Special Olympics Minnesota
2019 Equestrian Handbook
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New in 2019

• C1 level added for barrels and pole weaving
• New order of events at state

Practice ideas, skill development and rules can be found in the SOI Equestrian Coaching Guide and SOI Equestrian Rules.

https://www.specialolympics.org/our-work/sports/equestrian
Special Olympics
Minnesota
Equestrian Handbook

The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Equestrian shall govern all Special Olympics competitions. As an international sports program, Special Olympics has created these rules based upon Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI) rules for equestrian found at http://www.fei.org FEI or National Governing Body (NGB) rules shall be employed except when they are in conflict with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Equestrian or Article I. In such cases, the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Equestrian shall apply.

**RULES of Competition**

Equestrian athletes are separated by age and class-level. All athletes compete according to ability. A maximum of eight riders are allowed per class. All riders must have had at least 10 riding training sessions within the six months prior to competition. Entries must be received by the event management on or before the entry deadline. No post entries will be allowed. No dogs will be permitted on the show grounds, except service dogs. Service dogs must be approved by event management, confined to a 6 ft. leash and not permitted within 20 ft. of riding arena or horses.

**Spotters**

Spotters, appointed by the event director, will remain in strategic places in the competition area to act in case of emergency for unassisted riders. Other attendants are not allowed in the competition ring except at the request of the judge(s) or when specified in the event requirements. Delegations are allowed to use their coaches as spotters, please notify Kris Kelly prior to competition.

**Assistance**

Outside assistance (rail side coaching) will be penalized at the judge’s discretion. Electronic communication devices used for the purpose of communicating between riders and individuals outside the ring are prohibited. Cue cards may be used for hearing impaired athletes. In order for the cues to be universal, they should be designated as follows: 1=Walk, 2=Sititng Trot/Jog, 3=Posting Trot, 4=Canter/Lope, 0=Reverse, Universal Stop Sign=Halt. A reader may be requested for C supported riders at coaches meeting but needs to be provided by the delegation.

**Horses**

A rider must use the same horse in all events during the entire competition if it’s their own. Change of horse is only allowed for safety reasons or if a horse is sick or unsound. The official veterinarian’s decision, if called by the judge, as to the serviceable soundness of a horse will be final for the purpose of awarding medals and ribbons in the class for which the vet was called. Otherwise, the judge(s) and the equine director will make the final decision regarding a horse’s ability to compete. Horses provided by event management will be the best size and fit for athlete. Multiple riders will be assigned to event provided horses.
TACK

All personal horses must provide their own tack. Saddles must fit the horse. Appropriate equipment is provided by the competition management in agreement with the horse owner. An athlete may use his/her own saddle only if it fits the horse he/she is riding. Adapted and personally owned saddles must be approved by the event director and horse owner prior to the competition. Western tack for Western riders and English tack for English riders is allowed. Dressage tack will be allowed for English riders.

Bridles must be appropriate to the class entered and meet the rule requirements. A lead line must be attached to the halter and not to the bridle. The halter may be over or under the bridle as long as it doesn’t interfere with the use of the bit or the reins.

Riders may use adaptive equipment without penalty. (Note: Riders may in no way be attached to the horse or saddle.) Adaptive equipment must be approved prior to competition with Kris Kelly. English riders must provide their own stirrups leather and irons.

Prohibited Tack and Equipment (applies to warm-up as well as competition):
- Bearing, side or running reins
- Seat covers—if an athlete needs a seat cover, contact Kris Kelly
- Blinders
- Nose covers

Judging

Riders will be judged on:
- Control of horse
- Balance and seat
- Proper use of aids
- Ability to follow directions
- Ring etiquette
- Safety awareness
- Sportsmanlike conduct
- Walk, trot, and canter (when appropriate)
- Stop
- Turn
- Backup

Obstacles are judged on:
- Proper execution of obstacles and pattern
- Control of the horse
- Balance and seat
- Safety awareness
- Sportsmanlike conduct

Credit is given to the horses navigating the obstacles correctly while responding to the rider’s cues. If an excessive amount of time happens between obstacles, the judge will move the horse to the next obstacle. Unauthorized assistance by horse handler/coach/side walkers may result in penalty to riders.

In order to provide a true horse show experience, penalties will be assessed based upon judge’s discretion. Penalties will occur if horses are three strides off their gait within their designated class. Leaders are meant to keep horses in the patterns and not to lead through a pattern.
Attire

All riders must wear riding boots. Riders who need to wear other footwear must have a physician’s statement submitted prior to competition. Riding boots, a sleeved shirt, long pants, and a helmet are the only required attire. Below is an extended list of attire for both riding classes.

All rides must wear protective SEI-ASTM or BHS approved helmets with a full chin strap which must be fastened at all times when the riders are working around horses.

English

- A short, dark colored riding coat.
- A conservative color, preferably white, riding shirt or Oxford style long or short sleeved shirt.
- Tie or choker optional.
- Breeches or jodhpurs.
- Gloves are optional.
- Spurs are optional and must be approved by the horse owner.
- In case of inclement weather, athletes will be permitted to wear a hat cover and a conservative raincoat.
- In extreme heat (above 80 degrees), the judges may permit athletes to show without riding coats.
- Boots with heels.
- Approved helmet.

Western

- Pants/Jeans
- A long sleeved shirt
- A belt under loops
- Neckties, kerchiefs, bolos, chaps and gloves are optional.
  - Chaps are prohibited in all gymkhana events and showmanship classes.
  - A western type hat worn on an approved helmet is optional.
- Boots or shoes with a slick sole and heel are recommended.
- Spurs are optional

Biteless bridles may be used for Western competition. Otherwise, bit must consist of a metal bar varying from the straight bar to the jointed mouth piece. Nothing may extend below the horizontal plane of the mouthpiece other than a roller attached to the center of the bit. 8 ½ inch shank maximum (from top to bottom). Hackamores are only allowed in game class (barrel & pole). Reins must be attached to each shank. If using shanked bit, a one handed ride is preferred. A snaffle bit may be used regardless of the horse’s age. In this instance a two handed ride is acceptable.

Obstacles & Patterns

There are a minimum of six elements. They may include gates, four logs to ride over (not elevated), walking in and backing out of a straight chute, ride through serpentine obstacles at any gate capable, carrying an object from one place to another, bridge, box, L ground poles, side pass, haunch or forehand turns, etc.
ENGLISH AND WESTERN EVENTS: Game (Barrel & Poles)

General Information
- Only A1, B1 and C1 riders may register for barrel racing or pole weaving
- Athletes must provide their own horse at state for barrel racing or pole weaving

Tack
- Saddles and bridles as required in Equitation classes.
- Prohibited equipment:
  - Lariat or reata
  - Hackamores
  - Tie-downs
  - Draw reins
  - Bosals
  - Wire, metal or rawhide device as part of leather chin strap
  - Shoes other than standard horse shoes

Execution of Game Events
- All events are timed. The winner will be the competitor with the fastest time.
- Riders are required to start the course inside an enclosed ring and may not start until after all gates are closed and secured. Gates may not be opened until the rider has completed the course and returned to a walk or halt.
- Time begins as the horse's nose crosses the starting line.
- Time is complete when the horse's nose crosses the finish line.
- A 5 second penalty will be added to the time for each of the following:
  - Knocking over a pole or barrel. (An athlete is allowed to touch a pole or barrel with his/her hand with no penalty as long as the pole or barrel stays upright.)
  - Each 3 strides over the allotted gait for that division (example: trot to canter).
- A disqualification will be assessed for the following:
  - Failure to follow the course.
  - Failure to cross the start/finish line between markers.
  - Failure to have the chin strap on the athlete's helmet properly fastened for the entire time he/she is in the arena.
  - Recrossing the start/finish line after completing the course.
  - Excessive use of a bat, crop, whip or rope, as determined by the judge.
- In the event of a tie, there will be a run-off using the same course. The competitor declared the winner in the run-off must re-run the pattern within 5 seconds of his/her original time or the run-off must be held again.

Facilities and Set-up
- Riders must use their own horses for both barrel and pole competitions.
- Whenever possible, starting line markers or electric timers should be placed against the arena wall.
- The start/finish line must be clearly marked.
- The course must be measured exactly.
- 21 feet between poles and 21 feet from start line to first poles.
General Information

- The emphasis in the Showmanship class should be on the athlete’s ability to handle and show the horse, with safety as the main consideration. The horse is merely a prop to show the ability of the showman.
- Athletes showing horses under Western Tack Style may use a halter and lead shank made of leather or nylon. Chain leads are acceptable. Western attire, including an approved safety helmet, is appropriate.
- Athletes showing horses under English Tack Style may use a suitable English bridle or halter of either leather or nylon. English attire, including an approved safety helmet, is appropriate.
- The Quarter method of showmanship will be used. The following suggested guidelines of movement are meant to serve as an illustration of movement around the horse while showing in Showmanship classes and are for the exhibitors’/coaches’ information.
  - Imaginary lines bisect the horse into 4 equal parts, as seen in the figure. (Note: The quadrants will be numbered I, II, III and IV for ease of identification).
  - One line runs across the horse just behind the withers.
  - The other imaginary line runs from head to tail.
  - The athlete should move around the horse in the following manner:
    - When the judge is in I, the handler should be in IV.
    - As the judge moves to II, the handler should move to I.
    - When the judge moves to III, the handler moves to IV.
    - As the judge moves up the horse to IV, the handler returns once more to I.

This method of showmanship is based on safety, as the handler can keep the horse’s hindquarter from swinging toward the judge should the horse become fractious.
- Show management must post individual test patterns a minimum of one hour before the class is to be held.
- The following maneuvers are considered acceptable elements for individual test patterns:
  - Lead the horse at a walk or jog/trot
  - Back in a straight or curved line
  - Halt
  - Pivot or turn—quarter, half or full (360 degrees)
  - Set up square
Facilities and Set-up

- Three barrels are set in a triangle, using the following measurements:
  - Barrels 1 and 2 are set 27.43m (90') apart and 18.29m (60') from the start/finish line.
  - Barrel 3 is set in the center (as the top of a triangle) 32m (105') away from barrels 1 and 2. See layout diagram.
- If the course is too large for the available space, the pattern should be reduced in increments of 4.57m (15’) until it fits into the arena. Remember to leave adequate space between barrels and any obstacles. The distance from Barrel 3 to the finish line need not be reduced by these increments if there is sufficient room for the horse to stop.
- When measuring the area for the barrel course, remember to leave ample room for horses to complete their turns.
- Allow at least 13.77m (25’) from the start/finish line to the end of the arena.
- Upright poles should mark the start/finish line.
- Brightly colored 55 gallon plastic or metal drums may be used.
Execution of the Course
The barrel course may be run either right or left. The instructions are written right.
  • At a signal from the starter, the athlete will:
    o Run barrel number 1, passing to the left of it and completing an approximately 360 degree turn around it.
    o Go to barrel number 2, passing to the right of it and completing a slightly more than 360 degree turn around it.
    o Go to barrel number 3, passing to the right of it and completing an approximately 360 degree turn around it.
    o Then, sprint to the finish line, passing between barrels 1 and 2.

Stock Seat Equitation

General Information
  • Any or all riders may be required to execute appropriate tests included in the class requirements. Tests may be performed either collectively or individually.
  • Individual patterns consisting of a combination of elements may be called for.
  • Judges are encouraged to call for at least two tests to be performed. 15.5.1.4 Riders will not be asked to change horses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Guidelines Only</th>
<th>Mandatory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seat</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Keeping center of balance Complete contact with saddle Straight Back</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor Faults</td>
<td>Sitting off center Sway back Round back Losing center of balance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Faults</td>
<td>Excessive body motion Popping out of saddle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elimination</td>
<td>At judges discretion Fall to the ground of horse or rider</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hands</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiet hands</td>
<td>Maintaining consistent head position</td>
<td>Horse’s mouth gaping Heavy hands Constant bumping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsteadiness</td>
<td>Restrictions causing untrue gaits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure leg position Proper weight in stirrups Controlling motion Weight evenly on ball of foot Heels lower than toes</td>
<td>Interfering with another rider Excessive spurring Loss of contact between legs &amp; saddle foot &amp; stirrup Coming in contact with fence or other riders</td>
<td>At judges discretion Fall to the ground of horse or rider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uneven stirrups Motion in legs Insufficient weight in stirrups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining horse in good form at consistent gaits Ability to maintain horse under adverse conditions</td>
<td>Breaking from walk to jog Breaking from jog to lope Not standing in line up</td>
<td>breaking from jog to walk Breaking from lope to jog Allowing horse to back crooked Missing leads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Appearance</strong></td>
<td>Suitable well-fitted outfit Well-groomed horse Clean equipment</td>
<td>Saddle not suitable to rider’s size Unfitted outfit Dirty boots</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Western Trail

General Information
- This contest is neither a stunt nor a race but should be performed with reasonable speed.
- Western riding is a competition in the performance and characteristics of a good, sensible, well-mannered, free and easy moving horse.
- Horses will be judged on riding qualities of the gaits and change of lead (simple, interrupted or flying), and the athlete's ability to influence the horse.

**WESTERN TRAIL JUDGING GUIDELINES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trail</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Minor Faults</th>
<th>Major Faults</th>
<th>Elimination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Walk</strong></td>
<td>Consistency of gait</td>
<td>Inconsistency of gait</td>
<td>Break of gait</td>
<td>At judges discretion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jog/Trot</td>
<td>Clear transitions</td>
<td>Wrong lead at lope</td>
<td>Failure to perform gait</td>
<td>Fall to the ground of horse or rider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lope/Canter</td>
<td></td>
<td>or canter</td>
<td>called for</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(on the course)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control Obstacles</strong></td>
<td>Smooth</td>
<td>Slight touches</td>
<td>Knock down elevated elements</td>
<td>At judges’ discretion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gates Back</td>
<td>Good position</td>
<td>Slant side passes</td>
<td>Stepping out of confining elements</td>
<td>Fall to the ground of horse or rider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plush Side</td>
<td>Responsive</td>
<td>Wide positions</td>
<td>Losing gait</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>passes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Slow response</td>
<td>Fussiness and extreme tension</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turns on</td>
<td></td>
<td>Backing crooked</td>
<td>Refusals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forehead and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>headquarters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serpentine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agility Obstacles</strong></td>
<td>Attentive</td>
<td>Slight touches</td>
<td>Knock downs</td>
<td>At judges’ discretion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk over</td>
<td>Careful</td>
<td>Too hesitant</td>
<td>Refusals</td>
<td>Fall to the ground of horse or rider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trot or lope</td>
<td>Willing</td>
<td>Failure to stay on</td>
<td>Failure to maintain gaits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavalettis</td>
<td>Low poll</td>
<td>center lines</td>
<td>Off side of bridge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridges</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Calmness Obstacles</strong></td>
<td>Steady going</td>
<td>Tense over or</td>
<td>Jumping over or stampeding thru</td>
<td>At judges’ discretion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic</td>
<td>Alert Careful</td>
<td>thru obstacles</td>
<td>obstacles</td>
<td>Fall to the ground of horse or rider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brush</td>
<td>but willing Low poll</td>
<td>Spooking when</td>
<td>Refusals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plants</td>
<td></td>
<td>carrying objects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.3 Carrying objects</td>
<td>Calm when carrying objects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All horses with clean or minor faults trips will be considered before major fault horses.
Equestrian Divisioning

It should be noted that all riders compete according to ability. Equestrian athletes are not separated by gender or by age. According to the Special Olympics Sports Rules, divisions should consist of 3–8 riders.

Athletes are divided based upon their ability to perform a series of patterns with their horse. SOMN levels for competition:
- A1: Can perform walk, trot and canter independently
- B1: Can perform walk and trot independently
- BS/B3: Can perform walk and trot supported
- C1: Can perform walk independently
- CS/C2: Can perform walk supported

Please note that all B1 independent riders that have a physical disability prohibiting them from the trot will be listed as C1 riders. The same for BS riders—they will be in CS/C2.

EVENT INFORMATION

Area Competitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Registration Deadline</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area 3</td>
<td>July 21</td>
<td>North Country RIDE</td>
<td>Esko</td>
<td>July 7</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dani.druse@somn.org">dani.druse@somn.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area 5</td>
<td>July 14</td>
<td>Spirit Horse Center</td>
<td>Brainerd</td>
<td>June 30</td>
<td><a href="mailto:leah.wolkow@somn.org">leah.wolkow@somn.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

State Competition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Registration Deadline</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 16</td>
<td>Northwest Saddle Club</td>
<td>North Branch</td>
<td>July 28</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dani.druse@somn.org">dani.druse@somn.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

State Competition Information

- Athletes should have completed at least 10 training session prior to state competition.
- Bib numbers must be worn by athletes.
- Practice runs will be available the Thursday prior to competition.
- Stalling is available for competition ($20/stall, $8/bag of shavings). Contact Kris Kelly. Must bring hay, grain, blankets, etc. for stalling.
- Athletes will be separated by age.
- Athletes must have their own horse for showmanship, barrel racing and pole weaving events.
- Athletes may enter up to three events in either Western or English style.
- No dogs are allowed near arena (with exception to service dogs). Dogs must be leashed at all times and kept by personal trailers.
- **2019 order of events will be English events first followed by Western Events**
A & B1 WALK/TROT PATTERN

Walk over logs

22"
22"
22"

Walk into box, 360° to right

Walk at cone

Trot to cones

Stop & back up at cones

Walk to exit

Exit

Trot Serpentine around cones

10'

Trot

4'

Walk through

Start
B2, B3 & C WALK PATTERN

Walk over logs

Walk to cones

Stop & back up at cones

Walk to exit

Exit

Walk into box, 360° to right

Walkover 22"

Walk over 22"

Walk over 22"

Walk to cones

Walk Serpentine around cones

10'

Walk

Walk through

4'

Start

Walk through

Horse
SHOWMANSHIP A & B1 LEVEL RIDERS

1. Start at cone A
2. Walk to cone B
3. Trot to cone C and continue trotting to the judge
4. Stop and set up for inspection
5. When released, do a 90° pivot to the right and trot back to exit gate
SHOWMANSHIP B3, C1 & C2 LEVEL RIDERS

1. Start at cone A
2. Walk to cone C and continue walking to the judge
3. Stop and set up for inspection
4. When released, do a 90° pivot to the right and leave the arena at a walk
A horse may start either to the right or to the left of the first pole and then run the remainder of the pattern accordingly. These instructions are written for a horse starting to the right of the first pole. At the signal from the starter, the athlete will:

1. Start to the right of the first pole.
2. Weave the poles, passing them alternately left to right until reaching the last pole.
3. Turn the last pole to the right.
4. Weave the poles, passing alternately right then left until reaching the first pole and cross the finish line.
The barrel course may be run either right or left. The instructions are written right. At a signal from the starter, the athlete will:

1. Run barrel number 1, passing to the left of it and completing an approximately 360 degree turn around it.
2. Go to barrel number 2, passing to the right of it and completing a slightly more than 360 degree turn around it.
3. Go to barrel number 3, passing to the right of it and completing an approximately 360 degree turn around it.
4. Then, sprint to the finish line, passing between barrels 1 and 2.