



Rules from the  
2022 NSBA Official Handbook

## **EQUESTRIANS WITH DISABILITIES COMPETITION FOR INDEPENDENT & SUPPORTED EXHIBITORS**

**348. Equestrians with Disabilities.** This competition is open to people with physical or cognitive disabilities that love competing. EWD classes may be held at NSBA approved shows, US Para-Equestrian events or can be stand-alone events. In order to participate in EWD events, a diagnosis and acceptable adaptive equipment forms must be completed.

### **GENERAL RULES**

**349.** To provide show management with the option to include equestrians with disabilities competition, NSBA has adopted these rules. In doing so, NSBA does not assume responsibility for safety of participants. Since it is show management, which conducts these events and controls both the physical facility and all aspects of the events, responsibility for participant's safety remains solely with show management.

**350.** Each participant or their parent or guardian by allowing participation, assumes all risk of personal injury or property damage occurring as a result of the

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- participation and does hereby release and discharge the NSBA and show management, their respective officers, directors, representatives and employees from any and all liability, whenever or however arising, from such participation, except for the negligent act or omission, if any, of an indemnities. Further, as parent or legal guardian, they agree to indemnify and hold harmless NSBA and show management from such liability to the minor.
- 351.** Attendance at a NSBA-approved event, in whatever capacity, shall constitute authorization for NSBA, its agents, designees, or assigns to photograph, video tape, televise, post to the web or record by other means (hereinafter referred to as “photographic material”) any person or animal on the premises of a NSBA approved event, and shall further constitute authorization for the use of such person’s name, voice and biography, or the name, pedigree and performance record of any animal on the premises (hereinafter referred to as “related information”) in conjunction with any photographic material.
- 352.** Show management applies for NSBA-approval of these events on a voluntary basis and assumption of responsibility for safety by show management is required by NSBA as an express condition for NSBA to grant approval for these events.
- 353.** To obtain tentative NSBA-approval, application must be submitted a minimum of 90 days prior to the event on forms either provided by or acceptable to NSBA, stating the date and location of the desired events along with the show approval fee.
- 354.** EWD classes may be held at NSBA-approved shows, US Para-Equestrian events or can be stand-alone events.
- 355.** An exhibitor may show more than one horse in individually worked classes as outlined in the rulebook however, but horses cannot be shown by more than one exhibitor in the same EWD class. Exhibitors showing in Walk/Jog-Trot/Lope-Canter classes may not enter in Walk/Jog or Walk/Trot classes at the same show.
- 356. DIAGNOSIS**  
In order to participate an exhibitor must have a physical and/or cognitive medically diagnosed condition that causes a permanent impairment that can be measured objectively. Examples of conditions, diseases or disorders that may lead to permanent impairment are: paresis, amputation (partial to full joint), ankylosis, upper motor neuron lesions, vision impairment, and intellectual disability. Eligible conditions include: am-

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putation, arthrogryposis, Asperger syndrome, autism spectrum disorder, Batten disease, cerebrovascular accident (stroke), cerebellar ataxia, cerebral palsy, Coffin-Lowry syndrome, cystic fibrosis, Down syndrome, dwarfism, fragile X syndrome, Friedreich's ataxia, Guillain-Barre syndrome, hearing impairment, Hunter syndrome, microcephaly, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, Prader-Willi syndrome, Rett syndrome, spina bifida, spinal cord injury, traumatic brain injury, trisomy disorders and visual impairment. Additional diagnosis will be considered upon request.

**a) Diagnosis Form and Acceptable Adaptive Equipment Form:**

In order to participate in EWD events, a licensed medical physician must sign a NSBA diagnosis form. Also, a NSBA acceptable adaptive equipment form and riding ability form completed and signed by a certified instructor or coach of Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.), Special Olympics, US Para-Equestrian, Certified Horsemanship Association or IRD or a certified therapeutic riding instructor who is also a member in good standing of NSBA, indicating the riding ability and adaptive equipment that is required. A valid NSBA membership number or NSBA membership application must be submitted to NSBA. Upon receipt of the forms the EWD membership card will be noted with EWD endorsement. Forms must be updated every two years.

**357. Horse and exhibitor eligibility requirements must be met.**

**a)** Neither the exhibitor or their immediate family is required to own the horse. However, the exhibitor(s) must be NSBA members in order to compete.

**b)** Stallions are not eligible to be shown in any EWD activities.

**c)** The welfare of the horse is outlined in the rule-book, however, horses with a slight disability or lameness may be used at the discretion of the judge.

**d)** Any breed of horse may be shown at the same event, providing it be registered with a NSBA REA. Unregistered stock horses may be registered for NSBA competition per Rule #55.

**e)** Owner and exhibitor must be current NSBA members, in good standing, to earn points and be eligible for year-end awards.

**f) A rider may not show in any other Youth, Amateur or Open categories while showing in the Equestrians With Disabilities classes at the same show. A rider may show in only one of the Equestrians With Disabilities categories, Independent or Supported. If a rider's condition deteriorates so that the rider can no longer ride as an independent rider, but now needs support, this must be documented by the**

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physician and if participating in a therapeutic riding program, the certified PATH instructor. A copy of the documentation must be provided to NSBA.

### **358. GENERAL RULES FOR TACK AND EQUIPMENT**

English and western equipment and attire will follow rules as set forth in the rulebook with the exception of EWD acceptable adaptation equipment.

- a) **Helmet:** Exhibitors must wear a properly fitted and fastened with harness, ASTM approved protective helmet. A western hat may be affixed over the helmet in western events. Equipment should conform to the riding ability of the competitor and be suitable for the horse.
- b) **Halter:** All horses when ridden must wear a halter in a manner that does not interfere with reining of the horse. A halter must be on the horse either over or under the bridle for use by the handler if needed. All exhibitors ~~should~~ must be able to hold reins.
- c) **Bits or Bosal:** A snaffle bit, curb bit or bosal/hackamore may be used no matter the age of the horse.
- d) **Except for snaffle or hackamore entries, only one hand may be used on the reins and the hand may not be changed, (See Rule #133). However, use of two hands will not be cause for disqualification but will be penalized ~~scored according to severity.~~**
- e) Exhibitors are allowed to hold the saddle with either hand without penalty.
- f) Outside assistance will be penalized ~~at the judge's discretion.~~
- g) **EWD Acceptable adaptive equipment includes but not limited to:**
  - 1) **SADDLE**
    - a. Raised pommel
    - b. Raised cantle
    - c. Hard hand holds
    - d. Soft hand holds
    - e. Seat saver
    - f. Knee rolls/blocks
    - g. Thigh rolls/blocks
    - h. Padded saddle flaps
  - 2) **STIRRUPS**
    - a. Rubber bands around foot and stirrup
    - b. Enclosed stirrups
    - c. Strap from stirrup leather to girth/cinch
    - d. Strap from stirrup to girth/cinch
    - e. No stirrups
    - f. One stirrup
  - 3) **BRIDLE/REINS**
    - a. Looped rein/s
    - b. Connecting bar reins
    - c. Bridging rein
    - d. Ladder reins

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- e. Rein guides (rein through ring on saddle)
  - f. Elastic insert in reins
  - g. Side pulls

**4) WHIPS**

- a. One or two whips
- b. Strap attaching whip to hand

**5) RIDING ATTIRE**

- a. No boots if using safety stirrups (Peacock, S-shaped irons or Devonshire stirrups)
- b. Modified riding boots
- c. Gaiters
- d. Half chaps
- e. Off set spurs
- f. Safety vest

**6) POSTURE, POSTURAL SUPPORTS & ORTHOSES**

- a. L or R Arm sling
- b. Neck collar
- c. Ankle foot orthoses
- d. Prosthesis
- e. Wrist brace
- f. Back support
- g. Trunk support
- h. Gait belt

**7) OTHER AIDS**

- a. Commander using sign language
- b. Enlarged arena letters
- c. Audio Communications  
(for hearing impaired)
- d. Voice
- e. Bareback Pads
- f. Surcingles
- g. Other equipment will be considered upon request

**359. HANDLER** - Required for all independent exhibitor classes: one handler per entry to facilitate the safety of the exhibitor. The handler must be 16 years of age or older. The handler must have a lead line without a chain in their hand in case of safety issues.

- a) Handlers shall stand quietly in a designated area, not obscuring the judge's line of vision, unless their assistance is required and requested by the judge or ring steward in the event of a safety issue. The handler may either take a position behind, beside or in front their respective exhibitor's horse or quietly walk forward and snap onto the horse's halter after the exhibitor's pattern is completed or the class has come in to line up.
- b) A blind or deaf exhibitor may have an assistant who communicates via verbal or sign language or cue cards to the competitor so they may hear the judge's directives or pattern instructions. This

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assistant will be outside the ring and their position known to the judge and ring steward.

- c) Leaders and sidewalkers: The supported exhibitor must have a leader with a loose lead without a chain, attached to the halter in a manner that does not interfere with reining of the horse. The supported exhibitor may need the assistance of one or two side walkers. Once the class has started, unauthorized assistance from horse leaders, spotters and side walkers will result in penalties. Side walkers may not give verbal commands or extra physical prompting, except in case of emergency.
- d) Handlers, leaders, side walkers, or extra spotters other than the required horse handler are not considered tack or equipment.
  - a) Coaching from the center is not permissible
  - b) Handler attire must meet the requirement of rule #134 or #137 with the exception that hats are not required. However, if a hat is worn it too must meet the standard of rule #134 or #137.

**360. ARENA SET UP** - Markers must be used and may be numbered or lettered. People shall not be used as markers.

**361. PATTERNS** - All patterns must be posted one hour before the class. However, it is recommended that patterns be available 30 days in advance of the competition for EWD classes. One of the suggested EWD pattern(s) may be used, however a judge in concert with the show management may utilize a different pattern using the acceptable maneuvers.

**362.** Classes may be split at the discretion of show management. If go rounds are necessary, in the interest of successful implementation of the approved show, the number of go-rounds to be held and the number of horses to be shown at each go round should be based on safety and/or physical constraints of show premises when applied fairly and uniformly by a procedure in which all qualified entries are included in a random draw. When necessary to split large classes by running more than one go-round, finalists must rework the specified class requirements EXCEPT any scored class.

## **JUDGING EQUESTRIANS WITH DISABILITIES SUPPORTED EXHIBITOR**

**363.** Classes shall follow these guidelines, reversing only at the walk ~~and omitting all extended gaits.~~ ~~Horses should be backed in the line-up, not on the rail.~~ Horses should be worked for the amount of time necessary to evaluate each gait in each direction, taking into account the stress on the exhibitor and/or leader-side-walkers. The judge could choose to have the horse(s) walk briefly before resuming the jog/trot and completing the judging. The horses in the EWD supported classes are judged doing their jobs in spite of

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the challenges that may be presented due to the type of support or adaptive equipment that is required. Neither the amount of support and type of EWD acceptable adaptive equipment nor the unique characteristics of a specific exhibitor's disability should enter into the judging criteria. Excessive handling will be penalized. Horses requiring minimal assistance from the handler should be credited.

## **EQUESTRIANS WITH DISABILITIES SHOWMANSHIP AT HALTER**

### **EQUIPMENT AND ATTIRE**

- 364.** Class can be shown English or western attire but must be one way or the other. There will be no mixing of attire or equipment on a horse/exhibitor. It is recommended to use a plain leather halter and plain lead for English attire. A plain leather halter or sterling silver mounted leather halter with leather lead is recommended for western attire. The use of a chain is permitted but discouraged. No bridles and/or bits and/or lip chains may be used.

### **CLASS FORMAT**

- 365.** All exhibitors may enter the ring and then work individually or each exhibitor may be worked from the gate individually. When exhibitors are worked individually from the gate, a working order is required.

### **INDIVIDUAL PATTERNS**

- 366.** The judge may select an appropriate EWD pattern. In the event that the judge in concert with the show management develops a pattern instead of using existing EWD pattern(s) the following are unacceptable maneuvers: back in a curved line, pull turns. No exhibitor will be disqualified except for safety reasons at the judge's discretion. Exhibitors going off pattern will be penalized and placed at the bottom of the class.

### **SCORING**

- 367.** Scoring will be on a basis of 0-infinity with 70 denoting an average performance. Refer to Showmanship At Halter rules 172-175 for description and scoring.

## **WALK/TROT HUNT SEAT EQUITATION ON THE FLAT – Independent or Supported**

### **CLASS FORMAT**

- 368.** All exhibitors must enter the ring and then work indi-

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vidually, or each exhibitor may be worked from the gate individually. When exhibitors are worked individually from the gate, a working order is required. Exhibitors should be instructed to either leave the arena, fall into line, or fall into place on the rail after their individual work. The whole class, or just the finalists, must work at the appropriate gaits at least one direction of the arena.

### **INDIVIDUAL PATTERNS**

**369.** The judge must select an appropriate EWD pattern.

### **SCORING**

**370.** Scoring will be on a basis of 0-infinity with 70 denoting an average performance. Refer to Hunt Seat Equitation rules 241-245 for description and scoring.

## **WALK/TROT/CANTER HUNT SEAT EQUITATION ON THE FLAT – Independent**

### **CLASS FORMAT**

**371.** All exhibitors must enter the ring and then work individually, or each exhibitor may be worked from the gate individually. When exhibitors are worked individually from the gate, a working order is required. Exhibitors should be instructed to either leave the arena, fall into line, or fall into place on the rail after their individual work. The whole class, or just the finalists, must work at the appropriate gaits at least one direction of the arena.

### **INDIVIDUAL PATTERNS**

**372.** The judge may select an appropriate EWD pattern. In the event that the judge in concert with the show management develops a walk/trot/canter hunt seat equitation pattern instead of using existing EWD pattern(s). Unacceptable maneuvers: mount or dismount or drop or pick-up irons without stopping, address reins, hand gallop, or counter-canter.

### **SCORING**

**373.** Scoring will be on a basis of 0-infinity with 70 denoting an average performance. Refer to Hunt Seat Equitation rules 241-245 for description and scoring.

## **WALK/TROT HUNTER UNDER SADDLE – Independent or Supported**

### **CLASS FORMAT**

**374.** Exhibitors will compete on the rail at a walk and trot both ways of the ring, line up. No extended gaits.



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Exhibitors are required to back ~~will back in the line up not the rail~~. Refer to Hunter Under Saddle rules 216-217 for description and scoring.

## **WALK/TROT/CANTER HUNTER UNDER SADDLE – INDEPENDENT**

### **CLASS FORMAT**

- 375.** Exhibitors will compete on the rail at a walk, trot and canter both ways of the ring, line up. No extended gaits. Exhibitors are required to ~~will back in the line up not the rail~~. Refer to Hunter Under Saddle rules 216-217 for description and scoring.

## **WALK/JOG WESTERN HORSEMANSHIP – Independent or Supported**

### **CLASS FORMAT**

- 376.** All exhibitors must enter the ring and then work individually, or each exhibitor may be worked from the gate individually. When exhibitors are worked individually from the gate, a working order is required. Exhibitors should be instructed to either leave the arena, fall into line, or fall into place on the rail after their individual work. The whole class, or just the finalists, must work at the appropriate gaits at least one direction of the arena.

### **INDIVIDUAL PATTERNS**

- 377.** The judge must select an appropriate EWD pattern.

### **SCORING**

- 378.** Scoring will be on a basis of 0-infinity with 70 denoting an average performance. Refer to Horsemanship rules 157-161 for description and scoring.

## **WALK/JOG/LOPE WESTERN HORSEMANSHIP – Independent**

### **CLASS FORMAT**

- 379.** All exhibitors must enter the ring and then work individually, or each exhibitor may be worked from the gate individually. When exhibitors are worked individually from the gate, a working order is required. Exhibitors should be instructed to either leave the arena, fall into line, or fall into place on the rail after their individual work. The whole class, or just the finalists, must work at the appropriate gaits at least one direction of the arena.

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## INDIVIDUAL PATTERNS

- 380.** The judge may select an appropriate EWD pattern. In the event that the judge in concert with the show management develops a walk/jog/lope western horsemanship pattern instead of using existing EWD pattern(s). Unacceptable maneuvers: mount or dismount or ride without stirrups, back in a curved line, spins, rollbacks on the haunches and/or on the forehead;

## SCORING

- 381.** Scoring will be on a basis of 0-infinity with 70 denoting an average performance. Refer to Horsemanship rules 157-161 for description and scoring.

## WALK/JOG WESTERN PLEASURE – Independent or Supported

### CLASS FORMAT

- 382.** Exhibitor will compete on the rail at a walk and jog both ways of the ring, line up. No extended gaits. Exhibitors are required to back. Refer to Western Pleasure rules 145-149 for description and judging.

## WALK/JOG/LOPE WESTERN PLEASURE – Independent

- 383.** Exhibitor will compete on the rail at a walk, jog and lope both ways of the ring, line up. No extended gaits. Exhibitors are required to ~~will back in the line up not the rail.~~ Refer to Western Pleasure rules 145-149 for description and judging.

## EWD WALK/JOG/TROT TRAIL HORSE CLASS – Independent or Supported

### EQUIPMENT AND ATTIRE

- 384.** Class can be shown English or western attire but must be one way or the other. There will be no mixing of attire or equipment on a horse/exhibitor.

### CLASS FORMAT

- 385.** This class will be judged on the performance of the horse and while maneuvering a minimum of 5 obstacles for walk/trot/jog trail. Exhibitors are to work individually. There will be no rail work.
- a) The following are unacceptable:
- 1) Carrying an object
  - 2) Water hazard
  - 3) Slicker
  - 4) Mailbox

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## SCORING

- 386.** Scoring will be on the basis of 0-infinity, with 70 denoting an average performance. Each maneuver will be scored from a plus 1 1/2 to a minus 1 1/2, in 1/2 point increments. An obstacle missed, refused or taken out of order will result in a score of zero for that obstacle but will not disqualify entry.
- 387.** Excessive handling will be penalized. Horses requiring minimal assistance from the handler should be credited.

## EWD WALK/JOG/TROT/LOPE TRAIL HORSE CLASS – Independent

### EQUIPMENT AND ATTIRE

- 388.** Class can be shown English or western attire but must be one way or the other. There will be no mixing of attire or equipment on a horse/exhibitor.

### CLASS FORMAT

- 389.** This class will be judged on the performance of the horse and while maneuvering minimum of 6 obstacles for walk/trot/jog/canter/lope trail. Exhibitors are to work individually. There will be no rail work.

### COURSE

- 390.** Safety should be the first consideration in designing and setting up the course. Unacceptable maneuvers: carrying an object, water hazard, slicker, mailbox.

### SCORING

- 391.** Scoring will be on the basis of 0-infinity, with 70 denoting an average performance. Each maneuver will be scored from a plus 1 1/2 to a minus 1 1/2, 1/2 point increments. An obstacle missed, refused or taken out of order will result in a score of zero for that obstacle but will not disqualify entry.
- 392.** Excessive handling will be penalized. Horses requiring minimal assistance from the handler should be credited.
- 393.** This class is to be run with a walk in patterns only.

### TITLES & AWARDS

- 394. TITLES RESERVED.** The following titles shall be reserved for exclusive use by NSBA: NSBA WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW, NSBA WORLD CHAMPION HORSE and NSBA RESERVE WORLD CHAMPION HORSE; NSBA INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW, NSBA INTERNATIONAL CHAMPION HORSE and NSBA RESERVE INTERNATIONAL CHAMPION HORSE; and NSBA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW, NSBA NATIONAL CHAMPION HORSE and NSBA RESERVE NATIONAL CHAMPION HORSE.

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- 395. 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 points required to receive an award 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)*
- a)** Longe Line horses are eligible for NSBA year-end awards. However; final points should include no more than five (5) NSBA approved events during a given year. Points will be calculated from the horse's top five (5) performances.
- 396.** The NSBA will present National High Point Awards to the top riders earning the most points in NSBA approved events, per calendar year. For a complete list of awards visit [www.nsba.com](http://www.nsba.com)
- 397.** If a horse is sold, the points will continue on that horse, provided that the following requirements are met:
- a)** The new owner is a member of the NSBA or becomes a member within 30 days of the transfer or before the next time the horse is shown, whichever comes first.
- b)** The office is notified of the change in writing and provided with a copy of the horse's registration papers showing new ownership.
- 398.** 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)** Total horses placed over;
  - 2)** Total prize money won;
  - 3)** In head to head competition, the horse or rider that placed higher the most times.
- b)** Should there be a tie in total points for the purpose of year-end awards calculations in the Longe Line categories, the following tie-breakers will be used:
- 1)** The horse that has earned the most points at the lesser number of shows
  - 2)** The horse that has earned the most money at the lesser number of shows.