

2026 NCRC Equitation Judging Guidelines

- Hackamores and Bit less bridles will be allowed.
- Horses ages 5 and under are considered Junior. Junior horses may be ridden two handed, with a snaffle bit or bosal in English and/or Western.
- Horses age 6 and above are considered senior horses. Senior horses must be ridden one handed in a shanked bit for all western classes.
- NO whips during Western equitation classes.
- If officials see excessive use of a whip or spurs, the rider will be warned once. If it occurs again, the rider will be expelled from that show.
- Martingales and flashes are not allowed.

Bareback Equitation:	Open to English or Western attire. Judged on the ability of the rider to walk, jog or trot, and lope or canter while riding without a saddle. English riders must be able to show a post at the trot, and western riders are to wear their chaps during this class.
Costume Class:	Judged on costume originality, attention to detail, theme and overall appearance. Rider may be asked to trot. Lead line riders are eligible. Keep in mind not to add anything to your costume that could scare or spook other rider's horse.
English In Hand Horse:	Suggested but not limited to Saddle Horses. Handler may be asked to trot & set-up. May be judged individually, standing, at a walk, trot on the line. Horse must be sound, must stand square in front. Rear legs may be slightly back. Emphasis is on type & conformation. Halter or English Bridle permitted. English attire is required.
Groom's Class:	Intended for anyone who has not shown a horse/pony in any class that day. Hat & boots are required. Other show apparel is optional.
Grooming Class:	The class is judged on how well the horse is groomed.
Lead line:	Lead line equitation will be judged on rider's position. Lead line pleasure will be judged on the willingness of the horse Adult must be in control at all times. May be asked to trot, reverse & back up.
Parade Class:	Show at animated walk & parade gait. May be asked to halt & stand quietly. Judging is 75% on performance - 25% on appearances.
Ranch Pleasure	The ranch pleasure is a pattern class that includes extended gaits, stops, a back-up, turns, and walking and/or side passing over logs. All three of the horse's gaits should have more forward movement and the horse should hold a more natural head-set. The horse and rider should demonstrate smooth transitions between all the gaits and always maintain a controlled, forward movement.
Ranch Riding	This class measures a horse's ability to be a pleasure to ride while being used as a conveyance from performing one ranch task to another. The horse and rider are asked to perform a pattern that includes changes of gait, extension of gait, crossing logs and lead changes. All maneuvers should be performed as if the horse were being used on a ranch, and the horse should demonstrate a high level of training, relaxation and quality of movement in all gaits.
Road Hack:	Judged on the ability of the English rider at a walk, trot & canter, an extended trot as well as a collective, control hand gallop.
Showmanship:	May be asked to perform pattern at Walk/Trot, spin, back up & set-up. Opened to English or Western.
Walk/Trot English Equitation:	Ability of rider at a walk & trot. Rider may be asked to back up.
Walk/Trot English Pleasure:	The pleasure horse should be ridden with very little resistance and should be a pleasure to ride at a walk & trot. Rider may be asked to back up.
Walk/Trot Western Equitation:	Ability of rider at a walk & jog. Rider may be asked to back up. Rider must be able to post.
Walk/Trot/Canter English Equitation:	Ability of rider at a walk, trot and canter. Rider may be asked to back up.
Walk/Trot/Canter English Pleasure:	The pleasure horse should be ridden with little resistance in response to the rider at a walk, trot and canter. Rider may be asked to back up.
Walk/Trot/Canter Western Equitation:	Judged on the rider's western skills of legs, hands, body position at a walk/jog/lope. Rider may be asked to back up.

Walk/Trot/Canter Western Pleasure:	The horse should be a pleasure to ride, be very consistent at a walk, jog, and lope. Rider may be asked to back up.
Western Halter Horse:	Suggested but not limited to stock horse breeds. May be asked walk/trot, set-up. Based on the horses overall conformation in relation to breed type.