

SYNERGY EQUESTRIAN TEAM

RIDER HANDBOOK

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WELCOME

Dear Parents and Riders,

Welcome to Synergy Equestrian Team. I would like to extend a warm welcome to the new members and parents joining our team and welcome back our returning riders. We are thrilled to have you as a part of our equestrian team. I could not be more excited for you to get to know our riders, parents, and contributing members.

You can familiarize yourself with the Interscholastic Equestrian Association (IEA) by visiting their website, rideIEA.org. This handbook explains the IEA basics and how our team operates in association. In addition to this handbook, riders should read and be familiar with IEA's rulebook. IEA does make changes each year, so it is important that riders review it each season to stay informed. I am happy to help you by answering any of your questions.

Joining our equestrian team does require commitment. Riders should be prepared to work hard throughout the season, both in and out of the saddle. You have a responsibility to yourself, your teammates, parents, and coaches to practice good horsemanship and sportsmanship. Additionally, we rely on parents to do their part in helping the team be successful. From the financials to volunteering to be present during team functions, we simply cannot be successful without the support of the parents and guardians of our riders. We encourage parents to participate in helping organize team events, fundraising, and other activities, and welcome recommendations for improving the team.

Sincerely,

Jenna Hoy Cartabuke

Owner, Synergy Equestrian

ABOUT IEA

Interscholastic Equestrian Association Mission

The mission of IEA is to introduce students in private and public grade school to equestrian sports, to provide information concerning the creation and development of school associated equestrian programs, to develop understanding and appreciation of equestrian sports through organized student competitions, and to provide students with organized competitive events and to provide additional equine educational opportunities. Also, currently, there are few opportunities for these students to earn scholarship money. Through the IEA, students may have the opportunity to earn scholarships towards their college education.

The objectives of IEA are:

- To promote the equestrian as an athlete
- To provide students with organized competitive opportunities.
- To introduce new riders to equine sports.
- To promote the IEA among middle, and secondary schools.
- To provide students with opportunities for further education in equine sports and other equine-related fields
- To encourage liaison with USA Equestrian, IHSA and other interested bodies
- To provide information concerning the creation and development of school associated mounted and non-mounted equestrian programs.
- To establish and enforce IEA rules, standards and policies
- To evolve with the continuing progress of equestrian sports.
- To generally promote the common interests of safe riding instruction and competition and education on matters related to the horse industry and all segments thereof.

The unique aspect of these competitions, both at the local and national level, is that none of the riders will supply their own horses or tack. Instead, the horses, saddle and other tack are all provided to the students at the show. The host team arranges for the horses and equipment. Some of the equipment may be borrowed from various training barns and facilities. Though the rider and horse have a short opportunity at orientation in the over fences classes, essentially, the horse is new to the rider, and the scores are based upon horsemanship, not the horse. The competitions involve six classes jumping over fences no greater than three feet and numerous flat equitation classes.

The IEA is an affiliate of the United States Equestrian Federation, the United States Hunter Jumper Association, and the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association

Structure

- IEA offers Hunt Seat, Western, and Dressage disciplines.
 - Synergy competes as a Hunt Seat Team.
- IEA is comprised of multiple Zones located regionally around the country
- Competition is open to riders in grades 4th - 12th (min age 9), who have received at least 6 months of professional riding instruction.

- Each Zone is divided into Regions based on size of the Zone
- We are in Zone 5: Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois and Kentucky
 - Regions may vary slightly year to year and are adjusted based on growth within the zone in an effort to keep the number of teams relatively consistent across all regions.

Regular Show Season

- Each rider can compete in a maximum of 5 shows during the regular season with the goal to qualify individually for Regional Finals.
- The team will typically attend 7-10 shows to allow everyone the opportunity to compete in five shows and to qualify our team for Regional Finals.
- Entries will be determined based on the availability of riders, and spaces available at shows. Show hosts are only required to accept a certain number of entries from each team
- In some cases, we may not have confirmation of how many entries are accepted until a few days before the show.
- Many shows will take place over a single day, with two shows over a single weekend. In these cases, we will generally try to split the team so everyone has the opportunity to show at least one day.
- While we do our best to accommodate riders at shows closer to us, traveling to shows 2-4 hours away will be necessary and the amount will vary depending on the show schedule and distribution of teams within our region.

Hunt Seat Varsity & Junior Varsity (Upper School, grades 9-12) Classes:

1. Varsity Open O/F (over fences) - 2'6"
2. Varsity Open Flat
3. Varsity Intermediate O/F - 2'
4. Varsity Intermediate Flat
5. JV Novice O/F - x-rails
6. JV Novice Flat
7. JV Beginner Flat - Walk/Trot/Canter
8. JV Beginner Flat - Walk/Trot*

7x/8x JV Beginner Walk/Trot Warm Up**

Hunt Seat Futures (Middle School, grades 4-8) Classes:

9. Future Intermediate O/F - 2'
10. Future Intermediate Flat
11. Future Novice O/F - x-rails
12. Future Novice Flat
13. Future Beginner Flat - Walk/Trot/Canter
14. Future Beginner Flat - Walk/Trot*

13x/14x JV Beginner Walk/Trot Warm Up**

*These classes will not be awarded team points.

**These classes will not be awarded individual or team points

Rider Placement

- The team coach will place each rider in the most appropriate class for over fences and/or flat classes based on the rider's skill level and needs of the team. Keep in mind that IEA rules and requirements are different, and a rider may be placed in a lower fence class than they are used to showing in outside of IEA. For example, if a rider is currently jumps 2'6" regularly in lessons or at horse shows, the rider according to IEA rules is eligible for the novice division.
- Riders typically compete in a single level for both flat and fences classes. Although they may place into a higher flat class in certain situations.
- Individual points are earned as followed:
 - 1st place-7 points
 - 2nd place-5 points
 - 3rd place-4 points
 - 4th place-3 points
 - 5th place-2 points
 - 6th place-1 point
- Several factors determine a rider's eligibility to remain in a division. Key factors that trigger rider advancement include:
 - If a rider accumulates 29 or more points in a class during the regular season.
 - If riders point up in over fences, they must move up in the flat as well.
 - If a rider points up in the flat, they are not required to move up over fences.
 - Competing and placing at National Finals.
 - Following 3 seasons in a division
 - Horse show record that otherwise alters eligibility as outlined by IEA*
 - Eligibility is determined at the start of the membership period for the season
- Riders entering 9th grade (Upper School) have their eligibility "reset" - they follow the rules for initial placement to determine their level, and move up to 1 level down from their futures placement. For example, a Future Intermediate 2' rider who move into 9th grade may move into JV Novice x-rails, if eligible based on the class descriptions.

Competition

- Riders compete as individuals in their assigned classes at Regular season shows.
- IEA does not require participants to own a horse. Each team is responsible for providing enough horses to allow team members to practice, lesson and show.
- Each team is required to provide horses at one to two horse shows. The teams may be responsible for bringing horses to Regionals, Zones or Nationals.

- The horses are pooled based on what classes they are appropriate for and randomly assigned to riders through a blind draw.
- Classes may be “split” once they reach 12 riders, but each split must retain at least 6 riders in order to award placing to each split.
 - Show management will make reasonable attempts to separate riders from the same team when classes are split but it is not guaranteed.
 - In some cases, classes may be split at less than 12 riders and pinned to accommodate the number of available horses.
- Riders competing over fences will have a warmup pattern consisting of 2 jumps. There is no warmup for flat riders.
- Riders are judged on equitation and horsemanship; their ability to properly execute the tests asked of them while maintaining proper form.
- Placings will be awarded (1st - 6th) and riders will receive points based on their placings that accumulate towards qualifying for post season competition.
 - 1st place-7 points
 - 2nd place-5 points
 - 3rd place-4 points
 - 4th place-3 points
 - 5th place-2 points
 - 6th place-1 points
- The team coach chooses one rider per class as the Point Rider for each show. These riders are not told who the point rider is. Any points earned by this rider will also count towards the team score. At the end of the show, the point riders’ points are added up for each team, and team points are eared as follows:

Region Finals (“Regionals”)/ Zone Semi-Finals

- Regionals are held in February or March. The time frame of the season varies depending on the date selected for National Finals. Regionals are to be held no later than 10 business days before Zones (unless special permissions are granted) and Zones must be held no later than 15 business days before National Finals.
- Riders must accumulate 18 points to qualify for Regionals, in each class they compete.
- Teams must accumulate 20 points to qualify for Regionals. Coaches determine point riders for the team at Regional Finals.
- A rider may qualify individually and also be chosen as a team representative. This means they will compete twice, in both the individual and team rounds.
- Regionals/Zone Semi-Finals are a group effort. ALL TEAMS in attendance are expected to help. This means RIDERS (and parents) not just coaches.
- Zone Semi-Finals – Regional Finals may combine with another Region(s) for a Zone Semi-Finals competition. In this case, qualified riders from the regions compete for spots at zone finals. While there are more riders competing, there are also more placings that are able to advance. The region we would compete with is decided each year based on the Zone Split guidelines.

Zone Finals ("Zones") and National Finals ("Nationals")

- Each season, the allotment of riders for each zone to advance to nationals is determined based on the amount of riders within a zone. The same system is used to determine how many riders from each region advance to zone finals. With no more than 12 entries per class at Zones and no more than 22 entries per class at Nationals
- In past years, teams and riders that advance to Zone Finals have been required to participate in raffle ticket fundraisers. This will change for the upcoming season and instead there will be a fee of \$25 due from each rider in the Zone. This will be paid to Synergy (and due at the same time as team dues) and we will submit one team check.
- Zone Finals are a group effort. Teams in attendance are obligated to assist as need in the running of the show.
- Zones may be held anywhere in Zone 5 and are typically either the 3rd or 4th weekend of March
- National Finals rotates between the Zones.

HOW OUR TEAM WORKS

SET practices throughout the year at Synergy Equestrian. All practices and lessons are run through the Synergy Equestrian lesson program. Riders are required to attend on practice and one lesson weekly throughout the season, beginning August 1st, unless other arrangements are made with coaches.

SET, as a member of IEA, is required to fulfill hosting requirements. To meet our show hosting requirements we must either Host (1) horse show OR co-host (2) horse shows. We are not limited to only those requirements and may host/co-host additional shows, if need. In either instance, full team participation is expected and required.

Additionally, riders who advance to post-season competitions are expected to help in some fashion at Regional Finals and at Zone Finals. These responsibilities are determined based on the number of riders from our and other teams that advance to those shows.

Our main form of communication is via email. It is very important that emails are checked regularly for team communication. This is especially important in the days leading up to a horse show or team event. In addition to horse shows and lessons, we strive to have fun team events throughout the year. These events range from holiday parties to team outings. Please feel free to share ideas for these!

Team Requirements

- IEA requires riders to be in a regular lesson program
- SET riders are required to attend (at minimum)
 - (1) Practice weekly
 - (1) Lesson weekly
 - The more lessons/practices riders attend, the more quickly improvements will be made and the more likely riders are to have a successful season.
- Participation in planning and implementing of SET hosted horse shows
- Other Team Expectations
 - Have appropriate show attire (see packing list)
 - Wear appropriate attire for practices
 - Breeches (schooling breeches are fine) – we recommend practicing in your tall boots if you have a schooling pair otherwise paddock boots and half chaps
 - ASTM certified helmet
 - Fitted tops – obviously in the winter this is a harder task but it is important to avoid loose fitting clothing as much as possible. Baggy clothes, such as sweatshirts, make it very difficult to critique a riders' position and form
 - AVOID: baggy t-shirts, hooded sweatshirts, oversized sweaters/sweatshirts and similar clothing that make it difficult to judge a rider's form.
 - Know IEA tests for your division & be familiar with IEA general & hunt seat rule books

SHOW DAY EXPECTATIONS

Show days can be very long. All riders, whether showing that day or not, are expected to be at the show venue by the scheduled start of schooling (typically 6:30 or 7am) or approximately a half hour before schooling starts if/when we take horses. The schooling is a great opportunity to take notes on horses' behavior and habits so if you draw that horse you have a better idea of how to ride it and improve your performance. The horse draw, coach's meeting and course walk are completed between 8:00-9:00 am, and competition typically starts at 9:00 am.

There is no set order for the competition. Each show host determines the order of competition. A common order is to start with Varsity level competition and work down with JV Beginner last. Sometimes all the jumping classes are completed followed by all the flat classes. Other times both jumping and flat classes will be completed by level. Horse shows either run fences and flat all in one day or have the option of splitting the horse show schedule into two separate days. Occasionally riders will jump Saturday and flat Sunday.

The competition day can be delayed by the need for re-rides, if injuries occur, or inclement weather. Expect the show to run until 6 pm if a one-day horse show or about 2pm if a 2-day show. These are estimated times; shows can vary greatly depending on the number of entries. The "12-Hour Rule" does mandate show managers to complete show days within 12-hours of the start of morning schooling.

Riders may be expected to attend the full day of the show. This can include watching schooling in the morning, helping coaches throughout the day, and cheering on teammates. At some shows, assisting with horses may also be required. Please plan for riders to be in attendance for the full show day. Riders should plan accordingly to ensure they can complete and studying, homework, etc.

For shows we host – ALL RIDERS are expected to attend. Any conflicts need to be addressed with coaches well in advance. Typically, hosting dates are known by mid-summer so arrangements can be made. Each rider is expected to contribute equally, and attend the full day of the show(s) whether they are showing or not. Riders will be expected to arrive early to help get horses ready. After competition ends, riders will help untack horses, load them into the trailers and transport back to farm. Riders are expected to return to barn after the show to unload horses and clean tack. If riders are unable to do so, they need to work out options with the coach. All riders are expected to participate. This will usually add an extra hour onto expected time for riders to be done with horse show.

While venues often have some type of concessions, we try to coordinate bringing in snacks. Parents should look for emails regarding this leading up to shows. Healthy snacks are strongly encouraged. We may also try to coordinate a group order if there are food options close to the venue.

FEE STRUCTURE

*****SEE ANNUAL FEE SHEET FOR CURRENT COSTS*****

IEA Membership

Annual Membership: [Paid to IEA directly]

Membership forms must be completed online. Payment is completed online before printing, please save your confirmation of payment. *Electronic signatures now being used on membership forms

Synergy Equestrian Team Membership

Annual Team Dues:

In order to simplify team payments, all regular season dues, entries, coaching fees, etc. are rolled into a single fee. Below is a breakdown of what is included in team dues.

- Entry Fees - these are set by IEA and paid to Synergy so the team can submit a single entry check at horse shows. Each class is \$55 and riders can compete in 5 shows.
 - Riders who compete in Novice, Intermediate, and Open will have a Flat & an Over Fences class at each show (2 classes each show)
 - Beginner riders (WTC or WT) will compete in their class for points and an optional warm-up class (2 classes each show)
- Coaching Fees - \$XX per show day (regular season)
- Team Expense - \$TBD; this incorporates all other costs the team incurs throughout the season, including but not limited to:
 - Team IEA Membership - team & coach membership fees to IEA
 - Co-hosting costs - transportation for horses, coverage of part of the show fees
 - Travel expenses - hotel, gas, tolls, etc. for coaches to attend shows
 - Region & Zone Fees - the team is responsible for additional fees to offset the cost of Region & Zone Finals, as well as contributing to Zone Scholarships
 - In addition to fluctuating costs due to economic factors, we will consider the costs that would be incurred for advancement to Regional, Zone & National Finals; Seasons in which these locations require more travel will affect the overall cost of the season
- Things NOT included in team dues:
 - Post-Season Entry Fees: \$70 per class for those who qualify for Regionals/Zones/Nationals
 - Lessons/Practices: all lessons and practices should be paid to the barn [Synergy Equestrian], please see lesson price sheet

*These dues will be reassessed each season in an effort to appropriately plan for expenses.

**Special arrangements for payments can be made on an individual basis. Please address unique situation with the Synergy Accountant.

***Practices and Lessons are all paid to Synergy Equestrian and are subject to Synergy's cancellation policy. Please see lesson price sheet.

PARENT & RIDER EXPECTATIONS

Parent's Expectations

- Assist with team-sponsored shows
 - Having team members at horse shows on time
 - Organizing snacks for riders, fundraiser ideas for hosted shows, etc. as needed
- Assist with all team fundraising activities
- Make sure riders are present at all lessons, shows, show preparations and team events. Assist riders with prioritizing these events and only cancel lessons for illness and/or family emergency. Re-schedule when appropriate.
- Fiscally responsible for lesson and practice fees, show and coaching fees, riding apparel, and other team expenses. Payment made on time.
- Respect the decisions of the coach(es).

Rider's Expectations

- Compete in five regular shows per season.
- Be respectful of coaches, parents and fellow riders at all times. Display good sportsmanship towards teammates.
- Attend weekly practices/lessons ready to embrace feedback and continuously improve
- Practice four times a month with the equestrian team.
- Prioritize lessons and practices. Cancel only for illness or family emergency. Re-schedule to a different day if needed.
- Attend and participate in team fundraising events.
- Be responsible for horse management/horse holding at shows
- Respect the decisions made by the coach.
- Respect other team members and parents.
- Appropriately care for horses - whether at Synergy or a host facility, treat horses with kindness and gratitude
- Have a good attitude no matter what the outcome of a lesson, practice or show.
- Enjoy yourself! Have fun!

COMMONLY USED TERMS

There are a lot of terms we use in IEA that you may not be familiar with at first. This is a quick guide to some common terms for those of you who have not participated in IEA shows before.

Flat (classes)– walk, trot, canter, no jumping

Over Fences (O/F)– jumping class; riders jump a “course” (specified sequence) of fences

(Horse) Draw – the process by which horses are selected, “drawing out of a hat”

Coaches Draw – instead of riders drawing themselves, coaches draw for all team members

Automated/Steward Draw – similar to the coaches draw but instead run by show staff with supervision from the Steward to ensure fairness and rule compliance

Steward – the “game keeper”, the Steward applies and enforces the IEA rules as needed throughout the show day. This is who grants re-rides and in most cases, has the final say in any situation that arises

In-gate person – the person at the gate of the show ring, in charge of keeping correct order of riders and letting judge/announcer know who is in the ring. They can radio the Steward if the Steward is sitting with the Judge.

Back-gate/schooling supervisor – in charge of getting people on the correct horses and schooled in a timely manner, works with the in-gate to keep the show moving

Horse Holders – volunteers holding/walking riders in the schooling or mounting area

Schooling – (1) warm up for horses, open for viewing at the beginning of the show, (2) the designate warm-up a rider has before over fences classes

Future – middle school teams/riders grades 4th - 8th

Upper/JV/Varsity – high school teams/riders grades 9th - 12th

Qualifying – refers to riders/teams accumulating enough points to advance to Regionals

Pointing-up – refers to riders accumulating enough points to advance to the next higher division the following season

Rides (number of total rides) – the amount of entries, including all jumping and flat, e.g. If there is an over fences class of 7 riders and a flat class of 7 riders that is 14 rides.

Trips – a sum of over fences riders or courses to be jumped; an O/F class of 7 of which 3 have gone has 4 “trips” left to see.

Zone Admin - each Zone has a part-time IEA-employed Zone Administrator responsible for helping manage teams and regions within the Zone and organizing our Zone Finals. Zone admins are a resource for coaches to provide feedback, seek answers, and understand larger IEA changes.

SHOW DAY CHECKLIST

Most riders wear their riding breeches with paddock boots or other boots/shoes to the show, then change into their riding shirts/jackets and fix their hair just prior to show time. Breeches will be kept clean by wearing team black pants. Team jackets should be worn at every IEA horse show. These help identify our riders and also give a professional and uniform look to our team. A lot of things need to be brought to the show. Below is a checklist of the basics.

Show Apparel	
Show shirt	
Show jacket	
Riding breeches	
Belt	
Field Boots/paddock boots	
Boot socks	
Helmet	
Hair nets/hair ties	
Black gloves	
Black show crop	
Team jacket	
Team black pants	
Weather-appropriate outerwear (gloves, scarves, hats)	
Food to share	
Money for raffles/snack bar (optional)	
Boot shine/boot polish	
ALWAYS WELCOME: shade tents in hot weather, propane heaters in cold weather, tables to set out food and refreshments, extra chairs	

USEF VARSITY LETTERS

The USEF's High School Equestrian Athlete Program offers specially designed emblems and pins, exclusively for equestrian athletes in grades 9-12.

"High school equestrians have earned their place among the most dedicated athletes," shared John Long, USEF Chief Executive Officer. "Not only are they putting in long hours to train for and compete in the sport they love—they do so while taking the concept of teamwork to the highest level, forming a partnership with a horse to achieve their goals".

The High School Equestrian Athlete Program is open to equestrian athletes in all breeds or disciplines who are enrolled in grades 9-12, and are currently USEF members, or become USEF members. The program will run June 1-May 31 of each year, and will honor those who document their training and competition involvement by awarding emblems and pins. These are designed to be worn on existing high school letterman's jackets, or any jacket of the athlete's choosing, as a rite of passage and symbol of achievement.

This program requires enrollment and documentation prior to lettering. For more information, or to complete an enrollment application, simply visit this link on the USEF Youth Programs page at www.usef.org/documents/Youth/HighSchoolAthlete.pdf.

STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

By signing, I confirm that have read the Synergy Equestrian Team Handbook and agree to abide by all policies outlined in said text and that involvement in Synergy Equestrian Team comes with associated responsibilities of both time & money. I understand that upon joining Synergy Equestrian Team I am responsible, on behalf of my rider, for all team membership fees and dues owed to either Synergy or the Interscholastic Equestrian Association. I also understand that failure to abide by the rules & policies set forth by Synergy Equestrian & the Interscholastic Equestrian Association, by either myself or my rider, may be grounds for suspension or removal from the team.

Parent and Rider Acceptance Signatures:

Rider signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent signature: _____ Date: _____