

Horse Shows 101

Showing is entirely up to a child's individual interests and goals. While NCMT does not predicate its business model on the buying, selling, and showing of horses, we do promote good sportsmanship and a chance to test one's riding skills in a competitive format. Show participation does not affect the promotion process through NCMT ranks or riding levels. Yet, NCMT provides students such opportunities for those who want to show. Please discuss your possible interest with NCMT instructors. There are several different kinds of shows available. Sign-up sheets for all NCMT hosted shows will be posted outside of the office a month in advance, and taken down about two weeks prior to the show, so entries and horse assignments can be processed.

WHY DOES NCMT HOST HORSE SHOWS?

- To allow our Troopers the opportunity to test their skills in a competitive environment.
- **IT'S FUN!**

SCHOOLING VS. RATED HORSE SHOWS

“SCHOOLING HORSE SHOWS” – A horse show that does not carry a rating by an official governing organization such as the USEF (US Equestrian Federation – formerly the American Horse Show Association) or the USHJA (United States Hunter Jumper Association).

Schooling shows are offered to NCMT members only. Our staff has the flexibility to decide what classes to hold, and what the riders will do. A schooling show judge does NOT have to hold a judge's card, and may not be recognized by the USEF or USHJA. Schooling shows are a great way to “get your feet wet” and can serve as an introduction to “Rated” horse shows. They offer a low-pressure environment and are less costly than Rated or Open shows. Schooling or Review shows are a prerequisite for Troopers that are interested in participating in Open shows.

Cost: The cost of a Review Show is \$110, which includes the horse use fee, division fees, and training fee. It is paid by check the morning of the show when you pick up the “number” that you wear while showing.

Accumulation of Points: Riders do **NOT** accumulate points towards year-end awards. There are NO association membership fees. These shows are mainly for fun and to practice one's competitive skills.

Dress Code: The dress code is a little less formal than at rated shows but riders are expected to be neatly dressed.

NCMT offers 3 schooling shows per year: two Review Ceremony Horse Shows (in December and June) and a Benefit Horse Show/Gymkhana in May.

“RATED OR OPEN HORSE SHOWS” – Rated or Open shows are competitions governed and recognized by the USEF and USHJA. These shows are open to the general public: other barns attend them. NCMT Open Shows carry a rating of “C”, which is the lowest rating the USEF/USHJA assigns, and require a minimum number of 25 entries. Troopers compete against riders from other barns. This also means that the number of riders per class is usually higher than that of a schooling show. The dress code for these shows is much stricter and a judge can take off points for inappropriate attire.

Open shows follow either the rules of the USEF/USHJA: there may not always be classes for every level. Open shows hosted at NCMT are a prerequisite for cadets that are interested in participating in “away” or off-site horse shows. NCMT offers between 5 and 6 rated horse shows per year, typically in:

- March – USEF/USHJA “C” Rated
- Early July – USEF/USHJA “C” Rated
- Mid July – USEF/USHJA “C” Rated
- End of July – Blue Ribbon Ventures/CHJA/NEHC rated show. Double points Hoof Print High Score.
- August – FWPHA double points show
- October– USEF/USHJA “C” Rated

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Cost: The cost to compete in an NCMT Open show includes:

- \$125 horse use fee and training fee
- Regular Classes \$30
- Medals & Classics \$45
- Office Fee \$20
- NCMT Warm Up \$15
- Average cost to compete in one full division of three classes is approximately \$250, excluding one-time association membership fees that may also be required.

Accumulating Points for Year End Awards: A rider who is a paying member of the USEF/USHJA earns points in the divisions in which they compete. Such points are accumulated towards year end awards. Other organizations that govern showing may recognize NCMT’s one-day horse shows, and may also require membership in order to earn points towards year end awards. Points can be accrued in the hunter, jumper, or equitation divisions. In 2015, fees for Association memberships were:

- Hoof Print Series – Blue Ribbon Ventures (local level) – \$30
- FW-PHA – Fairfield Westchester Professional Horseman’s Association (county level) -\$55
- CHJA – Connecticut Hunter Jumper Association (state level) -\$30 for juniors, \$35 for adults
- NEHC – New England Horseman’s Council (regional level) – \$25
- USEF/USHJA – (national level) \$125 for both

NCMT encourages Troopers to become members in order to be eligible for “Finals” competitions and year-end awards.

“AWAY” SHOWS

NCMT may take a small number of riders to local area Open Shows in the **summer months**. These shows follow the same rules as the Open USEF shows; the formality of the show depends on its rating (A, B or C).

In “A” and “B” rated competitions, the horses’ manes and tails are usually braided. There are more participants per class – up to 50 + riders in some cases. Jumping rounds can take up to four hours to complete. These shows are often held over several days, as the classes take a long time. Because the horses have to be shipped by trailer to the away barn, riders may be required to be at NCMT as early as 5:00 AM to help pack the tack trunks and load the horses. Extensive preparations take place the day before the show, including extra horse grooming and tack cleaning.

The cost of these shows are billed to participating families. Example of the cost incurred for an Away Show:

- Braiding = \$50 for manes; \$35 for tails
- Horse Transportation = \$150 roundtrip
- Grooming = \$35 per day minimum, will vary
- Entries = \$35 to \$45 per class
- Office fees = \$20
- Stall fees = \$50 to \$75 per day, depending upon the show
- Training fees = \$75 per day per trainer
- Horse use fees = \$125 per day

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CLASSES?

Horse shows offer sets of classes, called “divisions”, for the various levels and abilities of both riders and horses. The three primary divisions are Equitation, Hunters and Jumpers. Within each division, there are several classes tailored to allow riders and horses to compete, from beginner to very advanced skill sets. Riders and horses who compete in several classes of a specific division can be eligible to become “champion” or “reserve champion” in that division by winning ribbons and accumulating points.

Equitation classes: The rider is judged based on position and ability to execute the course with seamless effort and high level of control. The horse is not judged, but the overall picture or presentation of the rider is very important. In Equitation classes, the rider accumulates points. Note that “Judging” can be subjective!

Equitation classes include:

- *Walk-Trot Equitation* – usually 2 classes - flat class only; no jumping.
- *Walk-Trot-Canter Equitation* – usually 2 classes - flat class only; no jumping.
- *Short Stirrup* - 1 flat and 2 jumping classes; open to riders age 12 or younger and includes a simple course of 4 cross-rails or “Xs” with no change of direction.

- *Academy Short Stirrup* - 1 flat and 2 jumping classes; open to riders over 13 years old and includes a simple course of 4 cross-rails or “Xs” with no change of direction.
- *Children’s Equitation* - 1 flat and 2 jumping classes; jumping classes range in height ranging from 2’, 2’3”, 2’6”, 2’9” and 3’. Courses include verticals, oxers, and changes of direction.
- *Junior Equitation* - 1 flat and 2 jumping classes which range in height from 3’ to 4’. Courses include verticals, oxers, and changes of direction
- *Adult Equitation* - 1 flat and 2 jumping classes - height range from 3’ to 3’6””. Courses include verticals, oxers, and changes of direction
- *Medal classes* - Jumping class that includes a test of the top four to six riders over a shortened course. The test is determined by the judge.
 - FWPHA
 - CHJA
 - NEHC
- “Big Eq” refers to Equitation Medal classes and Finals on a national level over fences that are 3’6” or higher
 - M&S – Marshall and Sterling
 - THIS – Taylor Harris Insurance Medal
 - USEF Pessoa Medal
 - ASPCA Maclay Medal
 - USET Medal

Hunters classes: The horse is judged on movement, expression, fluidity, and jumping style. A judge evaluates the straightness in the line of the rider, from the shoulder through the knee to the toe. The judge also looks for the arc, or bascule, of the horse. The horse’s knees must be high and square under the horse’s head, and the horse’s hind end must follow or complete the arc that the front end sets. The horse’s expression must be bright, with ears forward, and have a forward momentum. While the rider’s accuracy and ability is critical, the judge is judging the horse. Judging can be subjective! It is the horse that accumulates points. Prize money is offered in most 3’6” or higher classes to the top 6 ribbon winners.

NCMT riders and horses typically compete in equitation and hunter classes. Jumper classes are set at higher heights and widths which can be very taxing on the horses and is not appropriate for the majority of our fleet.

Jumpers classes: The courses include colored jumps, double and/or triple combinations, water obstacles and others. Fence heights vary, but range from 1.10m to 1.60m, which is Olympic Grand Prix level. Courses are highly technical and challenging, which is why the horse or rider is not judged subjectively. The rider and horse are expected to be highly educated. The rider is judged strictly by the number of faults a horse and rider combination accumulate. Faults include (i) lowering the fence height, (ii) exceeding the time allowed, (iii) and refusals. Riders are eliminated for going off course, falling off, and having two refusals at any time during the course. There is usually substantial prize money offered to the first 6 ribbons in most jumper classes.

POINTS AND RIBBONS

Ribbons range from 1st to 10th place:

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 st – navy blue | 6 th – green |
| 2 nd – red | 7 th – purple |
| 3 rd – yellow | 8 th – brown |
| 4 th – white | 9 th – grey |
| 5 th – pink | 10 th – baby blue |

Point values are placed on each ribbon and can vary depending upon the class and rating of the show. The below table shows point values for ribbons in FWPHA and CHJA rated classes. One needs 12 points to qualify for an FWPHA, CHJA or Hoof Print Medal Finals.

| Ribbon | Point Value |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1 st | 10 |
| 2 nd | 6 |
| 3 rd | 4 |
| 4 th | 2 |
| 5 th | 1 |
| 6 th | 1/2 |

SHOW ATTIRE

Proper show attire is required at all rated shows, and subject to points. If a rider is not wearing proper show attire, a judge may subtract points from his/her score.

Items that a rider should have are as follows:

For Short Stirrup or below:

- Clean jodhpurs
- Jodhpur accessories: garters (straps that wrap around below the knee) and pant loops under boots.
- Polished paddock boots.
- Hair braided with ribbons tied on the ends.

- Black gloves
- Show shirt with collar
- Belt
- ASTM approved helmet
- Spurs and crop

For Classes above Short Stirrup:

- Clean britches or jodhpurs
- Polished Boots (field or paddock)
- Hair is tucked in a hairnet and pulled up under helmet.
- Black gloves
- Show shirt with collar
- Belt
- ASTM approved helmet
- Spurs and crop

Tall Boots

Children age 13 or older or over 5' in height, or showing a full size horse in divisions more advanced than short Stirrup should wear tall boots.

NCMT has several of the listed items available for borrowing on the day of the show. If interested, please inquire from the office.