



2012 RULEBOOK

americanhorsemenchallenge.com

COMPETITION CAMARADERIE RESPECT INTEGRITY

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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the AHCA is to promote horsemanship and sportsmanship at its highest level while providing an arena of camaraderie within a competitive obstacle course setting. Its purpose is to instill public awareness and respect for the horse while members strive to improve their horsemanship skills. All competitions will be conducted with the highest level of integrity.

ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

The Board of Directors (The Board) shall be comprised of Jeff Lebbin, Todd Luhtanen, Bill Hull and John Black. The Board will have the final decision on all rules effecting AHCA.

The Advisory Board shall be comprised of 8 members. The Board shall appoint initial members of the Advisory Board. The term of Advisory Board members shall be 2 years, except in the initial year where one half of the members shall serve for 1 year. AHCA members shall elect members to the Advisory Board as their terms expire.

Duties of the Advisors shall include, but are not limited to, handling complaints on judges, chairing of committees as designated by The Board, to communicate concerns to The Board, to assist Affiliates efforts to grow and facilitate this sport, and assisting in the production of the National Finals Challenge.

Association Board shall be comprised of members appointed from the Affiliate members. The Association Board will work directly with the Advisors and assist on various committees as designated by The Board.

MEMBERS

There will be one class of Regular membership and each Regular member will have one vote in any association motion presented to the membership. In order to exercise their right to vote members' dues must be paid and current at the time of the vote. There will be one class of Youth membership for persons 18 years of age and under on January 1 of the current year. Youth members will have all the rights and privileges of Regular members, except the right to vote. A Regular membership fee shall be \$50.00 per year. A Youth membership fee shall be \$25.00 per year.

The Board shall determine dues for the Regular and Youth memberships. Dues are paid annually and expire one year from the initial date of membership.

There will be one class of membership that shall be designated a "Lifetime Membership". An individual may qualify for the lifetime membership category upon payment by that member. The Board shall approve fees. Upon payment of said fees and acceptance of thereof by The Board, the Lifetime member shall have the following privileges: A) a Lifetime membership card; B) no further payment of annual dues; C) such other privileges as The Board may from time to time bestow including all privileges of a Regular member. The fee for a lifetime membership shall be \$500.

Lifetime memberships obtained during the first year of AHCA shall have the opportunity to receive the special designation of Charter Member and receive a specially designed belt buckle with that designation. The Charter Member will also receive special recognition on the website. The Charter Member fee shall be \$650.00

There will be a class of membership called “Booster”. The Booster member is a noncompeting, non-voting, supporter of AHCA. Booster member will receive free admission at the National Finals Challenge. The fee for a Booster Membership shall be \$25 per year.

Members of AHCA shall be admitted, retained and expelled in accordance with such rules and regulations as AHCA may, from time to time, adopt. The AHCA reserves the right to deny membership to any individual they deem to be of a character not to the standards of AHCA.

There shall be one class of membership that shall be designated as “Affiliate”. Each Affiliate shall be a recognized association representing a state, region, or locale. Each Affiliate shall be governed by its own rules that shall be in conformance with those of the AHCA. These dues are payable on an annual basis and are due at the start of the riding season of each year. The Affiliate Membership fee shall be \$100.00 per year.

Affiliates may be represented on the Association Board by nominating from their membership any member in good standing with the AHCA.

A one-time horse registration fee of \$10 will be required for horses competing in AHCA sanctioned events. This is to accommodate lifetime point tracking of the registered horse.

DIVISIONS

Wranglers

Ages 12 years and under. Age is determined annually on January 1st. For safety reasons, stallions are not to be ridden in the Wrangler division.

Youth

Ages 18 years and under. Age is determined annually on January 1st. For safety reasons, stallions are not to be ridden in the Youth division.

Novice

The Novice rider has basic horsemanship skills but lacks the confidence and knowledge of a more advanced horseman. The AHCA encourages you to ride up to your individual skill level. A Novice rider must fulfill the requirements as stated for Amateur and must sign a Novice statement with their membership. In addition, a Novice may not have earned money in any performance, rodeo, roping, or cattle-based association. If a Novice rider places in the top 2 at the National Finals Challenge they will be ineligible to compete in the Novice division in future years. When a rider becomes ineligible he/she will be moved out of the Novice division as of December 31 of that year. A rider may petition The Board to remain in the Novice division.

Amateur

A person is considered an amateur when he/she has not judged, trained, or assisted in training a horse for remuneration, either directly or indirectly, nor received compensation for instructing another person in riding, training or showing a horse in competition for five (5) previous years. Any AAA rated judge shall not be eligible and must compete in the Open division.

Open

This division is open to all riders, regardless of age, experience or status.

Legends

An amateur rider age 55 years and older as determined by their birth date on January 1st.

Futurity

This division is open to 3 and 4 year-old horses only. The Futurity Division will be a sanctioned class offered at the National Finals Challenge only. A futurity horse must be nominated by June 1st when the first installment of \$250.00 will be due. A second nomination fee of \$200.00 will be due by July 1st. This will complete the nomination and entry process and is nonrefundable. Futurity horses can only be shown in a snaffle bit or traditional bosal. A horse ridden in the Futurity division may not be ridden in any other division at the National Finals Challenge.

English

This division is open to all riders that choose to compete in traditional English tack. The obstacles on the course will be set to challenge the English rider, but with safety the foremost consideration.

A competitor may always ride up to another division. All competitors are expected to compete within their individual capabilities.

COURSE

Courses are to be designed to be non-breed specific with a balance that reflects fairness to all disciplines. All courses shall be designed with the purpose of challenging the horse and rider team. The course should be designed to set the horse and rider up to succeed not to fail.

AHCA leaves the choice of obstacles to be used in the Challenge up to the Affiliate putting on the Challenge. Should there be a question whether a particular obstacle is within the AHCA guidelines a designate from the Affiliate should contact a member of The Board prior to the Challenge.

Any concerns regarding safety on the course should be brought to the attention of the judge.

All courses should be designed so they can be completed in 3-4 minutes, with a maximum of 8 minutes. The judge shall set the maximum time.

Obstacles will have a 30 second time limit. A judge may chose to extend the 30-second time limit on some obstacles. The judge may whistle a rider off an obstacle prior to 30 seconds when there is a lack of forward motion or 3 balks.

If a rider falls or loses control of their horse on the ground, the rider will have 60 seconds to regain control of their mount without assistance. Failure to regain control results in disqualification for that round. If a horse leaves the course it is a disqualification for that round. In the case of a wrangler an adult may help the rider regain control and remount their horse.

The Course for all divisions except Wranglers shall consist of 13 obstacles. The Wranglers course shall consist of 8 obstacles. In addition to a score for each obstacle, the rider shall receive a horsemanship score and time points.

Where jumps are an obstacle in the Legend division, they will be given an option of a maximum height of 18 inches. Wranglers will not be required to jump over 18 inches.

The judge has the option to make adjustments to the course.

Bridges should be no narrower than 18 inches or higher than 24 inches

Permanent jumps cannot be over 22 inches

Bank jumps cannot be more than 36 inches

Drops cannot be more than 54 inches.

Contestants will be given the opportunity to walk the course with the judges prior to the challenge. No horses are allowed on the course during the walk through. Only the contestants are allowed to ask questions about an obstacle or rule on the course. Only judges may conduct the walk through. When there are multiple courses a separate walk through shall be done for each course.

A course map must be posted one half hour prior to walk through or each contestant must be provided with a copy of the course map at the walk through.

Wranglers may have a parent or other adult on the course during their challenge run and walk-through. However, they are there for safety only. Any coaching is strictly prohibited and could result in a disqualification for that round.

The draw for the order of go for each round shall be done by a random draw with contestants present or shall be drawn electronically by the event office. The show office shall make adjustments to the order of go when a rider has multiple horses in one division.

Should a rider miss an obstacle the rider will receive a score of 0 for that obstacle and receive a 60 second time penalty.

Should a rider miss an obstacle and begin the next obstacle they may not go back to the obstacle that was missed. If the rider does go back to the missed obstacle they will be considered "off course" and be disqualified for that round. If a rider chooses to take an obstacle from a different direction this shall not be considered an "off course". Free rides must be completed in the direction specified by the course.

If a rider is interfered with or feels their run was interfered with by a distraction beyond their control they may seek a rerun. The rider must finish their run and request a rerun within one minute. The decision to grant a rerun will be left solely up to the judge and may not be challenged. If granted a rerun it will be run at the end of that division that day.

TACK AND EQUIPMENT

All types of saddles are allowed. Saddles lacking a horn may put the rider at a disadvantage, except in the English division.

No mechanical hackamores or other leverage devices will be allowed.

No drop nosebands, martingales, gag bits, or any form of cavesson is allowed. A cavesson is allowed in the English division only. A bosalito will be considered a cavesson and not allowed.

Traditional english equipment is required in the English division. Allowed tack will be general regulation snaffles, pelhams, kimberwicks, or full bridles all with cavesson nosebands. All types of martingales are not permitted. Figure 8 cavessons are not allowed.

Horses entered in the Futurity division may only be ridden in a snaffle (without cavesson) or traditional bosal.

A get down rope from the throatlatch to the saddle is allowed.

A rider may choose to ride bareback or bridle less.

No tie-downs of any kind will be allowed in any division.

PAYOUT CHART

| # of Places | Number of Horses Shown | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5-6 | 7-9 | 10-15 | 16-20 | 21-25 | 26-30 | 31-35 | 36-40 |
| 1 | 100% | 60% | 50% | 40% | 30% | 30% | 28% | 25% | 23% | 20% |
| 2 | | 40% | 30% | 30% | 25% | 24% | 22% | 20% | 18% | 16% |
| 3 | | | 20% | 20% | 20% | 18% | 17% | 15% | 15% | 14% |
| 4 | | | | 10% | 15% | 12% | 12% | 12% | 11% | 11% |
| 5 | | | | | 10% | 9% | 9% | 10% | 9% | 9% |
| 6 | | | | | | 7% | 7% | 8% | 8% | 8% |
| 7 | | | | | | | 5% | 6% | 7% | 7% |
| 8 | | | | | | | | 4% | 5% | 6% |
| 9 | | | | | | | | | 4% | 5% |
| 10 | | | | | | | | | | 4% |

| Number of Horses Shown | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|--|
| # of Places | 41-45 | 46-50 | 51-55 | 56-60 | 61-65 | 66-70 | 71-75 | 76-80 | 80+ | |
| 1 | 20% | 20% | 20% | 20% | 20% | 20% | 20% | 19% | 19% | |
| 2 | 16% | 16% | 16% | 15% | 15% | 15% | 15% | 15% | 14% | |
| 3 | 13% | 13% | 13% | 13% | 13% | 13% | 12% | 12% | 12% | |
| 4 | 11% | 11% | 10% | 10% | 10% | 10% | 10% | 10% | 10% | |
| 5 | 9% | 8% | 8% | 8% | 8% | 8% | 8% | 8% | 8% | |
| 6 | 7% | 7% | 7% | 7% | 6% | 6% | 6% | 6% | 6% | |
| 7 | 7% | 6% | 6% | 6% | 5% | 5% | 5% | 5% | 5% | |
| 8 | 5% | 5% | 5% | 5% | 5% | 4% | 4% | 4% | 4% | |
| 9 | 5% | 4% | 4% | 4% | 4% | 4% | 4% | 3% | 3% | |
| 10 | 4% | 4% | 4% | 4% | 4% | 4% | 4% | 3% | 3% | |
| 11 | 3% | 3% | 3% | 3% | 3% | 3% | 3% | 3% | 3% | |
| 12 | | 3% | 3% | 3% | 3% | 3% | 3% | 3% | 3% | |
| 13 | | | 2% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 2% | |
| 14 | | | | 2% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 2% | |
| 15 | | | | | 2% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 2% | |
| 16 | | | | | | 1.5% | 1.5% | 1.5% | 1.5% | |
| 17 | | | | | | | 1.5% | 1.5% | 1.5% | |
| 18 | | | | | | | | 1.5% | 1.5% | |
| 19 | | | | | | | | | 1.5% | |

SCORING

All obstacles will be scored on a scale of 1 – 10. With 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest. Scoring on obstacles will be in half point increments. An average score for an obstacle is 5.5/6.

Overall horsemanship will be given a score of 1 – 10. With 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest.

All riders will have a time score added to their scores as follows:

| Finish Position | Points Received |
|--|------------------------|
| 1st | 10 |
| 2nd | 9.5 |
| 3rd | 9 |
| 4th | 8.5 |
| 5th | 8 |
| 6th | 7.5 |
| 7th | 7 |
| 8th | 6.5 |
| 9th | 6 |
| 10th | 5.5 |
| All remaining, finishing in allotted time | 5 |

In the case of a tie after all points have been tallied, the faster of the 2 horse/rider teams will be ranked in the higher placing.

A rider should have a soft rein and not balance on the face or cause the horse's mouth to gap.

No showboating will be allowed. A rider will not be allowed to stand in the saddle or ride into a trailer or swing off while hanging onto the trailer for loading. The AHCA encourages the exhibiting of training and talent of the horse but at no time can the rider exhibit himself or herself using the horse as a prop.

If a contestant wants to add something "extra" to an obstacle, he/she shall ask the judge(s) during the walk through if it will be allowed or if it is considered showboating.

SANCTIONED CHALLENGES

Affiliate members shall submit a Challenge Application (available on the website) and pay a \$35 for each Challenge to be held. It is highly recommended that the application be submitted at least 30 days prior to the event to allow adequate notice to members and posting on the website.

A challenge can consist of no more than 2 rounds per division per day. A horse can only be ridden in 3 divisions per day. The judge has the right to disqualify the rider if he/she finds the horse to be over worked or stressed or deemed to be suffering.

A horse may compete in different divisions. The Open division shall always be the last to compete. Amateur shall always compete prior to the Legends division.

A horse may not run the same course more than once, with the exception of the Wranglers division where a horse may be shared.

The Open division shall always be the last to compete in the round. The Amateur division shall always compete prior to the Legends division.

All challenges must use AHCA certified judge. It is recommended that 2 judges be used for every challenge. When 2 judges are used their scores will be averaged.

Affiliate members may set the entry fee for their challenges.

No challenge will be approved on the same day that is within 150 miles of another approved challenge. The Board has the authority to override this depending on the circumstances.

Challenge results along with a \$5 fee per horse/rider team per division must be submitted to AHCA within 14 days of the challenge.

An affiliate may hold a maximum of two challenges on any given weekend. Example: an affiliate may hold a sanctioned event on Saturday and a separate sanctioned event on Sunday. An entry fee will be charged for each event with prizes/payback for each event. This concept is a tremendous boost for Affiliates in an effort to make a profit and it also gives two sets of prizes/payback and points.

AHCA requires 50% prize money payback per the attached schedule for all divisions except Novice and Wranglers. Cash paybacks are not allowed for the Novice and Wranglers divisions. Prizes equal to 50% of entry fees should be substituted instead for these divisions.

Prizes

When an affiliate awards prizes that include (e.g. embroidered, printed, etc.) the AHCA logo or other AHCA designation it must be approved by AHCA. When an Affiliate wishes to award buckles with the AHCA designation or logo it must be purchased through an approved AHCA provider.

JUDGES

The applicant shall be a minimum of 18 years old and a member in good standing with AHCA. Judges are required to successfully complete the judge's test. Information regarding the judging application and test may be found on the website.

Judge Rating

The Judge rating is A, AA, and AAA.

- Level 'A': A judge with a single A rating is one who is new to the AHCA, meets all the qualifications as specified by the AHCA and a background in other equine disciplines.
- Level 'AA': A judge with a double A rating is one who has the qualifications of a single A judge and a proven proficiency in multiple equine disciplines.
- Level 'AAA': A judge with a triple A rating is one who is well versed in all disciplines and familiar with all breeds, with extensive credentials and experience in these fields.

Only triple A rated judges may judge the upper level divisions at the National Finals Challenge.

A judge may ask any rider to drop the bridle after the rider completes the course. A judge may disqualify any horse/rider team if the horse has a bloody mouth or sides that are caused by rough handling as determined by the judge.

A judge shall disqualify any contestant if it appears the contestant has used any form of alcohol/drugs that may or may not inhibit their ability to navigate the course. Contestants shall not consume any form of alcohol during the event until competition is complete on the day they compete.

Should a contestant choose to file a complaint about a judge, there will be a filing fee of \$50.00. The Advisory Board will review the complaint. Should the complaint be deemed valid, the \$50.00 will be returned to the contestant who filed the complaint. The Advisory Board will send a written report of the complaint along with their findings and recommendations to The Board.

A judge may not judge a member of their immediate family.

The Board may revoke a judge's card if they do not enforce the rules of AHCA.

Judges shall position themselves apart from one another and shall not confer with one another in any fashion during a competitors run or following the run with the sole exception of being allowed to discuss a situation of a competitor being disqualified for that specific round of the challenge. Should a discussion of disqualification be necessary, the discussion will take place immediately following the completion of the run in question.

DRESS CODE

Traditional Western or English attire is acceptable depending on the division of competition.

Dress jeans or colored jeans are acceptable.

Riders shall wear long sleeved button up shirts with a collar. Shirts must be tucked in when the rider begins competition.

Riders must wear riding boots with a heel. Tennis shoes are not allowed.

Riders shall wear a western or English style hat depending on the competition division or a certified riding helmet. AHCA encourages contestants in the Wrangler division to wear a certified riding helmet. Caps are not allowed.

AWARDS

AHCA will sponsor an annual National Finals Challenge. Date and location will be announced as soon as available. For the initial year of AHCA a member must have competed in 3 sanctioned challenges to compete in the National Finals Challenge.

AHCA will recognize the following achievements annually:

- High point Horse/Rider team in each division
- High point Rider in each division
- High point Horse over multiple divisions

MISCELLANEOUS REGULATIONS

Every effort has been made to make the AHCA rulebook all-inclusive. Should there be a situation arise this is not covered in the rulebook The Board will determine the remedy.

Should a rule be challenged during an event, the event judge has the authority and is charged with the responsibility to enforce the spirit and intent of the rule in question.

Being an AHCA member is a privilege, not a right.

Unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated. Unsportsmanlike conduct shall be defined as any action of disrespect, deceit, fraud or intimidation directed to judges, contestants, or spectators. Should the situation arise a representative of the Affiliate and the judge have the authority to take whatever action they deem necessary. A report of the incident shall be made to The Board to determine if further action is warranted.

The horse will be treated with dignity and respect at all times. Any action or treatment that is deemed to be cruel, abusive or inhumane will result in immediate disqualification. Inhumane treatment is the exhibit of a crippled or injured horse, or a horse with any other health abnormality, which could thereby result in the horse's undue discomfort or distress. Abuse includes excessive jerking, spurring, whipping or slapping.

No person shall cause to be administered either before or during a sanctioned challenge any performance enhancing or mind altering drugs. AHCA reserves the right to conduct random drug testing.

Individual members are responsible for their own safety and the safety of their horse.

Tampering with another rider's horse, tack or equipment is unacceptable and will result in disqualification, as well as, disciplinary action to be taken by The Board.

All money transactions with AHCA should be by check or money order made payable to AHCA. Nonpayment of debt to AHCA or AHCA affiliate will result in immediate suspension of all membership privileges and void any points earned until restitution is made.

Consumption of any form of alcohol or drugs during a competition by any AHCA promoter, their staff, an AHCA member, or contestant is strictly prohibited.

Any horse showing obvious lameness or distress will be excused from competition.

Riding in a manner that endangers the safety of horse or rider shall be penalized or disqualified by the judge.

Fraternization with race officials and judges during a challenge is prohibited.

All competitors are expected to maintain control of their horses at all times. The judge has the authority to dismiss a horse they deem to be out of control or that they deem to unfit for competition.

All judges' decisions are final.

ASSOCIATION INFO

Board of Directors

- Jeff Lebbin
- John Black
- Bill Hull
- Todd Luhtanen

Contact Information

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COMPETITION CAMARADERIE RESPECT INTEGRITY