

In Hand Obstacle Challenge

PERSONAL ATTIRE AND APPOINTMENTS

- A. Required**
 - 1. Approved protective helmet is required under 18 years of age
 - 2. Appropriate footwear with distinguishable heel
- B. Optional/Preferred**
 - 1. Approved protective helmet 18 years of age and older
 - 2. Gloves
- C. Prohibited**
 - 1. Tank tops, sleeveless shirts, shorts

TACK AND EQUIPMENT

- A. Required**
 - 1. Properly fitted halter with lead
- B. Prohibited**
 - 1. Chain Leads
 - 2. Bridles
 - 3. Crops, Whips or Sticks
- C. Specifications**
 - 1. The judge will evaluate the tack on the horse when it enters the arena.
 - 2. Horses are permitted to wear protective boots, leg wraps or other leg gear.

GENERAL SPECIFICATIONS

- A.** Any minor (under the age of 18) may have a Spotter enter the ring at the discretion of a parent or guardian. Spotter may not assist in completion of the obstacles.
- B.** Beginner exhibitors have the option of having the course called out by a Course Reader.
- C.** Intermediate and Advanced exhibitors must memorize the course.
- D.** This competition is designed to demonstrate responsiveness & communication between horse and handler. You may be asked to perform such maneuvers as backing through an “L”, side passing over a log, going over a series of poles, navigating a bridge, opening and closing a gate, etc. Routes through the course will be the same for each competitor. Degree of difficulty of maneuvers will vary between divisions.
- E.** All horses are judged from the time they enter the arena until the completion of the last obstacle.
- F.** The horse should travel through and between obstacles with inquisitive desire to go forward without compromising its calm, relaxed attitude and way of going. It should approach each obstacle squarely with authority and correct form, with its own style, yet maintaining its willingness to be dictated to completely by the exhibitor with no apparent resistance.

- G. A horse deemed unruly to the point of endangering itself or others may be disqualified at the decision of the management or judge.

CLARIFICATION OF GAITS - The following descriptions constitute the approved standard for performance of each of the recommended gaits in the In Hand Obstacle Challenge.

- A. **Walk** - A free, regular, and unconstrained walk of moderate length is required. The equine should walk energetically but calmly, with even and determined steps. **(Required all divisions)**
- B. **Trot/Jog/Intermediate Gait** - The equine should go forward freely and straight, engaging the hind legs with good hock action, the position being balanced and unconstrained. The steps should be as even as possible, maintaining a steady cadence. The degree of energy and impulsion displayed denotes clearly the suppleness and balance of the equine. **(Required Intermediate/Advanced divisions)**
- C. **Halt** – Equine should be brought to a complete square stop without abruptness or veering. At the halt, the equine should stand attentive, motionless and straight, with the weight evenly distributed over all four legs, and be ready to move off at the slightest indication from the exhibitor. **(Required all divisions)**
- D. **Rein back** - This is backwards movement in which the legs are raised and set down simultaneously in diagonal pairs with the hind legs remaining well in line. To be performed in two parts: 1) rein back at least six steps (**Beginner**), twelve steps (**Intermediate**) and as required for obstacle (**Advanced**), unhurried, with head flexed and straight, pushing back evenly in a straight line using light contact and quiet aids; and 2) move forward willingly to the former position using the same quiet aids

IN HAND, ALL EQUINES

1. All exhibitors to enter the ring in a counterclockwise direction at the walk until otherwise directed by the judge. They shall then be reversed at the walk to repeat the same procedure in that direction. The judge shall ask exhibitor to rein back and to stand quietly.
2. After completing the rail portion as described above, the participant will proceed to the first obstacle.
3. General course requirements may include, but not limited to, the following:
 - a. All obstacles performed in a specific course order. Course will be posted at 8 am.
 - b. Exhibitors will be asked to change gaits (within their division requirements) while they navigate the course.
 - c. Obstacles may include: bridge, ground poles, 18” jump/pole, maneuvering through cones, 20m circle, negotiating raincoat or tarp, mailbox, rope gate.
 - d. Exhibitors are prohibited from driving, leading, or riding their equines on the course at any time prior to the competition. It is advisable, however, for exhibitors to walk the course prior to the competition.

4. Scoring - To be lead by exhibitor over a prescribed course of obstacles. After passing the starting line, the competitor shall proceed through each obstacle to the designated finish line.

a. Obstacle Scores:

Excellent	+ 1 ½
Very Good	+ 1
Good	+ ½
Correct	0
Poor	- ½
Very Poor	- 1
Extremely Poor	- 1 ½

b. Penalties:

Each tick	½
Hit or step on	1
Incorrect or break of gait at walk or trot 2 strides or less	1
Both feet in space	1
Skip space	1
Split pole	1
Failure to meet correct strides	1
Incorrect or break of gait at walk or trot over 2 strides	3
Out of lead or break of gait at lope	3
Knockdown	3
Step out or jump off with one foot	3
Step out or jump off with two or more feet	5
Drop object	5
1 st refusal or evade	5
Loss of control of gate	5
Blatant disobedience	5
2 nd refusal or evade	5
Instill fear	5

c. Disqualification

Work obstacle wrong	Score 0
Wrong line of travel	Score 0
Working outside of course boundary	Score 0
3 rd refusal or evade	Score 0
Complete gait failure	Score 0
Failure to complete obstacle	Score 0
Excessive or repeated touching horse	Score 0
Overturms of more than ¼ turn	Score 0
No attempt to perform obstacle	Score 0
Performing obstacle out of order	Score 0
In- hand: horse gets loose or leading on the wrong side	Score 0

5. There is a ten minute time limit per course. If all obstacles are completed before the five minute time limit, the exhibitor will exit through the finish line.

6. Ties – In the event of a tie for first, second or third place, the scores for a certain number of pre-selected obstacles will be combined, and the contestants with the tied scores will be placed according to their combined scores for these obstacles.