

1. **General Competition Rules:**

- 1.1. Competition is open to all breeds and disciplines.
- 1.2. Only one horse may be in the arena during a class.
- 1.3. Reruns shall be granted if the timer fails to work properly, if the obstacles are not placed properly or if there are any other situations that show producers deems may have had a negative impact on a run.
- 1.4. Show Producers have the right to disqualify any uncontrolled horse and/or a rider that may present a danger to other contestants, riders abusing their horse.
- 1.5. The same horse may not be ridden by more than one rider in the same class on the same day.

2. **Scoring**

- 2.1. Obstacle performance results are judged on a 0-10 scale for horse and rider. Scoring is based on the partnership's ability to complete the obstacles and navigate the course as outlined in General Judging Criteria. Course is timed, but time will be used only to determine placings in the event of a tie.

3. **Timed Course**

- 3.1. Time for course completion is used only to break ties.

4. **Refusals**

- 4.1. An obstacle may include multiple refusals. If multiple attempts have failed and time is excessive, the judge will 'call off' a rider, and the rider must proceed to the next obstacle.

5. **Stallions**

- 5.1. Stallions may compete in adult and open classes. No youth shall exhibit a stallion in any class.

6. **Horse Age Requirements**

- 6.1. The minimum age of a horse to compete under saddle is 2 years, as determined using the standard January 1st age progression. (A horse born in April is considered 1-year old on January first). There is no maximum age for a horse competing.

7. **Reruns**

- 7.1. Allowing reruns is determined by the Judge, reruns may be allowed in instances of equipment failure. When equipment failure causes a delay or a run to be discontinued, the judge may disqualify the entry. Reruns are at the Judge's discretion and are not required.

8. **Tack and Attire**

- 8.1. Attire
  - 8.1.1. Riding boots with a closed toe and heel are required at all times when handling or riding.
- 8.2. Tack and Equipment
  - 8.2.1. Halters, cavessons, bosals, bosalitas, tie-downs or nosebands are allowed to be worn under a bridle.

- 8.2.2. Fly masks, ear protectors, nose nets are acceptable, noseband tightness rules apply and must not interfere with equipment.
- 8.2.3. Weighted reins, rein chains, or slobber straps are allowed on any style headstall/bit.
- 8.2.4. A horse may be ridden bitless with no penalty. Bitless headstalls that apply compressive pressure and mechanical hackamores are not allowed.
- 8.2.5. When a Curb strap is used, it may be natural, synthetic, or smooth flat chain. Curb straps will be adjusted to allow a minimum of two fingers flat between the chin and the strap.
- 8.2.6. Splint boots are recommended and allowed.
- 8.2.7. Youth must wear helmets at all times when mounted

**9. Riders Meeting**

- 9.1. A riders meeting must be held before Trail Challenge starts to introduce the judge, to give a description of the course, to describe how the course will be judged, and to answer any questions riders might have before beginning the course. It is recommended all participants attend the riders meeting.

**10. General Judging Criteria**

- 10.1. Negotiating the Obstacle
  - 10.1.1. Horse and rider teams should negotiate the obstacle with calmness and patience, moving safely through the obstacle, negotiating the obstacle with proper horsemanship, finesse and an appropriate rate of progress.
  - 10.1.2. Horse should proceed at the rider's cue without hesitation.
    - 10.1.2.1. Points will be deducted for spooking, disobedience, stepping away, prolonged hesitation, or refusal.
  - 10.1.3. Rider balanced and in control
    - 10.1.3.1. Points will be deducted for being unbalanced or out of control.
  - 10.1.4. Hands on Reins:
    - 10.1.4.1. Soft use of reins/bit will be rewarded. Reward rider that allows horse full use of his head, neck, and eyesight to negotiate obstacles, especially on the trail; hills, ravines, down-fall etc. Reward rider for using one hand on a leverage/shank bit effectively with finesse.
    - 10.1.4.2. Penalize use of reins/bit that cause horses to raise or throw their head up, gaping mouths, hollowed out backs etc.
    - 10.1.4.3. Reins may be held with one hand or two hands. Hands may be changed, and reins may be adjusted in a smooth manner as needed to maneuver through the obstacle. Reins may cross over and/or be bridged.
  - 10.1.5. A good attitude of the horse is most desirable.
    - 10.1.5.1. Points will be deducted for excessive swishing of the tail, pinning ears, pawing, kicking, ears flat back, bucking, biting, or opening their mouth and arguing with their rider.

- 10.1.6. A calm, patient, willing horse is most desirable.
  - 10.1.6.1. Points will be deducted for anxiousness, nervousness, or rushing.
- 10.1.7. Balanced forward and backward balanced movement is most desirable.
  - 10.1.7.1. Points will be deducted for breaking cadence and unbalanced motion.
- 10.1.8. Subtle and refined cues will score higher than obvious cues.
  - 10.1.8.1. Points will be deducted for excessive cues (hand, leg, verbal, etc.) or any harsh use of bits or spurs.
- 10.1.9. Missed obstacles or completing course out of order.
  - 10.1.9.1. Points will be deducted for missed obstacles for each occurrence.
  - 10.1.9.2. An added obstacle or completed out of order will receive the deduction for each occurrence.