall not be considered “in good standing” with the NSBA.

**a)** A person in good standing is a current or lifetime member not on suspension or probation.

**b)** During Probation, a person on Probation shall be able to retain membership, shall be able to participate in NSBA-approved events, and to conduct business with the NSBA. They shall not be able to serve as an officer or director of the NSBA and shall not be an approved judge for the NSBA.

**3)** If all terms and conditions of the Probation are met, the person shall be reinstated as a member “in good standing” at completion of the Probation.

**4)** Any person who is also an approved NSBA judge who is subject to Probation and successfully meets the terms and conditions of their Probation, shall be required to reapply and retest to once again be an approved NSBA judge.

**122.** When multiple judges are used in a go-round, they shall not confer during the go-round. Each judge is instructed to judge the event as if he/she were the only judge. There must not be any consultation between judges until after the score cards are turned in, with the following exceptions: in a multi judged event that requires judges to confer regarding disqualifications or major penalties, provided a ring steward or show official is present, in a multi judged event, inspecting horses for possible lameness and checking their bodies and heads for abused areas. In these situations, abused areas should be noted by all judges and soundness must be reviewed by all judges through the ring steward. Each judge must sign his/her score card and the show management shall post the results or announce placings immediately following each go-round and finals.

**126.** GENERAL - In any NSBA event, credit is to be given to the horse that is willingly guided, under light control and without intimidation, goes softly and quietly while correctly performing the required gaits. The overall picture of a good mover is a horse that goes forward with comfort, self-carriage, confidence and willingness, a fluid stride with a full extension of the limbs, and a head and neck carriage that is naturally comfortable and compatible with the horses' conformation. Transitions will be smooth, without interruption of forward motion. The horse will exhibit a pleasant look, with clear, bright eyes and a willing attitude. The NSBA events may be the first

classes of a horse's long, productive show career. The fluid movement and correct cadence desired from the horses in the NSBA classes will allow the horse to perform competitively in other events.

**129. k) Disqualifications**

**1)** No Score (DQ) – abusive conduct, misconduct, lameness, illegal equipment, unsportsmanlike conduct, striking a horse anytime during a performance (including the “trot for soundness” pattern in Halter and Longe Line) except in under saddle classes that permit the aid of a crop, used in accordance to the rules set forth.

**134.** In all Halter, Showmanship and Longe Line classes a regular or show halter that is made of flat nylon or leather with a minimum width of 3/4 of an inch must be used. The halter must be a minimum one finger space (approximately 3/4”) between the halter and nose. Silver adornment will not count over a good working halter. Rope halters are permissible in Ranch Conformation.

**136. d)** Snaffle or Hackamore entries may be shown with both hands on the reins or with one hand on the reins, as long as that hand is not changed. When showing with both hands on the reins, the rider's hands should be carried near the pommel and no further than 4” out on either side of the saddle horn. Rider's hands must be steady and should be visible to the judge(s) at all times. When riding with two hands on split reins, the tails of the reins must be crossed on the opposite side of the neck. Reins must may be held singularly or bridged with the tails of the reins on the opposite side of the neck. Exception: in ranch classes, only one rein may be crossed over the neck and held with two hands. When showing with one hand on the reins, the hand is to be around the reins; index finger only between split reins is permitted. Closed reins (example: Mecate) may not be used with any snaffle bit, except in ranch classes, where a mecate is permitted. Violation of this rule is an automatic disqualification.

**136. f)** Standard, leather or woven leather split reins or romal reins are mandatory, hair reins are not permitted with snaffle bits, except in ranch classes, where a mecate is permitted.

**136. g)** Romal means an extension of braided or round material attached to closed reins. This extension shall be carried in the free hand with a 16-inch (40 cm) spacing between the reining hand and the free hand holding the romal. When using romal reins, the rider's hand shall be around the reins with the wrists kept straight and relaxed, the thumb on top and the fingers closed around the reins. When using a romal, no fingers between the reins are allowed and the free hand may be used to adjust the rider's length of rein.

**1)** The romal shall not be used forward of the cinch or to signal or cue the horse in any way. Any infraction of this rule shall be cause for disqualification.

**136. h)** In all western classes, excess rein(s) may be straightened or disentangled anytime during the class, provided the rider's free hand used to straighten or disentangle remains behind the rein hand. Any attempt to alter the tension or length of rein from bridle to rein hand, when using split reins, is to be considered use of two hands and a penalty score of zero or disqualification will be applied.

**136. i)** The use of 'two-rein equipment' is allowed, in all ranch horse classes. The purpose of the two-rein option is the transition between the hackamore and bridle and can be used on any aged horse in the youth, amateur, non pro, junior, senior or all age, in all ranch horse classes for one year only. The bit and bosal combination must be as described below. Only one hand may be used on the reins and hands must not be changed. Any number of fingers between reins will be permitted. Both mecate and bridle reins are to be held in the rein hand.

**1)** When using two-rein equipment, bosals may be of any size, constructed of braided rawhide or leather and have a non-metal flexible core. No iron or foreign substance may be used. The curb strap must be leather, at least ½" in width and lie flat against the horse's jaw. The rider must use one hand on the reins. Fingers between the reins will be permitted. Both mecate and bridle reins are to be held in the rein hand.

**136. k) 4)** Splint boots or leg wraps except in Horsemanship and Ranch Riding Performance classes.

**141. c)** Concerning degree of difficulty, which is the least important and last element of the hierarchy. This element must only be considered if the requirement for correctness has been met and the combination of correctness and quality allow the performance to be considered for placement. Difficulty is greatly influenced by exhibiting a pleasure horse that is willingly guided with little or no apparent resistance at a pace cadence and speed that allows for correctness and best quality of gait for that individual. A performance of a walk that is ground covering and free flowing has a high degree of difficulty. A jog or lope that is performed with a slow rhythm without sacrificing correctness or quality has a high degree of difficulty. Slowness that sacrifices correctness or negatively impacts quality shall be considered incorrect and a poor performance, at best.

**147.** Horses may be shown in a snaffle bit or hackamore with both hands on the reins or with one hand on the reins, as long as that hand is not changed. ~~The tails of the reins must be crossed on the opposite side of the neck and bridged when riding with two hands on split reins. When riding with two hands on split reins, the tails of the reins must be crossed on the opposite side of the neck. Reins may be held singularly or bridged with the tails of the reins on the opposite side of the neck.~~ Exception: in ranch classes, only one rein may be crossed over

the neck and held with two hands. Closed reins (example mecate) may not be used with a snaffle bit, except in ranch classes, where a mecate is permitted. Rider's hands should be carried near the pommel and not further than four (4) inches (10.16cm) out on either side of the saddle horn with very limited movement.

**151.** Faults can be classified as minor, major or severe. The judge will determine the appropriate classification of a fault upon the degree and/or frequency of the infraction. An exhibitor that incurs a severe fault avoids elimination, but should be placed below all other exhibitors that do not incur a severe fault. A minor fault can become a major fault and a major fault can become a severe fault when the degree and/or frequency of the infraction(s) merit.

**a) Minor Faults:**

- 1)** Loss of forward motion during transitions or in the reverse
- 2)** Quick, short vertical strides
- 3)** Failure to take the appropriate gait in a timely manner when called for
- 4)** Reins overly draped

**b) Major Faults:**

- 1)** Loss of cadence at any gait
- 2)** Overly canted at the lope. (Outside hind leg consistently carried further in than inside front leg)
- 3)** Stumbling
- 4)** Being on the wrong lead
- 5)** Break of gait
- 6)** Overflexing or straining neck in head carriage so the nose is carried behind the vertical
- 7)** Opening mouth excessively
- 8)** A back that is poor, reluctant or with hesitation
- 9)** Excessive movement of the topline at the lope
- 10)** Excessive nosing out
- 11)** Head carried too low (Tip of ear consistently below the withers)
- 12)** Head carried too high
- 13)** Excessive speed at any gait
- 14)** Excessive slowness at any gait, loss of forward momentum
- 15)** Touching horse or saddle with free hand

**c) Severe Faults:**

- 1)** A horse which appears sullen, dull lethargic, emaciated, drawn or overly tired
- 2)** Blatant disobedience
- 3)** Contact with spurs forward of the cinch

**159. d) 2) h.** Incorrect lead during transition to the lope.

**180. b) 3)** The conformation inspection will occur prior to the longeing demonstration. Each entry will be walked into the arena to the judge and pause for evaluation individually. The judge shall inspect each horse from both sides, front and rear. Inspection for parrot/monkey mouth is not required. They will then trot off straight and around a cone and take a place on the rail at the direction of

the show official. All entries will be inspected in this fashion and as the “trot-off” is administered, horse showing evidence of lameness should be excused from the class at that time. Any entry failing to complete the “trot-off” for soundness pattern in three attempts will be disqualified. An example of the conformation pattern is illustrated in Figure #1 in this handbook.

**184.** Horses are to be shown in a halter as described in NSBA Equipment rules (Rule #134). Either a regular or show type halter is acceptable. The halter must be a minimum one finger space (approximately 3/4”) between the halter and nose.

**187.** Each horse is to be inspected by the judge on conformation, proper equipment and for evidence of abuse, inhumane treatment, or violation of NSBA rules. Horses will not be allowed to show in illegal equipment or if there is evidence of abuse, of inhumane treatment, or of rule violations as mentioned in Rules #87-90, and Rule #10. It is mandatory that a horse must be tracked at a walk and jog/trot in the conformation portion of the class prior to longeing. Horses that show evidence of lameness will be excused prior to the longeing demonstration. Any entry failing to complete the “trot-off” for soundness pattern in three attempts will be disqualified.

**195.** The conformation inspection will occur as the horse is walked into the arena prior to the longeing demonstration at which the judge will evaluate the horse for conformation suitable for future under saddle performance. Refer to Rule #183 d). The judge shall inspect each horse from both sides, front and rear. Inspection for parrot/monkey mouth is not required. Any blemish and/or structural defect will be scored according to severity, however, will not be cause for disqualification. The judge may not discriminate for or against muscling, but rather look for a total picture, emphasizing balance, structural correctness, and athletic capability.

**203. b) 2)** Striking of the horse to cause forward or lateral movement including the “trot-off” for soundness pattern.

**212. f) 1)** Ride over obstacles on the ground – usually logs or poles (natural logs are recommended). Walk, trot, or lope may be used, but only one gait is required.

**a.** Walk-overs: Walk over no more than five four logs or poles no more than 10” high. The space between logs or poles should be 26 - 34”. The formation may be straight, curved, zigzagged, or raised.

**b.** Trot-overs: Trot over no more than five four logs or poles no more than 10” high. The space between logs or poles should be 36 - 48”. The formation can also be straight, curved, zigzagged, or raised.

**c.** Extended trot-overs: Trot over no more than five four logs or poles no more than 10” high. The space between logs or poles should be 6 - 8’6”. The formation can also be straight, curved, zigzagged, or raised.

**d.** Lope-overs: Lope over no more than five three logs or poles no more than 10” high. No more than two logs may be used in succession. The space between logs or poles should be at least 6 - 8’. The formation can also be straight, curved, zigzagged, or raised.

**212. 6)** Rope drag: A rope drag is not to be used in Youth, Novice/Level 1 Youth or Novice/Level 1 Amateur classes. Drag may be a complete figure eight and may begin in either direction. The exhibitor must have the rope dallyed on the saddle horn (a half or full dally) for the duration of the drag.

**221.** Faults can be classified as minor, major or severe. The judge will determine the appropriate classification of a fault upon the degree and/or frequency of the infraction. An exhibitor that incurs a severe fault avoids elimination, but should be placed below all other exhibitors that do not incur a severe fault. A minor fault can become a major fault and a major fault can become a severe fault when the degree and/or frequency of the infraction(s) merit.

**a) Minor Faults:**

- 1)** Loss of forward motion during transitions or in the reverse
- 2)** Quick, short vertical strides
- 3)** Failure to take the appropriate gait in a timely manner when called for
- 4)** Consistent lack of contact with rider’s hand and the horse’s mouth

**b) Major Faults:**

- 1)** Loss of cadence at any gate
- 2)** Overly canted at the lope canter. (Outside hind leg consistently carried further in than inside front leg)
- 3)** Stumbling
- 4)** Being on the wrong lead
- 5)** Being on the incorrect diagonal
- 6)** Break of gait
- 7)** Overflexing or straining neck in head carriage so the nose is carried behind the vertical
- 8)** Opening mouth excessively
- 9)** A back that is poor, reluctant or with hesitation
- 10)** Excessive nosing out
- 11)** Head carried too low (Tip of ear consistently below the withers)
- 12)** Head carried too high
- 13)** Excessive speed at any gait
- 14)** Excessive slowness at any gait, loss of forward momentum
- 15)** Touching horse or saddle with either hand

**c) Severe Faults:**

- 1)** A horse which appears sullen, dull lethargic, emaciated, drawn or overly tired
- 2)** Blatant disobedience



**231.** To be judged on manners, way of going and style of jumping. Horses shall be credited with maintaining an even hunting pace that covers the course with free-flowing strides. Preference will be given to horses with correct jumping style that meet fences squarely, jumping at the center of fence. Judges shall penalize unsafe jumping and bad form over fences, whether touched or untouched, including twisting. Incorrect leads around the ends of the course or cross-cantering shall be penalized, as well as excessive use of crop. In and outs (one or two strides) shall be taken in the correct number of strides or be penalized. Any error, which endangers the horse and/or its rider, particularly refusals or knockdowns, shall be heavily penalized. Competition round begins immediately when they come through the in-gate.

**a)** Scoring shall be on a basis of 0-100 open numerical format, with an approximate breakdown as follows:

- 1)** 90-100: an excellent performer and good mover that jumps the entire course with cadence, balance and style.
- 2)** 80-89: a good performer that jumps all fences reasonably well; an excellent performer that commits one or two minor faults; smooth.
- 3)** 70-79: the average, fair mover that makes no serious faults, but lacks the style, cadence and good balance of the scoper horses; the good performer that makes a few minor faults; out of rhythm riding (minor miss/"chip"), additional minor faults (light rub/rubs).
- 4)** 60-69: poor movers that make minor mistakes; fair or average movers that have one or two poor fences but no major faults or disobediences. Cross canter or no change (60), extra stride in a measured line (61-64), multiple distance mistakes, rail on lip of cup/displaced rail.
- 5)** 50-59: Trot, poor manners, dangerous jumping, extra stride in and out, and elimination of a stride in a measured line. hang a leg or drop a leg a horse that commits one major fault, such as a hind knockdown, refusal, trot, cross canter or drops a lead.
- 6)** 30-49: Disobedience (refer to Rule #231 c)14). a horse that commits two or more major faults, including front knockdowns and refusals, or jumps in a manner that otherwise endangers the horse and/or rider.
- 7)** 10-29: a horse that avoids elimination but jumps in such an unsafe and dangerous manner as to preclude a higher score. 2 disobediences.

**b)** MINOR FAULTS (suggested 2-5 point deduction per occurrence)

- 1)** A jump out of rhythm jump (minor miss/"chip")
- 2)** Obvious pace changes
- 3)** One step of missed lead (1 point for each stride up to 4 strides, additional cross canter strides major fault)
- 4)** Landing on cross canter for one stride (2 points)

**5)** Swap lead in front of jump

**6)** Wrong lead once competition round has begun (5 points)

**7)** Ahead or behind motion at jump

**c)** MAJOR FAULTS (suggested 10-20 point deduction per occurrence)

**1)** Canter trot jump more than one stride (75-70)

**2)** Cross cantering within the line up to two strides 10 pt penalty per occurrence

**3)** Missed lead change 4 strides or more

**4)** No lead change (60)

**5)** Trot on course (55)

**6)** Kicking out (50)

**7)** Dangerous jumping (50)

**8)** Using stick on horse in ring (50)

**9)** Knockdown (45)

**10)** First disobedience (40)

**11)** Second disobedience (30)

**12)** Manners

**13)** Major out of rhythm (major miss/"chip")

**14)** Disobediences (major faults):

**a.** Refusal. When a horse stops in front of an obstacle (whether or not the obstacle is knocked down or altered), it is a refusal unless the horse then immediately jumps the obstacle without backing one step. If horse takes one step backwards it is a refusal. After refusal, if horse is moved toward the obstacle but does not attempt to jump, it is considered another refusal.

**b.** Run-out. A run-out occurs when the horse evades or passes the obstacle to be jumped; jumps an obstacle outside its limiting markers; or when the horse or exhibitor knocks down a flag, standard, wing or other element limiting the obstacle (without obstacle being jumped).

**c.** Loss of Forward Movement. Failure to maintain trot, canter or gallop after crossing starting line, except when it is a refusal, a run-out or when due to uncontrollable circumstances, such as when an obstacle is being reset.

**d.** Unnecessary Circling on Course. Any form of circle or circles, whereby the horse crosses its original track between two consecutive obstacles anywhere on course, except to retake obstacle after refusal or run-out.

**d)** Elimination

**6)** Falling off

**7)** Deliberately addressing an obstacle

**240. c)** Horses being considered for an award are then to be shown at a walk, trot and canter. The horse must be shown with active, working, and energetic ground covering gates at the walk, trot, and canter. The horse shall exhibit a natural self-carriage, correct uphill balance, and the fluid forward movement that is desirable for working hunter. Refer to Rule #244.

**242. e)** The following will result in elimination:

**1)** Three accumulative refusals; and

**2) Off course:**

- f) If elimination occurs during a ride-off, the competitor is placed last of all those chosen for the ride-off.**  
**g) The following constitute major faults:**

- 1) A refusal**
- 2) Loss of stirrup**
- 3) Trotting while on course when not part of a test**
- 4) Loss of reins**
- 5) Incorrect diagonal**

**243. Competition round begins immediately when they come through the in-gate.**

**a) Suggested scoring may be on a basis of 0-100, with an approximate breakdown as follows:**

- 1) 90-100:** Excellent equitation, position and presentation; meets all fences squarely and at proper distance. Uses all options to their advantage.
- 2) 80-89:** Minor equitation faults, i.e., long, weak distance, deep distance, one step landing at counter-canter. Rider still maintains a quality ride, smooth.
- 3) 70-79:** More problems occur, equitation suffers, i.e., rounded shoulders, heels are not down, hands incorrect, lacks the style and presence. One major fence problem, i.e., chip with a ride up the neck, or discreet swap out, jumping off one side of jump. No dangerous fences, not a flowing course, out of rhythm riding (minor miss/"chip"), additional minor faults (refer to minors).
- 4) 60-69:** Major equitation faults, poor body position, loose legs and seat, failure to obtain or maintain trot to a trot fence approach, 2 or 3 misses at the fence, obvious wrong lead before or on the courtesy circle. Cross canter or no change (60), extra stride in a measured line (61-64), multiple distance mistakes.  
40-59: Breaking to a trot while on course, counter-canter or cross-canter at ends of arena, missed lead changes, loss of stirrup, dropping a rein, extra stride in combination.
- 5) 50-59:** Refer to major faults.
- 6) 40-49:** Disobedience (refer to disobediences).
- 7) 10-39:** Rider avoids elimination, one or two disobediences refusals, knock-downs, dangerous fences, accumulative major faults.

**b) MINOR FAULTS (suggested 2-5 point deduction per occurrence)**

- 1) A jump out of rhythm (minor miss/"chip")**
- 2) Obvious pace changes**
- 3) One step of cross canter (1 point for each stride up to 4 strides, additional cross canter strides major fault)**
- 4) Swap lead in front of jump**
- 5) Rail (4 point deduction per rail)**
- 6) Wrong diagonal up to 2 steps**
- 7) Hands not at a 45 degree angle**
- 8) Ahead or behind motion at jump**
- 9) Canter trot jump one stride or less**

**c) MAJOR FAULTS (suggested 10-20 point deduction per occurrence)**

- 1) Canter the trot jump more than 2 strides**
- 2) No lead change (60)**
- 3) Kicking out (50)**
- 4) Dangerous jumping/excessive speed**
- 5) Wrong lead once competition round has begun (10 point deduction)**
- 6) Using stick on horse in ring (50)**
- 7) Manners**
- 8) Major out of rhythm (major miss/"chip")**
- 9) Loss of stirrup (50) Loss of reins (50)**
- 10) First disobedience (40)**
- 11) Second disobedience (30)**
- 12) Wrong diagonal over 2 steps**
- 13) Holding reins incorrectly**

**d) ELIMINATION**

- 1) Falling off**
- 2) Three disobediences**
- 3) Off course**
- 4) Failure to trot soundness circle**
- 5) Bolting from ring**

**406. NATIONAL AWARDS.** The NSBA will present National High Point Awards to the top horses/owners earning the most points in NSBA approved classes, a minimum of 7 NSBA points (excluding base points) are required to receive an award provided by NSBA per calendar year. Points earned on the horse will be accumulated in the class shown. (Points are earned on horse; exception Non Pro, Amateur, Novice Amateur, Novice Youth and Youth classes' points are on horse and exhibitor combination).

**409. Ties in Year End Awards.**

- a) Should there be a tie in total points for purpose of year end awards calculations, the following tie breakers will be used, in order listed, until such tie is broken:**
- 1) NSBA points earned;**
  - 2) Total horses placed over;**
  - 3) Total prize money won;**
  - 4) In head to head competition, the horse or rider that placed higher the most times;**
  - 5) First horse/rider to compete in the calendar year.**

To download a copy of the NSBA Official Rulebook, please visit [nsba.com/rulebook](http://nsba.com/rulebook) or scan QR code. ■

