

ARIZONA REINING EQUESTRIAN TEAM

ARET Scholarship Show Series

Rulebook

2026-27 Season

Version 2026.11 · Effective for the 2026-27 season, beginning with the first show

ARET expands access to Western competition, helps riders grow across a variety of disciplines, and rewards their hard work with scholarships for their education.

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*Season-specific details (show dates, venues and start times, entry dates, fees, patterns and award deadlines) are published each year in the separate **Season Sheet**.*

1. About ARET and the Scholarship Series

- 1.1 About ARET.** The Arizona Reining Equestrian Team (ARET) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that runs the ARET Scholarship Show Series. The series began in 2025 and is open to riders from any stable or program who compete with a coach as part of a team.
- 1.2 Format.** Riders show horses drawn from a pool supplied by participating teams, so they are judged on their own riding or handling rather than on a horse they own. In matchup classes, riders from different squads ride the same horse head-to-head, and the winner earns points for their squad. Every rider earns individual points, every squad earns squad points, and youth riders can earn scholarship money.
- 1.3 Season Sheet.** Details that change each season (show dates, venues and start times, entry dates, fees and payment instructions, patterns, which shows offer showmanship and hunter seat equitation, and award deadlines) are published in the Season Sheet. Where this rulebook refers to the Season Sheet, the current season's sheet applies.
- 1.4 Which rules apply.** These rules govern the series. Where they do not address a situation, National Reining Horse Association (NRHA) rules apply to reining, American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA) or Arabian Horse Association (AHA) rules apply to horsemanship, showmanship and hunter seat equitation, and AQHA rules apply to ranch riding. If an ARET rule and an NRHA, AQHA or AHA rule conflict, the ARET rule controls. The Board interprets these rules (Rule 3.2).

2. Definitions

These terms have the following meanings throughout this rulebook.

Term	Meaning
Age division	Middle School, High School or Adult (Rule 4.4).
Alternate	A horse drawn in advance to replace a horse that is pulled or a rider who must be moved.
Coach	The adult named on a rider's membership form who is responsible for that team's riders (Rule 4.3).
Counting riders	The riders whose squad points count toward a squad's score at a show (Rule 10.6).
Disqualification	A ride that receives no placing and no points, as ruled by the judge or Show Official (Rule 9.3).
Division	One age division, level and class together, such as High School Intermediate Reining. Placings, points and awards are by division.
Elimination	The result of a fall or other event that ends a ride; treated the same as a disqualification (Rule 9.3).

Term	Meaning
Excused withdrawal	A rider who does not complete a class through no fault of their own: no suitable horse is available (Rule 8.12), or a horse-caused fall cannot be rerode (Rule 9.6). Unlike a scratch, it is not the rider's or coach's choice.
Fall	A rider coming off the horse so that they must remount or vault back into the saddle.
Horse description	The information a horse provider gives about each horse, including suitable levels and allowed equipment (Rule 12.1).
Horse provider	The team or owner that brings a horse to a show for riders to use.
Hunter seat equitation	An English class on the flat, judged on the rider's position and control (Rule 6.15).
Level	Beginner, Novice, Intermediate or Advanced.
Matchup	Two or three riders from different squads riding the same drawn horse in the same class (Rule 8.11). The rider who places higher wins (Rule 10.4).
No-show	A rider who is entered but does not ride. Treated the same as a scratch.
Off-pattern	A ride in which the rider does not complete the pattern as written, as ruled by the judge.
Professional reining instructor	A person who is paid to teach reining as a regular part of their work.
Regular-season show	Any of the four shows before the Championship Show.
Ride	One rider's turn in one class, including an exhibitor's turn in showmanship. Warm-up rides are not counted as rides.
Rider	Anyone competing in the series. In showmanship, the rider is the exhibitor who handles the horse from the ground.
Scratch	Withdrawing from a class after entering, by the rider's or coach's choice.
Show Official	The person named by the Board to make show-day decisions at a show (Rule 3.4).
Showmanship	A class judged on how the exhibitor prepares, presents and handles the horse from the ground (Rule 6.15).
Squad	Up to 4 riders from the same team who compete together for squad points (Rule 7.1).
Team	A stable or program whose riders compete in the series under a coach. Each team's riders are divided into squads.
Uncontested matchup	A matchup in which a rider has no opponent through no fault of their own, because none was drawn or the opponent was excused (Rule 8.12).

3. Governance, Officials and Disputes

- 3.1 Authority.** The ARET Board has final authority over the series, these rules and all series decisions. The Board acts by majority vote.
- 3.2 Interpreting the rules.** The Board decides what these rules mean when a question arises. Interpretations that affect more than one show are sent in writing to all coaches.
- 3.3 Rule changes.** Rules change only between seasons. In an emergency, the Board may change a rule mid-season by majority vote, with written notice to all coaches before the next show. Every change is recorded in the Change Log (Section 15), and significant changes are also announced through the series' usual channels.
- 3.4 Show Official.** The Board names a Show Official and a backup for each show, preferably someone not coaching a rider at that show. On show day, the Show Official decides rerides, horse removals, safety moves, conduct matters and coin flips, and answers questions about the rules.
- 3.5 Conflicts of interest.** A Board member or official must step aside from any decision involving their own team, their own child or a horse they provided. The backup Show Official or another Board member decides instead.
- 3.6 Judges.** ARET, as show host, selects the judges. Carded judges are preferred but not required. A judge may not judge a class that includes a rider they have coached in the past 12 months, unless no other judge is available and the coaches are told before the show.
- 3.7 Judges' decisions are final.** A judge's scores and placings cannot be disputed. On show day, a coach may bring a question about a judge's decision to the Show Official within 30 minutes after the class ends, only to understand the decision or to correct a scoring or math error.
- 3.8 Formal disputes.** A coach may dispute how a rule was applied by writing to the Board within 48 hours after the end of the show. The dispute must name the rule, describe what happened and say what outcome is requested. Only coaches may file disputes. The Board decides by majority within 7 days, with any conflicted member stepping aside (Rule 3.5), and sends its decision in writing. The Board's decision is final.

4. Membership and Eligibility

- 4.1 Membership.** Before their first show of the season, every rider must complete the Scholarship Series membership form, pay the membership fee and sign the liability waiver (Rule 4.2). Fees are listed in the Season Sheet.
- 4.2 Liability waiver.** Every rider, and a parent or guardian for riders under 18, must sign the series liability waiver each season before the rider's first ride. This includes warm-up riders.
- 4.3 Coach.** Every rider must have a coach named on their membership form. A coach is an adult who is responsible for the team's riders, submits or approves their entries, pays the team's Cover Your Tracks fee (Rule 6.13) and is the Board's contact at shows. A rider whose own coach cannot take part may join another team before the rider's first show of the season.

- 4.4 Age divisions.** Riders must be in 4th grade or above. Middle School is grades 4–8, High School is grades 9–12, and Adult is any rider who has finished high school, including college students. There is no upper age limit. A rider's age division is set by their school grade at the start of the season and does not change during the season. Homeschooled riders use the grade that matches their age.
- 4.5 Joining mid-season.** Riders may join at any time during the season. Squad placement is covered in Rule 7.4, and year-end eligibility in Rule 11.3.
- 4.6 Reining requirement.** To show in any reining class, a rider must have at least one year of instruction from a professional reining instructor and must currently take at least 4 reining lessons per month. The rider must certify this, and their coach must sign the certification, on each entry form. A false certification voids the rider's reining results at that show and may lead to action under Section 14.
- 4.7 Accommodations.** A rider who needs special equipment or other assistance to compete may request an accommodation. The rider or parent, together with the coach, must send a written request to the Board at least 14 days before the show. The Board decides with the horse providers and keeps the request private. If no suitable horse is available, the rider's entry fees for that show are refunded.

5. Divisions and Levels

- 5.1 Divisions.** Each rider shows in one division per class type and is placed only against riders in the same division.
- 5.2 Levels.** The levels are Beginner, Novice, Intermediate and Advanced. In showmanship and hunter seat equitation, levels are combined into Beginner/Novice and Intermediate/Advanced. A rider's level may be different in each discipline.
- 5.3 Placement.** Before a rider's first show of the season, their coach places them at a level using the Skills Checklist in Appendix A.
- 5.4 Board review.** The Board may review any rider's placement before the rider's first show of the season. During the season, the Board reviews a placement when any coach, including the rider's own, raises a concern in writing. After a review, the Board may move the rider up or down a level.
- 5.5 Moving levels.** A rider changes level during the season only through a Board review (Rule 5.4). Individual points earned at the old level do not transfer; the rider starts again at zero in the new division. Squad points the rider already earned stay with the squad. Attendance at the old level does count toward year-end eligibility in the new division (Rule 11.3).

6. Classes and Entries

- 6.1 Class limit.** At each show, a rider may enter up to one horsemanship class and up to one working western class (reining or ranch riding, not both). Riders do not have to enter either. At shows that offer showmanship or hunter seat equitation, a rider may also enter that class (Rule 6.15).

6.2 Classes offered. The series offers the following classes and levels.

Class	Levels offered
Western Horsemanship	Beginner, Novice, Intermediate, Advanced
Ranch Riding	Beginner, Novice, Intermediate, Advanced
Reining	Intermediate, Advanced
Showmanship	Beginner/Novice, Intermediate/Advanced
Hunter Seat Equitation	Beginner/Novice, Intermediate/Advanced

6.3 Running classes together. Classes at the same level may run together in the arena, but each age division is placed separately.

6.4 Large rail classes. A rail class with more than 12 riders is split into sections made up of whole age divisions, and each age division is placed only within itself. If one age division alone has more than 12 riders, it is split across sections but placed as one division; the judge may call back top riders from each section for a short final.

Entries

6.5 Entry deadlines. Riders enter each show through that show's entry form. Entry opening and closing dates are listed in the Season Sheet.

6.6 Late entries. The Board may accept a late entry until the horse draw is made. No entries are accepted after the draw. There is no late fee.

6.7 Scratches and refunds. Entry fees are non-refundable if a rider scratches or does not show, except as stated in Rule 4.7. The entry fee for a class is refunded if the rider is excused because no suitable horse is available (Rule 8.12).

6.8 Canceled shows. If a show is canceled and rescheduled, entry fees carry over to the new date. If it is canceled and not rescheduled, entry fees are refunded. Entry fees for classes that were not completed at a show that was stopped partway are handled the same way (Rule 13.9).

6.9 Fees. Fee amounts and payment instructions are listed in the Season Sheet.

Cover Your Tracks

6.10 Purpose. Every team must cover its riders' rides at each show: for each rider in each division, the team either provides a suitable horse or pays Cover Your Tracks. This keeps enough suitable horses in every division. Cover Your Tracks pays for horse use at that show only; it does not give any team use of another team's horses for lessons or practice.

6.11 Horse credit. Each horse a team provides covers up to 4 rides at that show, but only in the classes and levels its horse description lists as suitable (Rule 12.1). A horse earns this credit if it is entered in the horse draw and judged sound on show morning, even if it is later pulled for welfare or safety reasons. A horse that does not arrive, or is unusable before the draw, earns no credit. A horse its provider withdraws for any other reason earns credit only for the rides it actually carried. A credited horse may cover any combination of up to 4 of the team's own rides

in classes and levels it is suitable for; when a team's horses could cover its rides in more than one way, credit is applied in the way that covers the most rides.

- 6.12 Amount owed.** A team owes the per-ride Cover Your Tracks fee for every ride its riders enter that its credited horses do not cover. Extra credit is not refunded or carried over. The per-ride fee is listed in the Season Sheet.

Example. A team has 30 rides at a show: 12 in Beginner classes and 18 in Intermediate and Advanced classes. It brings 3 horses suited only to Beginner riders. They cover the 12 Beginner rides, so the team owes Cover Your Tracks for the 18 Intermediate and Advanced rides.

- 6.13 Payment.** Each team's coach pays the team's Cover Your Tracks total in one check per show. How riders pay their coach is up to the team. The series does not accept separate checks or cash from individual riders for Cover Your Tracks.
- 6.14 ARET riders.** ARET riders pay their Cover Your Tracks fees monthly through their ARET team fees, rather than per show.

Showmanship and Hunter Seat Equitation

- 6.15 When they are offered.** Showmanship and hunter seat equitation give riders experience in other disciplines. They are offered at the regular-season shows listed in the Season Sheet. They are draw-based classes with no matchups, and they use the same horse draw, ride limit and Cover Your Tracks rules as other classes.
- 6.16 Points.** These classes earn individual placing points (Rule 10.1) in their own divisions. They do not earn squad points and do not count toward eligibility or awards in any other class. Year-end awards are covered in Rule 11.6.
- 6.17 Other special classes.** The Board may offer other special classes for experience only. They earn no points, and details are announced when they are offered.

7. Teams and Squads

- 7.1 Squads.** Each team divides its riders into squads of up to 4 riders. Squads compete for squad points (Section 10).
- 7.2 Building squads.** Each team's coach decides how to build that team's squads and reports them to the series before the team's first show of the season. Squads may mix levels or include riders at the same level.
- 7.3 Squad size.** Teams are encouraged to fill all four spots in each squad. Smaller squads are allowed, and a rider may show as a squad of one. Smaller squads are at a disadvantage in squad standings (Rule 10.6).
- 7.4 Riders joining mid-season.** A rider who joins mid-season may join a squad from their own team that has an open spot, or show as a squad of one. The coach must report the change before that show's entry deadline.
- 7.5 Staying on a squad.** A rider may not change squads or teams after their first show of the season. If a rider leaves, their squad continues with the riders it has.

7.6 Squad identity. Each squad chooses its own name and color.

8. Competition Format

Patterns

8.1 Season patterns. All patterns for the season, including the Championship Show patterns, are chosen in advance and posted in the Season Sheet, getting harder from show to show. Horsemanship uses full patterns. Each pattern names a tiebreaker maneuver, which the Board gives to the judge before the class (Rule 10.8).

8.2 Pattern progression. Patterns progress by level as follows.

Level	First two regular-season shows	Last two regular-season shows and Championship
Beginner	Walk/trot rail work and a simple pattern	Walk/trot rail work and a slightly harder pattern each show
Novice	Rail work and a shorter pattern	One longer pattern, no rail work
Intermediate and Advanced	Full patterns	Full patterns

Matchups

8.3 Matchup classes. Intermediate and Advanced classes are matchup classes at every show. Novice classes are matchup classes at the last two regular-season shows and the Championship Show.

8.4 Classes without matchups. Beginner classes, and Novice classes at the first two regular-season shows, are draw-based: riders ride drawn horses but have no matchups and are placed on their own rides only.

8.5 Pairing. The Board pairs matchup riders at random, from different squads, within the same division where possible. Otherwise riders are paired within the same level, and the judge's ranking of the combined class decides the matchup. Squads from the same team may be paired against each other.

8.6 Three-way matchups. A matchup has three riders only when the number of riders makes an even pairing impossible.

Horse Draw

8.7 The draw. The Board makes the horse draw at random, including alternates, and posts it before the start of each show.

8.8 Order of go. The Board sets the order of go. No horse goes back to back, and no rider rides the same horse twice in one show.

8.9 Substitutions. If a horse is pulled, withdrawn or cannot be used, the Show Official moves its remaining riders to alternates.

- 8.10 Safety moves.** A coach who believes a rider cannot safely ride their drawn horse may ask the Show Official to move the rider to an alternate. The Show Official decides before the rider's class begins wherever possible. Safety comes before keeping a matchup together.
- 8.11 Matchups after a horse change.** When a horse change means matchup riders cannot both ride the original horse, the Show Official decides before the affected rider rides, with safety first. If neither rider has ridden, both move to the same alternate when one suits both; otherwise each rides a suitable alternate. If one rider has already ridden, the other rides a suitable alternate. In every case the matchup stands and is decided under Rule 10.4, and both coaches are told before the affected rider rides.
- 8.12 No suitable horse.** If no suitable alternate is available, the rider is excused from that class. They receive no placing or points, and their opponent's matchup is treated as uncontested (Rule 10.4).

Show Day

- 8.13 Back numbers.** Back numbers change at every show. Riders wear their numbers on their backs only in classes with rail work. Showmanship and hunter seat equitation riders also wear their numbers on their backs. In all other classes, including ranch riding and reining, numbers go in the pouches on the saddle pad.
- 8.14 Warm-up riders.** Horses are warmed up only by Advanced riders named by the Board, who must arrive by the time the Board sets for each show. Warm-up riders may also show. No one may warm up a horse above their own level, and reining horses are warmed up only by riders who meet the reining requirement (Rule 4.6).

Rerides

- 8.15 When a reride is granted.** A reride may be granted when the horse puts the rider at an unfair disadvantage through no fault of the rider, for example blatant or extreme disobedience, tack failure, or a horse that appears lame or injured. A reride is not granted for mistakes caused by the rider's skill.
- 8.16 Asking for a reride.** Only the rider's coach or the judge may ask for a reride. The coach must tell the Show Official as soon as possible after the ride, and before the class results are announced.
- 8.17 Who decides.** The Show Official grants or denies the reride after talking with the judge, before the class results are announced. Results are held until the decision is made.
- 8.18 How rerides are ridden.** A reride is ridden on an alternate horse at the end of the class and is judged as if the first ride never happened. In a rail class, the judge decides whether to restart the class or have the rider perform individually. In a matchup, the reride counts in place of the first ride.
- 8.19 If a reride is denied or cannot be ridden.** If a reride is denied, or cannot be ridden because no suitable alternate is available or the rider is not medically cleared (Rule 13.7), the original ride stands as judged. For a fall the horse caused, the rider is treated as an excused withdrawal instead (Rule 9.6).

9. Judging and Ride Outcomes

- 9.1 Standards.** Reining is judged under NRHA rules. Horsemanship, showmanship and hunter seat equitation are judged under AQHA or AHA rules, which set the same standard; judges may be carded by either association. Ranch riding is judged under AQHA rules (Rule 1.4).
- 9.2 Judging the rider.** Judges are told that riders are on drawn horses, and they judge the rider's ability rather than the horse's, within reason.
- 9.3 Ride outcomes.** Each ride ends in one of the outcomes below.

Outcome	Placing	Individual points	Matchup
Completed, on pattern	Placed normally	Yes, by placing	Decided by placing or score
Off-pattern	Below every on-pattern ride	Yes, by placing	Loses to any on-pattern ride
Disqualified or eliminated	Not placed	None	Loses the matchup
Scratch or no-show	Not placed	None	Loses the matchup
Excused withdrawal	Not placed	None	Opponent's matchup is uncontested

- 9.4 Off-pattern rides.** In horsemanship and ranch riding, an off-pattern ride cannot place above any on-pattern ride. In reining, an off-pattern ride scores 0 and places below every on-pattern ride.
- 9.5 Disqualification.** A rider is disqualified when the judge rules so under NRHA, AQHA or AHA rules, or when the Show Official finds that the rider used equipment not allowed by the horse description (Rule 12.1), rode in an unsafe way, or mistreated the horse (Section 14).
- 9.6 Falls.** A fall during a ride is an elimination, unless the Show Official finds that the horse's actions caused the fall. In that case, the rider may reride on an alternate horse, but only if they are medically cleared to continue (Rule 13.7) and a suitable alternate is available. If no reride is possible, the rider is treated as an excused withdrawal: no placing or points, and the opponent's matchup is uncontested (Rule 10.4).

10. Points and Standings

Every rider earns individual points for where they place, and every squad earns squad points. Points add up across all five shows, and the Championship Show counts the same as a regular-season show.

Individual Points

10.1 Placing points. Each class is placed all the way down, separately for each division, and earns points as follows.

Placing	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th+
Points	7	5	4	3	2	1	0

10.2 Riders alone in a division. A rider who is the only rider in their division places 1st and earns 7 points if they complete the ride. The division minimum for year-end awards still applies (Rule 11.8).

10.3 Points stay in their division. Individual points belong to the division where they were earned (Rule 5.5).

Squad Points

10.4 Matchup points. A matchup is won by the rider who places higher in the class. In scored classes, that is the rider with the higher score, except that an off-pattern ride always ranks below an on-pattern ride (Rule 9.4). Tied scores are broken under Rule 10.8. A rider completes a ride if they finish it without being disqualified or eliminated; an off-pattern ride counts as completed. Matchup squad points are awarded as follows.

Situation	Squad points
All riders in the matchup complete their rides	The winner earns 5; every other rider earns 0
Only one rider completes (the others are disqualified, eliminated, scratched or did not show)	The rider who completed earns 5
Two riders in a three-way matchup complete	The higher placing of the two earns 5
No rider completes	No squad points are awarded for that matchup
Uncontested matchup (no opponent through no fault of the rider)	5, if the rider completes

10.5 Classes without matchups. In classes without matchups, a rider's individual placing points also count as their squad points.

10.6 Squad score at each show. At each show, add the squad points earned by every rider on the squad who rode. If all 4 riders on a 4-rider squad rode, drop the rider with the lowest total, so 3 riders count. If 3 or fewer riders rode, every rider who rode counts.

10.7 Season squad standings. A squad's season total is the sum of its show scores from all five shows.

Worked example. Individual: a Middle School Novice horsemanship rider places 2nd and earns 5 individual points.

Matchup: in Intermediate Reining, Rider A (Squad Blue) scores 70 and Rider B (Squad Red) scores 68.5 on the same horse. Rider A earns 5 squad points; Rider B earns 0. Both also earn individual points for their placings in their own divisions.

Squad score: at one show, Squad Blue's four riders earn 10, 7, 5 and 3 squad points. The lowest (3) is dropped, so Squad Blue's show score is 22. If only three of them had ridden, all three would count.

Tiebreakers

- 10.8 Ties in a class.** Judges place every rider in rail classes, so those classes have no ties. In scored classes, ties are broken by the fewest penalties, then by the higher score on the pattern's tiebreaker maneuver (Rule 8.1), then by a coin flip.
- 10.9 Ties in a matchup.** A tie between matchup riders is broken the same way as a tie in the class.
- 10.10 Year-end individual ties.** Ties for year-end champion or reserve are broken by the most 1st places in that division over the season, then the most 2nd places, and so on through 6th; then by the higher Championship Show placing; then by a coin flip by the Show Official.
- 10.11 Squad ties.** Ties in show or season squad standings are broken by: (1) the most matchup wins among counting riders; (2) the most 1st places among counting riders, then the most 2nd places, and so on through 6th; (3) a coin flip by the Show Official. For season ties, each count covers the whole season.

Standings and Announcements

- 10.12 Live standings.** Standings are updated live during each show and may be viewed by anyone.
- 10.13 End-of-show announcements.** At the end of every show, the series announces the high-point champion and reserve rider in each division, the high-point champion and reserve squads, and the highest horsemanship, ranch riding and reining scores of the day.

Awards and Scholarships

Show Awards

- 11.1 Regular-season shows.** 1st through 6th place in each division receive a rosette sticker.
- 11.2 Championship Show.** Placings at the Championship Show receive ribbons. Championship squad awards are set by the Board and announced before the Championship Show.

Year-End Awards

- 11.3 Eligibility.** A rider is eligible for year-end awards in a division if they rode in that division at 3 or more of the 4 regular-season shows. For a rider who changed levels (Rule 5.5), regular-season shows ridden at the old level count toward this total, but points earned there do not transfer. A ride that ends in elimination or disqualification counts as riding in the division; a scratch or no-show does not.

- 11.4 Championship Show.** Any member may show at the Championship Show and receive show awards. Year-end standings include only eligible riders. Eligible riders do not have to attend the Championship Show, but earn no points from it if they do not.
- 11.5 Division buckles.** Champion and reserve champion buckles are awarded in every division of horsemanship, ranch riding and reining, based on points from all five shows.
- 11.6 Showmanship and hunter seat champions.** A champion award is given in each showmanship and hunter seat equitation division at the Championship Show, based on points from the regular-season shows that offered the class. To be eligible, a rider must have shown in that division at every regular-season show that offered it. The division minimum applies (Rule 11.8). This replaces the 3-of-4 requirement in Rule 11.3 for these classes. No reserve award or scholarship is given in these classes.
- 11.7 Awards go only to eligible riders.** Year-end awards and scholarships go only to eligible riders (Rule 11.3). If a division meets the minimum but fewer than two of its riders are eligible, only the awards that can be filled are given: a single eligible rider receives the champion award, and no awards are given if no rider is eligible. Unfilled awards are not passed to ineligible riders.
- 11.8 Division minimum.** Buckles are awarded in a division only if at least 3 different riders rode in it at a regular-season show. There are no exceptions.
- 11.9 Special awards.** The series awards three special buckles, open to riders from every team:
- Sportsmanship: respect, encouragement and fair play toward riders, horses and officials.
 - Rising Star: the greatest growth in riding over the season.
 - Volunteer of the Year: outstanding service to the series.
- 11.10 Nominations and voting.** Each squad may nominate one rider per special award, with a one-sentence reason, by the deadline in the Season Sheet. Every series rider receives one vote per award. The nominee with the most votes wins, and the Board breaks any tie.

Scholarships

- 11.11 Who can earn scholarships.** Scholarship money goes to the eligible champion and reserve champion (Rule 11.7) in each Middle School and High School division that meets the division minimum (Rule 11.8). Riders from any team may earn it. Adult divisions do not receive scholarships.
- 11.12 How scholarships are paid.** Scholarship money is paid directly to an accredited college, university, trade or vocational school for educational costs. The recipient must submit the series scholarship request form, listing the school, their student ID and the school's preferred payment method.
- 11.13 Claim deadline.** Recipients must claim their scholarship within 8 years of the date it was awarded. Unclaimed money returns to the scholarship fund.
- 11.14 Amounts.** Scholarship amounts depend on the funds raised during the season. The Board sets them and announces them before the Championship Show.

12. Horses

The series depends on teams that lend their horses, and every horse's welfare comes first.

- 12.1 Horse descriptions.** Every horse provider must submit a horse description before the draw, stating the horse's suitable levels, whether it can do flying lead changes, its ride limit, its tack, and whether spurs, a crop or two-handed riding are allowed. Show-day changes are posted at the show.
- 12.2 Default equipment.** If a horse description does not allow spurs, no spurs may be used. If spurs are allowed but the type is not stated, only ball (non-roweled) spurs may be used. No crop may be used unless the description allows one.
- 12.3 Ride limit.** A horse may carry no more than 4 competition rides per show. Warm-up rides do not count toward this limit. Each horse gets one warm-up session per show unless its provider asks for more; the provider may limit warm-up, and the Show Official may stop the warm-up of a horse that seems tired. The provider may set a lower limit. More than 4 competition rides requires approval from both the provider and the Show Official.
- 12.4 Reining horses.** Reining horses may only be ridden by riders who meet the reining requirement (Rule 4.6).
- 12.5 Withdrawing or removing a horse.** A horse provider may withdraw its own horse at any time. The judge, the EMT or other qualified medical professional, or the Show Official may remove a horse immediately for welfare or safety reasons. A removed horse returns only if both the provider and the Show Official agree. Its riders move to alternates (Rule 8.9).
- 12.6 Provider responsibilities.** Providers must bring horses that are sound, fit and suitable for the levels listed in their descriptions, with the tack listed. Riders are encouraged to ask the provider how best to show the horse.

13. Attire, Tack and Safety

- 13.1 Horsemanship and working western attire.** Riders must wear western show attire following NRHA, AQHA and AHA guidelines:
- Jeans and western boots
 - A collared western shirt (button-down or horsemanship shirt)
 - A western hat or a helmet
 - Chaps or chinks: required at Intermediate and Advanced; optional at Beginner and Novice

13.2 Showmanship attire. Exhibitors must wear show attire following AQHA or AHA guidelines:

- A long-sleeved, collared western shirt or other appropriate show shirt
- Western jeans or show pants in good condition
- Western boots with an appropriate heel
- A western belt
- A western hat or an equestrian helmet
- Hair neatly secured in a bun, ponytail or braid
- Clean, properly fitted clothing that allows safe movement

13.3 Hunter seat equitation attire. Riders must wear traditional, conservative hunter seat attire appropriate for a horse show:

- A properly fitted, securely fastened equestrian helmet (required)
- A traditional long-sleeved riding shirt, with breeches or jodhpurs
- Tall boots, or paddock boots with half chaps
- A riding coat: optional at Beginner/Novice
- Clean, neat, properly fitted clothing suitable for riding
- Hair neatly secured so it does not interfere with vision or safety

13.4 Helmets. Helmets are required in hunter seat equitation (Rule 13.3). In all other classes they are strongly encouraged; the series does not require them, but each coach may require them for their own riders.

13.5 Tack and aids. The horse provider chooses the tack. Riders may adjust stirrup length. Spurs, crops and bit changes are allowed only as the horse description permits (Rule 12.2), in every class including hunter seat equitation, and must be used appropriately and humanely.

13.6 Safety staff. An EMT or other qualified medical professional must be present at every show.

13.7 Injuries. Only an EMT or other qualified medical professional at the show may clear an injured rider to continue; that decision is final. If no one qualified is present, a rider who falls or is injured may not ride again that day. A rider who shows signs of a concussion may not ride again that day, and no reride is granted.

13.8 Incident records. Every fall, injury and horse removal is recorded by the Show Official.

13.9 Weather and emergencies. If weather or an emergency stops a class and the show continues that day, the judge decides whether the class resumes or restarts. If the show ends early, classes that were completed count in full for placings, points and awards. A class that was stopped before every rider rode does not count for anyone, and neither does a class that never started. Entry fees for those classes are handled under Rule 6.8.

14. Conduct and Sportsmanship

14.1 Who this covers. These rules apply to riders, coaches, parents and family members, and anyone attending a show with a team. Everyone is expected to treat horses, judges, volunteers and each other with respect.

- 14.2 Minor misconduct.** For minor misconduct, the Show Official gives up to two verbal warnings. After a third incident, a rider is disqualified from the rest of the show, or a parent or coach is asked to leave.
- 14.3 Serious misconduct.** For mistreatment of a horse, violence or threats, dangerous behavior, or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, the Show Official may remove the person from the show immediately, without warnings.
- 14.4 Further action.** After reviewing an incident, the Board may place a person on probation, suspend them from future shows, or remove points and awards connected to the incident. The person may respond in writing before any suspension is decided.

15. Change Log

Every change to this rulebook is listed here, newest first.

Version	Effective	Change
2026.11	2026–27 season	First full rulebook, approved by the Board. Replaces the 2025–26 Preliminary Rules and Regulations Handbook.

Appendix A: Skills Checklist for Level Placement

Coaches use this checklist when placing riders (Rule 5.3). A rider belongs at a level when they can perform all of the skills for the levels below it, and nearly all of the skills for that level, reliably and safely on many kinds of horses, not just once on a familiar horse. For example, a counter canter counts only when the rider asks for it on purpose and holds it, not when the horse happens to be on the wrong lead. Skills are about control and correctness, not speed: riders should ask each horse only for what it can comfortably give, especially horses with several rides that day.

Levels are cumulative: each level includes every skill from the levels before it.

Level	Horsemanship	Ranch Riding	Reining
Beginner	Controls the walk and jog on the rail in both directions; stops and backs straight; rides a figure eight at the walk or jog; turns 180 degrees on the haunches; lengthens the jog and brings it back; mounts and settles onto a new horse safely.	Walks and jogs with steady control; extends the jog and returns to a regular jog; walks over a pole or log; stops and backs.	Not offered.

Level	Horsemanship	Ranch Riding	Reining
Novice	Picks up the requested lead and stops from the lope; turns on the haunches up to two full turns; walks and jogs without stirrups with a secure seat; changes leads through the walk, jog or halt; side passes in both directions.	Lopes on both leads; jogs over poles; makes simple lead changes; makes smooth transitions between gaits.	Not offered.
Intermediate	Asks for a flying lead change when the horse is able; rides a figure eight at the lope with simple or flying changes; turns on the haunches up to 4¼ turns.	Extends the lope and returns to a regular lope; lopes over a pole; changes leads, simple or flying, as the horse allows; rides the pattern accurately.	Rides a full NRHA pattern on an unfamiliar horse: circles with control of size and speed, lead changes, spins, stops, rollbacks and back-up. Must also meet the reining requirement (Rule 4.6).
Advanced	Lopes without stirrups with a secure seat; holds a counter canter on purpose; adjusts quickly to an unfamiliar horse's way of going.	Performs every maneuver precisely, with clear differences between regular and extended gaits and smooth, prompt transitions, adjusting to each horse.	Rides the same maneuvers as Intermediate with more consistency, precision and finesse: clear, controlled speed changes in circles, correct spins and stops, and quick adjustment to each horse. May be capable of faster spins and harder stops, but asks only for what the horse can comfortably give.

Showmanship and hunter seat equitation use two combined levels (Rule 5.2). Hunter seat equitation is judged on the flat. As with the other classes, each skill should be done reliably and safely on many kinds of horses.

Level	Showmanship	Hunter Seat Equitation
Beginner/Novice	Leads at the walk and jog from the correct position on the horse's left side; stops and backs straight; turns 90 to 180 degrees on the haunches; sets the horse up square for inspection and moves around it correctly while the judge inspects.	Holds a correct hunt seat position and steady hands; walks, posts the trot on the correct diagonal and sits the trot; canters on the requested lead; halts and backs; rides a figure eight at the trot, changing diagonals; changes leads through the trot.
Intermediate/Advanced	Performs a full pattern smoothly and accurately; makes prompt, smooth transitions between the walk and jog; backs through turns and changes of direction; turns 360 degrees or more on the haunches; sets the horse up quickly and squarely, adjusting to each horse's way of going.	Rides a figure eight at the canter with a simple or flying change as the horse allows; holds a two-point position at the canter; rides without stirrups at the walk and trot; counter-canters on purpose; lengthens and shortens stride with control, asking each horse only for what it can comfortably give.