

2024 NRCHA Rules Changes of Direct Importance to Exhibitors

**2023**

<b>1 General Rules for Show &amp; Contest</b>	
1.1.6	Automatic disciplinary action will be taken against any NRCHA member who fails to make any payment of any kind, to the NRCHA, Reined Cow Horse News or any NRCHA approved show, in a <b>twelve</b> -month period:

<b>2.4 Non Pro Ownership Requirements / Rules</b>	
2.4.1	Non Pros must not exhibit in Non Pro classes (except as noted in 2.4.5.3) any horses owned by any third party, but shall only exhibit horses solely owned by the exhibitor or the exhibitor's family, which is the exhibitor's spouse, child, stepchild, parent, grandparent, grandchild, step-parent, sibling, half-sibling, spouse's parent, spouse's step-parent, spouse's sibling, spouse's half sibling, spouse's step sibling, sibling's spouse, half-sibling's spouse, step-sibling's spouse, legal ward, or legal guardian. Separate legal entities such as family corporations, trusts or partnerships, are also authorized by this rule and must meet the family requirements as stated above. "Owned" means, in addition to other legitimate methods of acquiring ownership, the bona fide legal ownership obtained for adequate consideration in reasonable relationship with the actual market value of the horse.
2.4.5.3	Horse Show <b>Intermediate Non Pro Boxing and Limited Non Pro Boxing</b> classes - Any Non Pro in either of these two classes does not need to own the horse they are showing in that class.

<b>3 Horse Show Divisions / Approved Classes</b>	
3.5.2	Limited Open Bridle - open to any rider that has not won more than \$15,000 in Open and Non Pro divisions in approved NRCHA events. To be eligible to compete in this division, contestants must have a valid Horse Show Limited Open designation on their membership card. The Open and Limited Open <b>shall</b> have a common draw. (Except in the case of the NRCHA World Show.)
3.6.2	Limited Open Hackamore - open to any rider who has not won more than \$15,000 in Open and Non Pro divisions in approved NRCHA events. To be eligible to compete in this division, contestants must have a valid Horse Show Limited Open designation on their membership card. The Open and Limited Open <b>shall</b> have a common draw (Except in the case of the NRCHA World Show.)

**2024**

<b>1 General Rules for Show &amp; Contest</b>	
1.1.6	Automatic disciplinary action will be taken against any NRCHA member who fails to make any payment of any kind, to the NRCHA, Reined Cow Horse News or any NRCHA approved show, in a <b>fourteen</b> -month period:

<b>2.4 Non Pro Ownership Requirements / Rules</b>	
2.4.1	Non Pros must not exhibit in Non Pro classes (except as noted in 2.4.5.3) any horses owned by any third party, but shall only exhibit horses solely owned by the exhibitor or the exhibitor's family, which is the exhibitor's spouse, <b>legal domestic partner</b> , child, stepchild, parent, grandparent, grandchild, <b>aunt, uncle, cousin</b> , step-parent, sibling, half-sibling, spouse's parent, spouse's step-parent, spouse's sibling, spouse's half sibling, spouse's step sibling, sibling's spouse, half-sibling's spouse, step-sibling's spouse, legal ward, or legal guardian. Separate legal entities such as family corporations, trusts or partnerships, are also authorized by this rule and must meet the family requirements as stated above. "Owned" means, in addition to other legitimate methods of acquiring ownership, the bona fide legal ownership obtained for adequate consideration in reasonable relationship with the actual market value of the horse. <b>Violation of this rule will result in disqualification from the class shown.</b>
2.4.5.3	Horse Show <b>Limited Non Pro Boxing</b> class - Any Non Pro in this class does not need to own the horse they are showing in the Limited Non Pro Boxing.

<b>3 Horse Show Divisions / Approved Classes</b>	
3.5.2	Limited Open Bridle - open to any rider that has not won more than \$15,000 in Open and Non Pro divisions in approved NRCHA events. To be eligible to compete in this division, contestants must have a valid Horse Show Limited Open designation on their membership card. The Open and Limited Open <b>may</b> have a common draw. (Except in the case of the NRCHA World Show.)
3.6.2	Limited Open Hackamore - open to any rider who has not won more than \$15,000 in Open and Non Pro divisions in approved NRCHA events. To be eligible to compete in this division, contestants must have a valid Horse Show Limited Open designation on their membership card. The Open and Limited Open <b>may</b> have a common draw (Except in the case of the NRCHA World Show.)

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3.8	<p>Boxing Classes - work to consist of reining pattern and single cow work (boxing) on the end of the arena. Each contestant upon receiving a cow in the arena shall hold that cow on the prescribed end of the arena for 50 seconds, demonstrating the ability of the horse and rider to control the cow. Time shall begin when the gate closes behind the cow after being let into the arena. The announcer or judge will signal the completion of the 50 seconds with a whistle or horn. (New cow guidelines will follow rule 19.3.5.) Horses 5 years of age and under as of January 1st of current show year may be shown in either a snaffle bit or hackamore. Horses of any age may be shown in the two rein equipment (in accordance with the two rein equipment rules defined in Rule 3.7) or bridle. Riders cannot have earned more than \$750 in fence work classes at any judged classes or events. A rider will be ineligible <b>upon reaching the earnings threshold</b> in any combination of officially published NRCHA earnings and/or earnings from any other association. The responsibility for eligibility lies with the competitor. If an individual feels a competitor is not eligible for a class, the burden of proof lies with the person who protests.</p>	3.8	<p>Boxing Classes - work to consist of reining pattern and single cow work (boxing) on the end of the arena. Each contestant upon receiving a cow in the arena shall hold that cow on the prescribed end of the arena for 50 seconds, demonstrating the ability of the horse and rider to control the cow. Time shall begin when the gate closes behind the cow after being let into the arena. The announcer or judge will signal the completion of the 50 seconds with a whistle or horn. (New cow guidelines will follow rule 19.3.5.) Horses 5 years of age and under as of January 1st of current show year may be shown in either a snaffle bit or hackamore. Horses of any age may be shown in the two rein equipment (in accordance with the two rein equipment rules defined in Rule 3.7) or bridle. Riders cannot have earned more than \$750 in fence work classes at any judged classes or events. A rider will be ineligible <b>at the end of the current show year</b> in any combination of officially published NRCHA earnings and/or earnings from any other association. The responsibility for eligibility lies with the competitor. If an individual feels a competitor is not eligible for a class, the burden of proof lies with the person who protests.</p>
3.8.1.2	<p>After Non Pro competitors reach the age of <b>65</b>, if they do not wish to exercise their fall back provision under 3.8.1.1 and fall back into the Non Pro Boxing, they may, in Limited Age Event Classes only, elect to compete in EITHER the LAE Non Pro Boxing division OR the appropriate LAE Non Pro fence division. A competitor may not show the same horse in an LAE Non Pro Boxing division AND a Horse Show fence division during the same event. For purposes of this rule, an event is any NRCHA approved show or shows held over consecutive, or back-to-back days.</p>	3.8.1.2	<p>After Non Pro competitors reach the age of <b>60</b>, if they do not wish to exercise their fall back provision under 3.8.1.1 and fall back into the Non Pro Boxing, they may, in Limited Age Event Classes only, elect to compete in EITHER the LAE Non Pro Boxing division OR the appropriate LAE Non Pro fence division. A competitor may not show the same horse in an LAE Non Pro Boxing division AND a Horse Show fence division during the same event. For purposes of this rule, an event is any NRCHA approved show or shows held over consecutive, or back-to-back days.</p>
3.8.3	<p>Limited Non Pro Boxing - open to approved Non Pro riders who have not earned more than \$1,000 in lifetime earnings and who comply with all Non Pro eligibility rules, with the exception of the section 2.4 ownership rules. (See Non Pro eligibility rules.) For purposes of determining eligibility for this class, all Non Pro Boxing earnings shall be computed at zero as of January 1, 2002. This class may run concurrent with <b>Non Pro Boxing</b>. There is no fall back Provision in this class. The responsibility for eligibility lies with the competitor. If an individual feels a competitor is not eligible for a class, the burden of proof lies with the person who protests.</p>	3.8.3	<p>Limited Non Pro Boxing - open to approved Non Pro riders who have not earned more than \$1,000 in lifetime earnings and who comply with all Non Pro eligibility rules, with the exception of the section 2.4 ownership rules. (See Non Pro eligibility rules.) For purposes of determining eligibility for this class, all Non Pro Boxing earnings shall be computed at zero as of January 1, 2002. This class may run concurrent with <b>Non Pro Boxing or the Intermediate Non Pro Boxing</b>. There is no fall back Provision in this class. The responsibility for eligibility lies with the competitor. If an individual feels a competitor is not eligible for a class, the burden of proof lies with the person who protests.</p>

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3.8.4	<p>Youth Boxing - open to riders 18 years of age and under as of November 16th of the current show year. Riders cannot have earned more than \$750 in fence work classes at any judged classes or events with the exception of horse sales. A rider will be ineligible upon reaching the earnings threshold <b>upon reaching the earnings threshold</b> in any combination of officially published NRCHA earnings and/or earnings from any other association. Show management may bar youth from exhibiting a stallion in youth classes. Youth Boxing classes may not run concurrently with any other classes. If a youth attends a show and the horse shows only in the youth classes, stalls will be available at half price at the NRCHA Stallion Stakes, NRCHA Derby, NRCHA Hackamore Classic and NRCHA Snaffle Bit Futurity®.</p>	3.8.4	<p>Youth Boxing - open to riders 18 years of age and under as of November 16th of the current show year. Riders cannot have earned more than \$750 in fence work classes at any judged classes or events with the exception of horse sales. A rider will be ineligible upon reaching the earnings threshold <b>at the end of the current show year</b> in any combination of officially published NRCHA earnings and/or earnings from any other association. Show management may bar youth from exhibiting a stallion in youth classes. Youth Boxing classes may not run concurrently with any other classes. If a youth attends a show and the horse shows only in the youth classes, stalls will be available at half price at the NRCHA Stallion Stakes, NRCHA Derby, NRCHA Hackamore Classic and NRCHA Snaffle Bit Futurity®.</p>
3.9.1	<p>Select Classes – open to riders <b>55</b> years of age and over as of November 16th of the current show year. One select class will be run concurrent with the Non Pro Bridle, Intermediate Non Pro Bridle, or Level 1 Non Pro Bridle. A second select class will be run concurrent with the Non Pro Boxing, Intermediate Non Pro Boxing, or Limited Non Pro Boxing. They cannot be run as standalone classes; riders must enter at least one concurrent Non Pro Division. There will be no World Show eligibility, but these classes will be offered at the World Show for those that qualify for any of the six World Show qualifying classes.</p>	3.9.1	<p>Select Classes – open to riders <b>50</b> years of age and over as of November 16th of the current show year. One select class will be run concurrent with the Non Pro Bridle, Intermediate Non Pro Bridle, or Level 1 Non Pro Bridle. A second select class will be run concurrent with the Non Pro Boxing, Intermediate Non Pro Boxing, or Limited Non Pro Boxing. They cannot be run as standalone classes; riders must enter at least one concurrent Non Pro Division. There will be no World Show eligibility, but these classes will be offered at the World Show for those that qualify for any of the six World Show qualifying classes.</p>
3.12.1	<p>Open to approved Non Pro Boxing riders and who comply with all Non Pro eligibility rules. Non Pro riders in this class must meet the requirements of the 2.4 ownership rule. (See Non Pro eligibility rules.) Earnings are calculated as lifetime boxing earnings. Riders cannot have earned more than \$750 in fence work classes at any judged classes or events with the exception of horse sales. A rider will be ineligible <b>upon reaching the earnings threshold</b> in any combination of officially published NRCHA earnings and/or earnings from any other association. The responsibility for eligibility lies with the competitor. If an individual feels a competitor is not eligible for a class, the burden of proof lies with the person who protests.</p>	3.12.1	<p>Open to approved Non Pro Boxing riders and who comply with all Non Pro eligibility rules. Non Pro riders in this class must meet the requirements of the 2.4 ownership rule. (See Non Pro eligibility rules.) Earnings are calculated as lifetime boxing earnings. Riders cannot have earned more than \$750 in fence work classes at any judged classes or events with the exception of horse sales. A rider will be ineligible upon reaching the earnings threshold <b>at the end of the current show year</b> in any combination of officially published NRCHA earnings and/or earnings from any other association. The responsibility for eligibility lies with the competitor. If an individual feels a competitor is not eligible for a class, the burden of proof lies with the person who protests.</p>
<b>5 Appointments &amp; Equipment</b>		<b>5 Appointments &amp; Equipment</b>	
5.3.1	<p>Chin strap must be smooth leather. No wire, chain or other metal or rawhide device may be used in conjunction with a part of the leather chin strap. Leather chin strap must be flat, flexible and at least ½ inch wide. <b>No metal rivets are allowed</b> to come in contact with the chin, or chin groove of the horse. Metal keepers are not acceptable on the chin strap.</p>	5.3.1	<p>Chin strap must be smooth leather. No wire, chain or other metal or rawhide device may be used in conjunction with a part of the leather chin strap. Leather chin strap must be flat, flexible and at least ½ inch wide. <b>No metal rivets are allowed on the inside of the chin strap and the rivets may not, at any time,</b> come in contact with the chin, or chin groove of the horse. Metal keepers are not acceptable on the chin strap.</p>

**2023**

5.3.2	<p>Reins with romal required. The reins can be held in either hand, with hand around reins in a fist position with thumbs up. The non-rein hand must be on the romal. (The keeper, or hobble, that attaches the romal to the reins is considered to be a part of the romal.) The non-rein hand is not allowed, at any time, to touch the reins or a score of -0- will be applied. The rider is allowed to shorten the reins while the horse is in motion as long as their hands are held in a legal manner. No fingers are permitted between the reins in Bridle classes, except in the Two Rein class. Crossed reins will result in a zero score. In the herd work and boxing classes only, romal reins can be held in one hand. Roping reins are optional in the Steer Stopping.</p>
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**2024**

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**6 Broken Equipment**

6.1	<p><b>If at any time during a performance a piece of equipment breaks, the rider may continue provided the broken equipment does not pose a hazard to the rider and/or is not cruel to the horse.</b> In the event that the fence work immediately follows the rein work or if a new cow is awarded during the fence work, broken equipment may be repaired within a 1 minute time period. Rider may dismount, if necessary, to make the repair or pick up lost equipment or attire. Horse and rider may not leave the arena and</p>
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**6 Broken Equipment**

6.1	<p>If at any time during a performance a piece of equipment breaks, the rider may continue provided the broken equipment does not pose a hazard to the rider and/or is not cruel to the horse.</p>
6.2	<p>When the cow work immediately follows the rein work, broken equipment may be repaired between the two phases, within a 1-minute time period. If a new cow is awarded, the rider may repair equipment between cows as well.</p>
6.3	<p>Rider may dismount, if necessary, to make the repair or pick up lost equipment or attire. Horse and rider may not leave the arena and may not receive physical assistance or equipment from outside the arena. If the rider is unable to continue because of the broken equipment, the rider will be excused with a score of zero.</p>

**9 Rules for Competition**

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9.6.1	<p><b>If an entry enters the arena or working area out of order, but does not cross the time line, start the pattern (ie... lope depart, trot or run in), step into the roping box, or call for their cow, the entry may exit the working area with no penalty assessed. The correct entry may then enter the arena within a reasonable amount of time (normal gate-call) and compete as normal. If the correct entry is not present at the gate, the score for that entry will be zero.</b></p>
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**10 Limited Age Events**

10.4.2, 10.4.3, 10.4.4, 10.4.7, 10.4.8, 10.4.9	<p>Open &amp; non pro top rider lists &amp; open &amp; non pro lifetime earnings eligibility limits are based on category 1 and category 2 earnings</p>
10.4.13	<p>Select Classes – open to riders <b>55</b> years of age and over as of November 16th of the current show year. A select class may be run concurrent in each of the Non Pro, Level 1 Non Pro and Non Pro Boxing. They cannot be run as standalone classes, will not count toward National Standings, and will be offered as jackpot only.</p>

**10 Limited Age Events**

10.4.2, 10.4.3, 10.4.4, 10.4.7, 10.4.8, 10.4.9	<p>Open &amp; non pro top rider lists are based on category 1 earnings, open &amp; non pro lifetime earnings eligibility limits are based on category 1 and category 2 earnings</p>
10.4.13	<p>Select Classes – open to riders <b>50</b> years of age and over as of November 16th of the current show year. A select class may be run concurrent in each of the Non Pro, Level 1 Non Pro and Non Pro Boxing. They cannot be run as standalone classes, will not count toward National Standings, and will be offered as jackpot only.</p>

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19 Judging	
19.3.3.2	Turning: After a reasonable amount of time, the contestant shall take the cow down the fence, making at least one turn each way on the fence. The contestant must get a minimum of one turn in each direction when attempting the fence work. To qualify as a turn, <b>the turn must be accomplished without the aid of the END fences to actually stop or turn the animal being worked unless the horse and rider are in working position.</b> During the turn, the horse should use himself in a controlled athletic manner, using its hocks to stop and drive out of the turn, while using its front end to balance and turn. More than two good turns in each direction should not result in extra credit but also should not be penalized unless the cow is thereby too exhausted to circle correctly. One turn each way may not necessarily result in extra credit if the horse and/or cow are out of control.
19.3.5.1	When enough cows are available, the contestant should receive a new cow if the cow drawn is unreasonably difficult or unworkable. The judge will indicate new cow by blowing his/her whistle twice – indicating the awarding of a new cow. Allowing the horse to quit working before the judge signals for a new cow will result in a zero score. If the judge awards a new cow, the exhibitor has the option to refuse the new cow by continuing to work. If the exhibitor intends to accept the new cow, he or she must <b>pull up immediately.</b> With a multiple judge system, any one of the judges may terminate the work or signal for a new cow.
19.3.5.5	In the case that a rider is awarded a third cow, the rider will have the option to work their new cow or to rest their horse and work their new cow at the end of the next set. If the rider is in the last set of the class they shall be afforded up to 20 minutes for their horse to recover before working the third cow.
Cow Work - Penalty Points:	3 point penalties: E. Exhausting or overworking the cow before circling. H. Hanging up on the fence (refusing to turn). Hang-Up; Definition: When attempting to turn a cow on the fence a horse is considered to be hung up when the animal being worked exits the turn and the horse momentarily refuses the riders command and freezes up (stops lateral movement of the shoulders). Also considered a hang-up is when a horse is put in a position where it is physically impossible to complete the turn and the lateral movement of his shoulders is stopped. K. Knocking down the cow without having a working advantage

2024	
19 Judging	
19.3.3.2	Turning: After a reasonable amount of time, the contestant shall take the cow down the fence, making at least one turn each way on the fence. The contestant must get a minimum of one turn in each direction when attempting the fence work. To qualify as a turn, <b>the exhibitor must be in position to control the animal and be the cause of the animal to change course.</b> During the turn, the horse should use himself in a controlled athletic manner, using its hocks to stop and drive out of the turn, while using its front end to balance and turn. More than two good turns in each direction should not result in extra credit but also should not be penalized unless the cow is thereby too exhausted to circle correctly. One turn each way may not necessarily result in extra credit if the horse and/or cow are out of control.
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19.3.5.5	In the case that a rider is awarded a third cow, the rider will have the option to work their new cow or to rest their horse and work their new cow at the end of the next set. If the rider is in the last set of the class they shall be afforded up to 20 minutes for their horse to recover before working the third cow. <b>If the rider elects to leave the show arena, the horse must stay in the warm-up area adjacent to the show arena. If the horse leaves the warm-up area or works a cow, the run will result in a 0 score.</b>
Cow Work - Penalty Points:	3 point penalties: <b>D. Dangerous Position</b> E. Exhausting or overworking the cow before circling. H. Hanging up on the fence (refusing to turn). Hang-Up; Definition: When attempting to turn a cow on the fence a horse is considered to be hung up when the animal being worked exits the turn and the horse momentarily refuses the riders command and freezes up (stops lateral movement of the shoulders). Also considered a hang-up is when a horse is put in a position where it is physically impossible to complete the turn and the lateral movement of his shoulders is stopped. K. Knocking down the cow without having a working advantage

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Boxing Cow Work - Penalty Points:	3 point penalties: L. Loss of control and animal leaves the end of arena
	1 point penalties: A. Loss of working advantage P. Working out of position C. Changing sides on the second drive / rate M. Failure to drive past the middle marker.
	3 point penalties: D. Failure to drive cow past middle marker on second drive before time expires K Knocking down the cow without having a working advantage T. Performing a fence turn (whether initiated by horse or rider)
Box Drive - Penalty Points:	-0- score: A. Turn tail B. Using 2 hands on the reins when using a bridle or two rein C. Fingers between the reins, except when using a two rein D. Balking E. Extremely out of control F. Bloody mouth (inside) G. Illegal equipment H. Leaving the work area before the pattern or work is complete I. Fall of horse or rider J. Schooling of the horse between rein work and cow work K. Schooling of the horse between cows if a new cow is awarded M. Improper Western Attire N. Failure to work in the proper working order

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Boxing Cow Work - Penalty Points:	3 point penalties: D. Dangerous Position L. Loss of control and animal leaves the end of arena
	1 point penalties: A. Loss of working advantage P. Working out of position C. Changing sides on the second drive / rate T. One the first drive, failure to drive past the middle marker
	3 point penalties: D. Dangerous Position K Knocking down the cow without having a working advantage W. Performing a fence turn (whether initiated by horse or rider) Z. Failure to drive cow past middle marker on second drive before time expires
Box Drive - Penalty Points:	-0- score: A. Turn tail B. Using 2 hands on the reins when using a bridle or two rein C. Fingers between the reins, except when using a two rein D. Balking E. Extremely out of control F. Bloody mouth (inside) G. Illegal equipment H. Leaving the work area before the pattern or work is complete I. Fall of horse or rider J. Schooling of the horse between rein work and cow work K. Schooling of the horse between cows if a new cow is awarded M. Improper Western Attire N. Failure to work in the proper working order Q. On first drive down the fence, failure to drive the cow past the middle marker after two attempts