



2015 - 2016  
Handbook For  
Judges

Revision 5 - © ACTHA, Inc. June 2015

Judges – thanks for agreeing to judge an ACTHA event! Your host, the riders, and ACTHA genuinely appreciate your time and efforts. We’ve gotten some feedback how we could make the judging experience better for everyone and easier for you. So, here we go!

This handbook is designed to guide and help judges and is not meant to be the “be all, end all” to judging an ACTHA event. Each event is unique, however good horsemanship and fun is the constant factor. Please review the ACTHA rules, and use your horsemanship knowledge to judge fairly and consistently. The rules are listed as “rules” and the guidelines are shown as guidelines. Paramount to the event is safety. You are responsible for the safety of the participants at your obstacle.

**Before the event** – Whether it’s an AOC or a CTC, the ride host should send you the obstacle list with criteria of the obstacles that you’ll be judging. It should be at least a week or two before the event so as to allow you time to review your obstacles and know the judging criteria that you’ll be expected to base your scores on. She/He will provide you with a “judges code” so you can have access to the judges portal on our website.

Judging a CTC will involve you learning about one obstacle (there’s 6-8). You should have an assistant at the obstacle to help you. Judging an AOC will involve you judging multiple obstacles (usually 4) and does not need an assistant, but one may be provided. Judges must 18 years old and assistants at least 12 years old.

***We believe that every judge wants to do a great job and recognizes the responsibility that has been placed upon them to score fairly, accurately and give good feedback on the performance of the competitors. That being said, here is what ACTHA expects – be fair, be consistent, use our guidelines and you’ll be awesome!***

**Learning About Your Obstacle(s)** - There’s several options to learn about your obstacles, you can choose one, or be an overachiever ☺ and do them all! Start off at the Judges Portal on the ACTHA website – [www.actha.us/judges](http://www.actha.us/judges)

1. If you have the Judge’s Code, you can enter that information, it will take you to the specific event that you’re hosting and you can choose from the obstacles that will be used at the event.
2. If you’re a visual person, you can go to the Official ACTHA YouTube Channel and watch the video for your obstacle(s). <http://www.youtube.com/user/OfficialACTHA> .
3. If you learn best by listening, you can call our Judge’s Hotline 855-JUDGE-99 (855-583-4399) listen to the basic judging information and enter the code for your obstacle.
4. On the ACTHA website, you’ll also see the official obstacles and the criteria to be used for judging them. Remember, the ride host will have the latitude to vary these obstacles and may combine “elements” within a single obstacle to make it more interesting or challenging. (ie- a gate obstacle may incorporate a sidepass)
5. A complete obstacle list and judging criteria can be found at [www.actha.us/obstacles](http://www.actha.us/obstacles)

**What to Expect When You Arrive** - While it may vary from event to event and for a CTC vs an AOC, you should check in with the ride host when you arrive. You should participate in a judge’s briefing, where the host will explain the flow of the ride, specific obstacles, go over rules, provide you with a ‘judges bag’, and make sure you have any “props” necessary for your obstacle. There’ll be a rider’s briefing before the rider’s begin; if time allows you to attend, it’s a good opportunity to provide the rider’s with exactly what you’re looking for at your obstacle and the criteria you’ll be judging on. You’ll learn a lot about what the host is expecting from the rider’s and the rider’s will

ask questions about specific obstacles and clarify instructions. Clarify with the host how you'll get to your obstacle, who will let you know that the last rider has passed (do not base it from your scoresheet), and how you'll get back to camp.

**What Should Be in Your Judge's Bag** - The host should provide you with 2 pens, clipboard, judging criteria for your obstacle(s), score sheet, a copy of our rules, and a list of judges and staff with phone numbers so you can keep in communication with them. There should be a big Ziploc bag that you can place your clipboard and score sheet in to protect it while scoring, should it rain. Although not required, your ride host may have snacks, water, sunscreen, bug spray, and other necessities in your bag. Again, this is different, depending on whether you're at a CTC or an AOC.

**What You Should Bring** – A cell phone, chair and anything you might need to be comfortable outside for 2-4 hours, including raingear (ACTHA runs, rain or shine). It's not as critical for an AOC, but for a CTC, you could be out in the woods for a few hours, and it's good to be comfortable. Check with your host to see if you should bring anything special, prior to your event. Some hosts provide lunch, if you provide the cooler, others hook you up all the way – again, each host has “their way” of hosting an ACTHA event, not wrong, just different!

**At Your Obstacle -What to Expect** - Okay, so you've been plunked down in the woods at your obstacle. Now what? Read your obstacle and have your assistant do a dry run to see if it's reasonable, can be performed in the time allotted, and tweak if necessary, in keeping with the description that the riders have received. Make sure that the “start” and “stop” markers are clearly visible.

When a rider approaches an obstacle, they should be welcomed. If you can see them, you can judge them, so if their horse is naughty before they present themselves to you at the obstacle (ie bucking up the hill, or the rider yanking on their mouth) you can factor it into your scoring and overall impression. We're informal, it's supposed to be fun so try to help riders relax and enjoy the obstacle while keeping them moving along. The rider should give you their name, number and division. Repeat it back to them so it's clear you've identified the person you're scoring and that you're using the correct instructions for execution of the obstacle and judging criteria for the division they're in. Ask if the rider understands what they're supposed to do at the obstacle. If asked, you can give directions as to what is expected that they do, what you're looking for (criteria), but you cannot coach them as to how to accomplish the tasks with training tips or hints. Once they have entered the start markers, time begins.

**A score other than ZERO** must be given to the horse and rider team making a legitimate attempt at executing an obstacle, regardless if they are unsuccessful at executing the obstacle or go over the time allotted.

Riders have the allotted time (30-60 seconds) to perform the obstacle and the timer should start when they pass the obstacle entrance markers and end when they pass the exit cones. If they have asked, you may let them know when they have 15 seconds left so they don't time out. **It is a courtesy for a judge to give a 15 second notice before time is up at an obstacle, not a requirement.**

**A 5 point penalty** will apply against each horse and rider for going over time (-5 for horse and -5 for rider), but in no instance will team be allowed to continue more than 30 seconds over time allotted. Judge will thank the rider and ask them to move along. The score may be anything greater than zero/zero.

*Example: Rider A adequately performs and completes the obstacle, but goes over the allotted time by 10 seconds. Let's assume he would have scored an 8 and a 9. With the time penalty, the score would be 3 and 4.*

*Example: Rider B struggles, but completes the obstacle, also goes over the allotted time by 10 seconds. Let's assume he would have scored a 4 and a 5, barring a time penalty. With the time penalty the score would be a 1 and a 1 (because a score other than zero must be awarded for a try). No negative numbers are allowed in scoring.*

1. If they do go significantly (15 seconds or more), politely say, "I'm sorry, but you need to please move along, great try." Don't let them back up your obstacle and create a long waiting time for other riders.
2. The spirit of ACTHA is to encourage trail riding in the form of casual competition. There may be circumstances where good judgment and common sense come into play. Judges have discretion within their obstacle, maintaining consistency and fairness for all riders.

### **ARENA OBSTACLE CHALLENGE – "In Hand Option"**

We have partnered with Parelli Natural Horsemanship on the judging for the In Hand participant and they will be judged on (refinement, balance, cadence, subtle cues, willingness, etc) Time will not be extended for mounting/dismounting nor additional total arena time. There is a complete section as to how to judge "in hand" at the end of this handbook.

### **Important Things You Should Know –**

1. Let's talk about Shank Bits, Gaited Horses and anything else that might be a source of confusion. Any harsh or excessive use of bits, spurs, or tack will be penalized by the judges as they see fit. Riders **SHOULD** use tack and ride in the style that is traditional and accepted by their discipline. A trail horse needs the use of his head and neck for balance and eyesight, therefore, soft use of the reins should be appreciated by the judges.
2. Gaited horses – When the word "trot" is used, we'd expect a comparable gait for gaited horses. We recognize that many gaited horses have a naturally higher headset. We recognize that many gaited riders sit back a bit further in their saddles as it is natural to some disciplines. We recognize that gaited horses may appear somewhat faster at a trot or canter, but the horse should not appear out of control at any speed and that a head bob is often part of the breed's characteristics not a soundness concern. Gaited horses may gait as opposed to trotting or cantering; however, if the open division (only) calls for a canter, it is expected that they should be able to accomplish this, but don't "ding" them if they can't/don't do so. Please, judges – do not score harshly for an open horse that does not canter, but instead, reward one that does. A "gait" is generally a 4 beat lateral movement and may appear somewhat faster than a Quarter Horse trot or canter, but should never appear out of control.

#### **Not Desirable**

- lack of smoothness - bounce
- loss of rhythm – the horse switches from a 4 beat gait to a 2 beat gait
- change in balance – the length of stride is not consistent
- loss of tempo – the horse speeds up or slows down
- switching in and out of gait – will be penalized in the same manner as a horse that switches from the trot to the walk to the lope when it was not required.

- Bad Manners - head shaking, opening of the mouth, pinning of the ears, continuous switching of the tail

When judging the Gaited Horse the following are considerations to determine correctness of gait:

- there is no suspension, so there is no need for the rider to bounce or post.
- the ride is smooth and comfortable for the rider - 1 foot is always on the ground
- the rhythm is regular and consistent
- the horse does not speed up or slow down
- the horse stays in gait – the gait does not change
- 4 distinct even or uneven beats can be heard
- the horse is mannerly, attentive and confident

Gaiting is in the genes - natural and inborn and not man-made as the result of gimmicks. There are over 30 gaited breeds. Most breeds of gaited horses were selectively bred in the Americas. Smoothness and comfort combined with a kind and willing disposition were qualities that were prized. Their quiet temperament, willingness and trainability were the perfect qualities to enhance the comfortable ride. Many carry the name of the area that fostered their survival – Missouri Fox Trotting Horse, Tennessee Walking Horse, Peruvian Horse, Florida Cracker, Puerto Rican and Columbian Paso Finos, Kentucky Mountain Horse, Rocky Mountain Horse, American Bashir Curley.

What is a Gaited Horse?

In simplest terms, a gaited horse is a horse that does not trot. In place of the trot, the horse performs a gait without suspension. The trot is a gait with suspension. When there is suspension in a gait, there are times when all four feet are off the ground. In a gait without suspension, at least one foot is always on the ground. When one foot is kept on the ground at all times, there is no suspension resulting in no bounce for the rider.

Gaited horses perform various 4-beat gaits instead of the trot. Without suspension, the ride is smooth and comfortable for the rider – there is no need to post. Although the gaited horse does not trot, most gaited horses can walk, canter and gallop like all horses. It has become common usage to refer to horses that do not trot as Gaited or Soft Gaited horses.

There is a great variety of gaits among the soft-gaited or smooth gaited breeds. The gait that the horse performs in place of the trot is sometimes called the intermediate gait or the middle gait as it is the gait that is between the walk and the canter or lope. Each gaited breed has special terminology for the gait between the walk and the canter or lope. For Gaited Horses at ACTHA events, this gait is called the “comparable gait”.

The “Comparable Gait” for gaited horses at ACTHA Events should be a gait without suspension – one foot on the ground at all times. The gait should be smooth and comfortable for both horse and rider. It should be a four beat gait either even or uneven. It should be faster than the walk, but must be balanced, controlled and consistent. The horse should not change either the rhythm or the tempo of the gait during the time it is required to gait.

It is the responsibility of the rider, (but not required) of a Gaited Horse to inform the judge they are riding a gaited horse. The judge will then ask for the “comparable gait” rather than the trot if the trot is a requirement of the obstacle.

At obstacles where the trot is required, the gaited horse is expected to perform a “comparable gait” in place of the trot. The judge is not expected to recognize or determine the correctness of the specific gait for the breed. There are certain characteristics that are common to gait for all gaited horses no matter the breed.

There should be a difference in speed or ground covering ability between the walk and the “comparable gait”; however, neither excessive speed or animation is a requirement. The posture of some gaited horse riders may appear different from what is considered correct posture with other breeds. Gaited horses are often ridden in special gaited saddles and the riders legs are often placed farther in front than in a non-gaited saddle.

Manners, willingness, harmony, control and responsiveness are important considerations for all horses including gaited horses. The relationship between the horse and rider is also a consideration.

“Comparable Gait” required of gaited horses should be evaluated on smoothness, rhythm, balance, tempo, and consistency.

SMOOTHNESS and the appearance of a comfortable ride are essential elements: the gait should appear to be a pleasure for both horse and rider.

RHYTHM - The rhythm is always 4 beat but may be even 4 beat or uneven 4 beat as 4 distinct hooves hit the ground.

BALANCE - The length of stride remains the same. The right side moves the same as the left side in hind and front.

TEMPO – The tempo remains the same neither speeding up or slowing down.

CONSISTENCY - Horse remains in the same gait throughout the section.

3. Two Hand Rule & Shanked bits – ACTHA has relaxed the 2 hand/shanked bit rule and is clarified as – **We will not penalize riders who ride with two hands on a shanked bit.**
  - a. **What ACTHA is looking for is that the horse is offering absolutely no resistance to the bit and is working in a relaxed and comfortable manner.**
  - b. Riders should be consistent *within a single* obstacle and not keep changing hands unless the obstacle needs to have a changing of hands.
4. ACTHA is fine with aids such as bits, spurs, crops, etc, it is how they are used that should be judged. We are looking for a willing partnership, and the subtle use of aids should be appreciated and reflected in the rider’s score. We focus on horsemanship and fun at our rides and want to see everyone having fun!
5. Extra points are NOT given in a CTC/AOC. Rider may not gain extra points by performing an obstacle in another manner. Rider is expected to perform the obstacle as written on their obstacle sheet in their division only. IE- a pleasure rider may not execute an obstacle with the criteria of the open division. The exception to this is for the Master’s Division, who is encouraged to add finesse and style to their obstacle.
6. Buddy riders do not perform the obstacles and are not judged. They should be asked to move down the trail if they attempt the obstacles. This will help move the ride along.

7. ACTHA prefers to have an obstacle completed correctly and calmly as opposed to fast. Judges are not to record the time it takes a rider to perform the obstacle.
8. Judges are not to allow riders to try and school their horse through an obstacle once their time is up.
9. Judges should not tell other competitors how any other competitor performed at an obstacle, or who timed out, how others navigated the obstacle, or any information that could be considered advantageous to another rider at any time.
10. Keep competitor safety in mind at all times. While not encouraged, you may move an obstacle if the conditions and footing become unsafe and are expected to do so. Use common sense and alter or change an obstacle whenever circumstances dictate that it is no longer safe. Try to keep the elements of the obstacle as close to the original difficulty as possible. Moving a creek crossing that has become unsafe, or rerouting around a bog is an example of the need to change an obstacle.
11. Judges are to be observant to dangerous situations and may excuse a competitor. Safety is foremost and a judge can stop any dangerous behavior or unsportsmanlike like conduct. Judges have the power to disqualify a contestant for any unsportsmanlike behavior towards anyone – two legged-or four.
12. Judges are always to be polite to contestants, and be careful that contestants do not overhear their comments or conversations with the assistant.
13. Judges are encouraged to have a fun attitude rather than be ‘standoff-ish’. They may comment to a participant on an obstacle. For example, they may say “good job” or “good try”.
14. Judges must conform to ride standards. For example, a centered balanced ride is preferred on a trail ride as opposed to a specific seat or hand position that may be used in a specific sport such as cutting or jumping.
15. Judges are not required to answer questions about a rider’s individual performance.
16. If an accident occurs at your obstacle, call management immediately. Do whatever is necessary to assist, however, do NOT move a back or head injury. Please do whatever is necessary to continue the event as soon as possible.

**SCORING** - At each obstacle, both the horse and rider each start with a score of 10 (20 pts). Points are deducted based on the performance of horse and rider separately. If a rider makes a LEGITIMATE attempt at an obstacle, they should receive a score other than a zero, unless they do something that would warrant a zero (see below). The key is to be consistent in your scoring and the best way to do that is with just a little prep work before riders arrive. Look at your obstacle and imagine what your vision of a perfect execution would look like from the horse and from the rider. Write down 3-5 mistakes that a horse could make. Write down 3-5 mistakes that a rider could make. Assign a negative (like -2, -1, -4) for those mistakes based on the severity of those mistakes. Now as each horse comes through your obstacle, you’ve got a firm idea of what it should look like, and can be consistent in scoring for the same mistakes.

If the obstacle is not performed as instructed, the rider should get a score, albeit a much lower score. An example would be where the criteria called for a trot over the poles and the rider walked. It is better for the rider to perform the obstacle safely than to risk life and limb. Another example would be a rider executing ¾ of the obstacle and opting to exit the obstacle so as not to time out. They should receive a score because they didn't time out, they attempted the obstacle but just did not complete it, or complete it as instructed.

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**SCORING SCALE: 10=Excellent, 9=Very Good, 8=Good, 7=Fairly Good, 6=Satisfactory, 5=Sufficient, 4=Insufficient, 3=Fairly Poor, 2=Very Poor, 1=Extremely Poor, 0=Not Executed/No Try**

1. (+) Pluses are used at the judge's discretion and will help break ties. A plus can be given for a high level of communication, a superb performance or for an excellent try with a green horse, for example. Judge can award just one plus to horse and/or one plus to rider for any score range. You can only give one plus to each member of the team (horse/rider), for a total of 2 per obstacle.

Comments are to be given for zeroes and disqualifications, but are encouraged for any scores. This is extremely helpful to know if a competitor timed out, or performed the obstacle incorrectly. You do not have time to write a comment for every rider and this cannot hold up the event. **Judges are strongly encouraged to add comments for any score under a 4**

2. In a bog situation a judge may instruct a rider to dismount a struggling horse. In this instance a score may be given to the horse and rider team.

**Zeros** - A zero is tied to a specific obstacle, not the entire event. Reasons for a Zero would be

- a. Passing an obstacle without a legitimate attempt. There's no shame in passing an obstacle without making an attempt (which is cause for a zero), and at the end of the day it's about having a good time out there and relaxing – we don't want to cause more stress and we want everyone coming back on the top side, safe and sound.
- b. Dismounting within the obstacle for a safety reason, either at the direction of the judge or rider's decision. The exceptions for this would be if the rider dropped the "prop" being used and the judge okayed dismounting to retrieve prop (rope, rock, slicker, etc), but time would still be running, or if the obstacle called for a dismount. The judge must be consistent in this rule.
- c. **"Safety call" – when the judge requests you dismount for safety reasons**
- d. **Going completely "off course."** We intend this to mean that the horse and rider leave the general area of the obstacle, not a hoof "out of bounds." It is intended that the rider has adequate control of their mount to keep it within the general boundaries of the obstacle. Going off course, such as not entering or exiting through the markers, or veering off well outside of the obstacle perimeters. We're not talking one hoof out of the obstacle perimeters, or turning left instead of right, or executing exactly per directions. The score should be affected significantly by those mistakes, but should not result in a zero.
- e. **There is NO LONGER A ZERO FOR A TIME OUT**

3. **Disqualifications** – A DQ applies to the entire event, not just one obstacle. It means that while you may be allowed to continue along the trail, that none of your scores will count and you will



be marked as disqualified for the entire event. Reasons for a DQ would be (1) Fall of horse or rider. By fall of rider, we mean involuntary dismount. If you do an emergency dismount, you did not fall – declare it before you bail!! Horse is considered down if any point of the horse above the knee touches the ground. (2) VERY noticeable lameness or injury, or a horse in severe physical stress. We're mean this as 3 legged lame, not just a little off, or an older horse's unique "way of going." The term "serviceably sound" should apply. (3) The use of excessive force or unsportsmanlike behavior directed towards anyone, two legged, or four is not okay and will be grounds for disqualification. (4) Ponying or leading someone's horse will result in the ponied horse being DQ'd. (IE – crossing a creek, or road) – be safe, but be aware, and safety first! (5) KNOWINGLY straying from the trail will result in a DQ – we're not talking getting lost and going back to find your way on the trail, but deliberately making a shortcut.

**JUDGING CRITERIA** - As a general rule – Judges should be looking for the following from the rider – finesse, a balanced ride, proper use of aids, hands, good communication, and partnership; from the horse – a willingness to perform, athleticism, bravery, skill, good attitude and a nice way of going. Rhythm, balance, cadence, and smoothness of gait should be expected.

- Judges must know the standards for good equitation:
  - head up
  - heels down
  - elbows in
  - centered in their saddle
  - hands in front of their saddle ( not too high )
  - ears, shoulders, hips, heels in a straight line
- Judges must know the following in regards to trail riding:
  - A trail horse should be held on LIGHT contact to allow for balance and slight adjustment.
  - Riders may grab mane going uphill with no penalty.
  - Riders must get their weight off their horse's loins going uphill. A rider should be slightly out of the saddle (English 2 point). Western riders cannot bend as far forward, but they must still get their seat out of the saddle.

4. When judging the horse, you should be looking for a horse that is happy to be out on the trail, a willing partner, with a nice way of going. The horse should be moving in balance, with rhythm and cadence, relaxed, ears forward (at least not pinned), trusting and working in harmony with his rider.

**POINT DEDUCTION EXAMPLES** - Judges are given discretion as to the amount of points deducted from each horse and rider score. If you are consistent, the format works beautifully! For example, if you deduct 2 points for nicking a log, deduct 2 points from all who nick the log.

1. Horse may lose points for backing away or side-stepping an obstacle.
2. Sniffing an obstacle is not a refusal, however if a horse demonstrates more than a slight hesitation this shows a lack of bravery and the horse should receive point deduction(s).
3. Refinement will score higher than very obvious cues.
4. Horses opening their mouths, gaping, and arguing with their riders will receive a lower score. For example, ears flat back, kicking out, bucking, or biting.
5. Riders should appear balanced and in control.
6. Leaning will be penalized.
7. Riders are to get off their horses back/loins going uphill by maintaining an up and forward position.
8. Any harsh use of bits or spurs will be penalized at the judge's discretion.

9. Horses should not rush obstacles; calmness will score higher than nervousness.
10. Nicking, or stepping on a pole will receive point deduction(s). Dislodging a pole will receive a higher point deduction. Stumbling will receive the most severe point deduction(s).
11. Horse and rider should appear relaxed and natural for a high score.
12. A natural head set is very acceptable in a trail horse. A raised head may show a tense or nervous horse, judge discretion advised.

**What an Obstacle Sheet Looks Like** – Notice the handwritten scoring notes so that when riders execute the obstacle that scoring is consistent.

Obstacle #4 It's Raining, It's Pouring: Slicker														
Division	Time Limit	Description												
Junior	30 seconds	Stop parallel with fence. Pick up slicker and rub on horse's neck (one side)												
Plr / Scout	30 seconds	Stop parallel with fence. Pick up slicker and rub on horse's neck (one side)												
Open	30 seconds	Walk to cone, sidepass over to fence, drape slicker on front (both sides), hindquarters, both sides, turn on forehand and replace back on fence												
Judging Criteria:														
<u><b>Slicker (raincoat) (O/P)</b></u> Rider should not hand-cuff themselves by placing both hands in the slicker at once (penalty). Riders should never let go of their reins, one hand should have control of the reins. IF HORSE PANICS THE JUDGE IS TO INSTRUCT RIDER TO DROP THE SLICKER IMMEDIATELY. The judge is looking for a calm and still horse. Points will be deducted for movement or poor attitude on the part of the horse. The rider is to stay in control of the horse and stay balanced.		Harsh use of aids will be penalized. <u><b>Stop (P)</b></u> Horse is to stop in a balanced fashion. Open horses should stop quickly to achieve a high score. Horses should stop in a straight line. Penalize a head toss, open mouth, or any form of resistance. Penalize any steps past the stop marker.												
<u><b>Turn on the Forehand (O)</b></u> The front legs of the horse will remain relatively still, while the hind end crosses over. All rules of good balanced equitation apply.		<div>Scoring Note Example</div> <table><tr><th>Horse</th><th>Rider</th></tr><tr><td>-2 poor stop</td><td>-2 heavy hands</td></tr><tr><td>-3 spook</td><td>-3 drops slicker</td></tr><tr><td>-1 slight start</td><td>-1 "checks" horse after stop</td></tr><tr><td>-2 no cross on TOF</td><td>-1 rider leans/off balance</td></tr><tr><td>-2 horse moves</td><td>-3 Drops reins</td></tr></table>	Horse	Rider	-2 poor stop	-2 heavy hands	-3 spook	-3 drops slicker	-1 slight start	-1 "checks" horse after stop	-2 no cross on TOF	-1 rider leans/off balance	-2 horse moves	-3 Drops reins
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**What a Score Sheet Looks Like** – Make sure that you fill in the Obstacle Name and Number as well as Your Name in the top section. Please write clearly, and remember you **MUST** explain any 0's. (time out, no attempt, off course, etc). If time allows, you can enter comments, suggestions and compliments in the comments section, but don't hold up the flow of the ride just to record comments. Riders love comments, but not at the expense of backing up riders at your obstacles and causing a long delay!

You'll also see a column for "Judges Pick" Each judge will be looking for the horse/rider team that really stands out to them for whatever reason they see fit. It could be the wise old horse that takes care of a novice rider, the cute pony with the adorable child, the rider that opts to dismount and take the zero because it is the "right choice" for the horse, or it could be the rider who just "bombs" the obstacle, but laughs all the way through it without punishing their horse. It is a great reason to give a prize to someone who may not necessarily earn a performance ribbon, but was having a good time, doing the right thing, or exhibiting good sportsmanship at an obstacle. At the awards ceremony, judges will recognize their "Judges Pick", explain why, and award a Cavallo hoof pick to the winner. Winners of the Judges Pick Awards (one for each obstacle) are automatically entered into the drawing for The Cavallo/ACTHA Equestrian Vacation.

SCORING PER OBSTACLE: 20 points total (10 points total for horse & 10 points total for rider);  
PLUSES: Give pluses to horse, rider, or both in any score range for an exemplary attempt.

10 = Excellent, 9 = Very Good, 8 = Good, 7 = Fairly Good, 6 = Satisfactory  
5 = Sufficient, 4 = Insufficient, 3 = Fairly Poor, 2 = Poor, 1 = Very Poor, 0 = Not Executed

Obstacle:				Judge:						
#	DIV	Rider Name	Horse		Rider		Total (Manual Only)		Judges Pick	Comments
			Score	Plus	Score	Plus	Score	Plus		
101	P	Alyssa Yogerst								
102	J	Abbegail Menendez								
103	S	Karen Block								
104	S	Becky Overland								
105	S	Christy Fields								

**What Next?** After all of your riders have been through, and the safety rider (last rider) has come through your obstacle, you are released to return to camp. Prior arrangements should have been made for you to get back to camp, either by someone transporting you back, or you coming back on your own. Do not leave your obstacle until you're SURE every rider has been accounted for, either by coming through your obstacle, no show, or returned to camp.

**Back At Camp** - Once you return to camp, YOU should read your scores to the scorekeeper while they enter into the computer. This is a way to double check your entries and make sure you made notes on any zeroes and can ask questions about anything that happened at your obstacle that may be questionable. This is the time to raise any concerns about rule violations, or questions regarding scoring, execution or anything out of the ordinary.

Make sure you have your Cavallo Hoof Pick to award at the ceremony and make a note of who and why they deserve it! It's a thoughtful prize and means a lot for someone to be recognized for something special.

Please make sure that your host has your contact information, including email address so that ACTHA can send you ACTHA Bucks discount coupons for volunteering at the event. You may receive an email or phone call asking for feedback about your experience. If you have any feedback, comments or suggestions that you'd like to share, please email them to [trailboss@actha.us](mailto:trailboss@actha.us) and we'll get back to you – YOU ARE ACTHA!

From the bottom of our hearts, and the horses we all work so hard to help, thank you! Because of volunteers like you, we helped a horse in need today.

If, at any time you have questions, need help, or more information about your obstacle, judging, or a rule clarification, please call us, drop us a line, or check our website. We're here for you!

## ACTHA 2015-2016 RULES effective 6-1-15

*This Rulebook supersedes all previous editions. The rules published here are effective June 1, 2015 unless otherwise specified at the time of their enactment. These rules will remain in effect except as superseded by rule changes enacted by ACTHA Board of Directors. Refer to ACTHA's website for the most updated version of the rules. Any differences between information on our website, printed material, social media, and this handbook shall be governed by the official rules in this handbook.*

### **American Competitive Trail Horse Association, Inc. Mission Statement**

It is the mission, duty and purpose of ACTHA, Inc. to address, educate, coordinate, and provide aid and relief to unwanted, unused, abandoned or abused equines on a national level. ACTHA's mission is to provide a venue for the trail rider to participate in the sport of competitive trail riding, focusing on educating participants in all aspects of the equine, care, training, as well as the importance of being a good steward of our natural resources (land, water, and the animals entrusted in our care). To create an enjoyable venue showcasing the wonderful attributes of the great American trail horse and granting the recognition they so richly deserve. Leading by example, ACTHA donates 20% of its share of member rider proceeds from each event to registered 501(c)3 organizations (usually equine charities providing care for horses in need), and provides a vehicle for organizations and individuals to raise funds to support their causes. Our mission also focuses on creating and enabling humane treatment and employment options for every able-bodied equine, reducing the burden on local, state, and federal programs to support the ever-growing problem of unwanted, unused, abandoned, or abused equines. To further our mission, ACTHA will create and maintain a registry open to all breeds and a point designation system which will stay with each horse for its lifetime, thereby adding to their value and distinction.

### **1. Definitions.**

- a. American Competitive Trail Horse, Inc., is herein recognized as ACTHA.
- b. A 'Competitive Trail Challenge' is herein referred to as a CTC.
- c. An 'ACTHA Obstacle Challenge' is herein referred to as an AOC.
- d. Rules shall be specified by the word 'MUST'/'MUST NOT'. Rules **MUST** be abided by. They are **NOT** Suggestions.
- e. Suggestions shall be specified by the word 'SHOULD'. Although they do not have to be complied to, they are proposals which are recommended by ACTHA.
- f. A 'minor' is an individual under the age of 18.
- g. A 'junior' is an individual between the ages of 7 and 15.

**2. ACTHA's Disclaimer of Responsibility for Safety.** ACTHA does not assume responsibility for the safety of participants, volunteers, or attendees at any ACTHA sanctioned event. ACTHA event hosts act as independent contractors, agreeing to hold the event according to ACTHA rules, which are designed to promote friendly, fair, casual competition. Event Hosts are responsible for the safety of participants. Safety is a concern of everyone, but ACTHA does not assume responsibility for the safety of horse or human.

- a. All riders assume the risk of horseback riding as participants in an ACTHA event. All riders **MUST** sign a waiver of liability acknowledging their assumption of risk in order to participate in a CTC/AOC. This is done online if you register for a CTC/AOC online, otherwise it **MUST** be signed at the event.

### **3. Membership**

- a. *Membership Types*
  - i. Annual Membership consists of a 12-month period beginning with the date of purchase and expiring 12 months later.
  - ii. 30 Day Trial Membership is available to individuals who wish to explore the benefits of ACTHA without the commitment of an annual membership. Trial memberships will automatically convert to an annual membership at the end of the trial period. The auto-renew feature may be disabled by the member any time prior to renewal.
- b. *Membership Accounts.* Members may select a single membership, a family of 2 membership, or a family of 4 membership.
  - i. Additional family members and horses may be added to these accounts for an additional fee as outlined in the membership tab of a member's account.
- c. *Membership Add-ons.* There are value add-ons available to members to reward frequent riders. Because each membership type and account is priced differently, total membership cost will be dependent upon which package the member chooses. Benefits and costs are outlined on the 'Membership' tab on the ACTHA website.
- d. *Membership Responsibilities.* Membership in ACTHA is by mutual agreement. Membership therefore, may be terminated by ACTHA for cause detrimental to the interest of ACTHA, its events, objectives and pleasurable



relationship of its members, as determined by the Board of Directors or Steering Committee. By participating in ACTHA events, a participant agrees to hold ACTHA and its management harmless from any damage incurred as a result of membership or participation in ACTHA activities. Members are responsible for understanding the current rules as they appear on the rules page of our website and agree to abide by same. All ACTHA members have the responsibility to obey and be bound by the rules of the organization.

i. ACTHA reserves the right to refuse entry or disqualify participants at its discretion for any reason, including, but not limited to, inhumane treatment of animals, poor sportsmanship, or failure to pay debt to ACTHA or ACTHA event host, being under the influence of alcohol or any other personality altering drug or for any reason.

ii. ACTHA operates on an honor system. Any participant who displays dishonest character with regard to ACTHA competition will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from the association, loss of points, and being banned from participation in future events.

e. *Cancellation of Membership.* Either party may cancel membership for any reason or pro-rated standard membership dues will be refunded. Membership add-ons are not refundable.

**4. Media Rule.** Attendance at an ACTHA approved event, in whatever capacity, shall constitute authorization for ACTHA, its agents, designees, or assigns to photograph, video tape, or record by other means (hereinafter referred to as “photographic material”) any person or animal participating, and shall further constitute authorization for the use of the photographic material in any manner that ACTHA, in its sole discretion, determines would be beneficial to promoting the purposes and goals of ACTHA; provided, however, that no photographic material or related information will be used in conjunction with the endorsement of any product unless prior written consent is obtained. Attendance at an ACTHA event shall further constitute agreement to the terms and conditions outlined above, and shall constitute a waiver and release, without limitation, for photographic material obtained at an ACTHA event to be used for promotional purposes, with no obligation or promise of compensation for said use of photographic material.

## **5. Divisions of ACTHA**

a. *Masters Division (formerly Mentor Division)* Open to riders 18 years and older. Obstacles are to be executed per open division requirements, but the expectation is for a much higher degree of finesse and riders may include additional maneuvers into the execution of the obstacle within the time limit set. Riders must be a member of ACTHA and is open to clinicians, instructors, trainers or professionals. Open competitors are not required to move up to this division, but may do so once reaching Platinum Status. Participants will be judged, will receive 4 points for competing, unless the division is qualified per the new qualifying rules (see below) in which case it will earn as per standard point structure. Benefits include points towards Achievement Program. Additional prizes at discretion of individual host. Neither ribbons nor prizes are required to be awarded for this division. This is a new division for 2015-2016, and may grow to include benefits of other competitive divisions as participation increases.

b. *Open Division* - Open to riders 7 years and older. This is a competitive division open to members. Obstacles will be more difficult than those of the Pleasure Division. Benefits include 1<sup>st</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> ribbons, points towards State and National Standings, Achievement Program and one entry into ACTHA Adventure Giveaway. Additional prizes, cash POP prize, cash jackpot and additional awards at discretion of individual ACTHA event host. Additional prizes and awards are not required and are solely at the discretion of individual ACTHA event host and may widely vary at each event.

c. *Competitive Pleasure Division* – Open to riders 7 years and older. This is a competitive division open to members. Obstacles will be technically less difficult than those of the Open Division. Team must move up at the beginning of the new season after winning 3 blue ribbons in this division. Benefits include 1<sup>st</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> ribbons, points towards State and National Standings, Achievement Program and one entry into ACTHA Adventure Giveaway. Additional prizes, cash POP prize, cash jackpot and additional awards at discretion of individual ACTHA event host. A Competitive Pleasure Division rider may voluntarily “try” Open Division and may be allowed to come back down to pleasure so long as they have not earned more than 10 points. Once a Pleasure Rider has earned 10 points in the open division, they may not step back down to pleasure on that same horse. Additional prizes and awards are not required and are solely at the discretion of individual ACTHA event host and may widely vary at each event. The option to dismount and perform an obstacle “in hand” in the pleasure division for Arena Obstacle Challenges is no longer allowed. It is accommodated within its own separate division/class.

d. *Rookie Pleasure Division*- Open to riders 7 years and older. This is a competitive division open to members. Obstacles will be identical to those in the Competitive Pleasure Division and offers an optional “half step” for Scout Riders or anyone wishing to start off in a novice type competitive division. Team must move up at the beginning of the new season after accruing 25 points. Benefits include 1<sup>st</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> ribbons, points towards State and National Standings, Achievement Program and one entry into ACTHA Adventure Giveaway. Additional prizes, cash POP

prize, cash jackpot and additional awards at discretion of individual ACTHA event host. Additional prizes and awards are not required and are solely at the discretion of individual ACTHA event host and may widely vary at each event. A Rookie Pleasure Division rider may voluntarily “try” Open Division and may be allowed to come back down to pleasure so long as they have not earned more than 10 points. Once a Pleasure Rider has earned 10 points in the open division, they may not step back down to pleasure on that same horse. The option to dismount and perform an obstacle “in hand” in the pleasure division for Arena Obstacle Challenges is no longer allowed. It is accommodated within its own separate division/class.

- i. Note on grandfathering current Pleasure Riders and their points – Current Pleasure participants who currently have more than 25 points are not eligible to participate in Rookie Pleasure. Current Pleasure participants with less than 25 points as of 6/1/15 will be eligible to register for either division. For example, Rider A has 15 points as of 5/31/15. She is eligible to ride in Rookie Pleasure for the 2015-2016 season. If she chooses to register for an event on 6/6/15 in the Competitive Pleasure Division, she can choose to voluntarily step up to that division. Once A Rookie Pleasure Rider has competed in Competitive Pleasure, they may not step back down to Rookie Pleasure Division, regardless of having received a ribbon or not.
- e. Scout Division – Open to riders 7 years and older. This is a competitive division open to both ACTHA members and non-members. Obstacles will be executed identically to the Competitive and Rookie Pleasure Division. Team must move up at the beginning of the new season after winning 3 blue ribbons in this division. There are no achievement award points, or points for national or state standings. Benefits include 1<sup>st</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> ribbons. Additional prizes and awards are not required and are solely at the discretion of individual ACTHA event host and may widely vary at each event. “Rookie Scouts” enjoy a reduced entry fee for their first full season (members only). All scouts compete in a single division, regardless of membership status or rookie status.
- f. Buddy Division - Open to riders 7 years and older. This is a non-competitive division open to both ACTHA members and non-members. Buddy riders participate on the trail ride but do not participate in the judged obstacles. There are no ribbons, points, or additional prizes for this recreational rider division.
- g. Junior Division - Open to riders age 7-15. This is a competitive division open to ACTHA members. Juniors MUST wear a SEI/ASTM approved riding helmet and be accompanied by an adult rider. One adult rider may accompany up to five junior riders. Each junior rider must provide written authorization from their parent or legal guardian permitting the minor to participate in the event. Obstacle difficulty is similar to the pleasure division. Juniors may win ribbons and prizes, but are not eligible to participate for jackpot cash prizes.
- h. Staff Division – This is a competitive division open to ACTHA staff. Riders to perform obstacles and receive a score. Scores are not to be announced at the event, but will be posted online, no prizes, ribbons or awards, but horses will accrue points towards the Medal Achievement Program.
- i. VIP Entry - This has been modified to describe an entry, not a division and may be used at ACTHA’s discretion. VIP riders will be placed into an appropriate division and are to be used for public relations, sponsors, media, and high profile guests. Riders will receive all benefits entitled to the division in which they are placed.
- j. In Hand Division - This division is available to members only, in Arena Obstacle Challenges only. Obstacles must be performed on lead, and all participants are judged on partnership and execution of the obstacle from the ground. Participants may choose to enter this “class/division” either as a stand-alone entry or in addition to a mounted division. Judging criteria developed in partnership with Parelli Natural Horsemanship, which focuses on a willing partner and good communication skills with your horse; all styles of ground work are welcome and encouraged; it is the result and partnership that is being judged. If a participant elects to compete in both In Hand and a Mounted Division, the Mounted Division “run” must be performed prior to the In Hand “run.” The reason for this is to keep the playing field level for all mounted contestants. The In Hand Division is not required to be offered at every ACTHA Arena Obstacle Challenge and is entirely at the event host’s discretion. It will be clearly noted on the AOC event page as to the availability at a particular event. . Benefits include 1<sup>st</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> ribbons, points towards State and National Standings, Medals Achievement Program. Additional prizes or awards are at the discretion of the individual ACTHA event host but are not required and may widely vary at each event. A horse may be shown in hand by one person and then ridden in a competitive division by another participant, but the horse may only compete once “In Hand.” Minors MUST wear a helmet when competing “In-Hand.”
- k. Therapeutic Division - This is available ONLY at accredited therapeutic centers, who have the skills and resources to accommodate riders who are participants in a therapeutic riding program. It is only available in

AOCs. Participants may be assisted or independent riders, aged 7 and up. A horse may be used multiple times in a Therapeutic Class/Division, but will only receive points for their highest placing, per event. Fee is to be that of Scout Riders.

**6. Moving Between Divisions of ACTHA.** We have designed the divisions of ACTHA to welcome all levels of riders and horses.

- a. Riders are permitted to move between divisions as they see fit. For example, if a rider usually rides the open division with their most seasoned horse and that horse goes lame, the rider may ride the pleasure division with a less seasoned horse on a subsequent CTC. If a rider usually competes in pleasure and purchases a horse that has competed in open division, the horse and rider TEAM has the option to compete in competitive pleasure, rookie pleasure or open. The determination as to which divisions are available to a horse and rider is based on the team performance, not the performance of an individual. It is intended that the rider strives towards moving up in levels and difficulty, and riders are encouraged to participate in the division which best suits *their* horsemanship level and challenges the team for better performance.
- b. *Juniors.* Junior riders may compete in any division. If a junior begins the ACTHA season as a junior rider but turns 16 before the end of the season, they may continue to ride in the Junior division for the remainder of the current season.
- c. *Scouts.* Scouts must move up to Open or Pleasure (Rookie or Competitive) division at the beginning of the season following the participant having earned 3 blue ribbons in Scout Division on one horse. A scout may bump up into Rookie or Competitive Pleasure and come back down to Scout until such time as they have earned 10 points in either Competitive Pleasure or Rookie Pleasure.
- d. *Rookie Pleasure.* Team must move up at the beginning of the new season after accruing 25 points. A Rookie Pleasure Division rider may voluntarily “try” Open Division and may be allowed to come back down to pleasure so long as they have not earned more than 10 points. Once a Pleasure Rider has earned 10 points in the open division, they may not step back down to pleasure (Rookie or Competitive) on that same horse. Once a rider has earned 10 points in the Rookie Pleasure Division or Competitive Pleasure, or Open Division of a qualified ride, they **MUST** not ride in the Scout division on that same horse.
- e. *Competitive Pleasure.* Team must move up to the Open Division at the beginning of the new season after winning 3 blue ribbons in the Competitive Pleasure division. A Competitive Pleasure Division rider may voluntarily “try” Open Division and may be allowed to come back down to pleasure so long as they have not earned more than 10 points in the Open Division. Once a Pleasure Rider has earned 10 points in the open division, they may not step back down to pleasure on that same horse.
- f. *Masters Division* (formerly *Mentor Division*). Open competitors are not required to move up to this division, but may do so once reaching Platinum Status. Participants will be judged, will receive 4 points for competing, unless the division is qualified.

**7. Equipment Regulations at ACTHA Events**

- a. Proper equestrian attire **MUST** be worn. No shorts, sneaker, flip flops.
- b. Riders should dress for the discipline in which they are riding. Riders **SHOULD** use tack and ride in the style that is traditional and accepted by their discipline. Chaps or chinks **SHOULD** be worn if appropriate. ‘Equestrian casual’ is acceptable, but neatly dressed.
- c. A rider **SHOULD** carry for their use on the trail: lead rope, halter, hoof pick, knife, identification, and a bottle of drinking water.
- d. Horses **MUST** wear some form of **HEADGEAR**, such as a bridle or hackamore. If an English or Western style hackamore, bosal, or side pull is questionable, rider must show proof that the device was manufactured/advertised/sold as a hackamore. All publicized hackamores/bitless bridles are allowed (Parelli Natural Hackamore, Advantage Horsemanship Bitless Bridle, Dr. Cook’s for example)
- e. Horses **MUST NOT** wear a halter by itself with lead rope or reins attached. If a halter is worn, it **MUST** be worn under some type of headgear.
- f. Horses **MUST** wear some type of **SADDLE**. No bareback pads, or saddles without stirrups.
- g. Training devices such as martingales (standing, running, German) of any kind, or tie-downs **MUST NOT** be used during an AOC/CTC. No form of head restraint other than a bridle is permitted, this includes an over-check.

- h. Protective Sport Boots are permitted for your horse during a CTC/AOC. The use of a protective hoof boot for an unshod horse is permitted.
- i. No props, or other distractions or devices may be carried on the ride (radios, toys, tarps, etc). Rhythm beads are acceptable.
- j. Crops, spurs, dressage whips, carrot/handy sticks, and other aids are allowed; how they are used will be taken into account and riders will be judged accordingly. Excessively harsh use of aids, or abuse of the horse will result in disqualification from the competition.
- k. While not required, participants in the In-Hand Division SHOULD use a rope halter and lead rope.
- l. Minors (under 18) MUST wear a helmet any time while mounted, or competing "In-Hand."

## **8. Rules Relating to Equines**

- a. Horses MUST be tied to horse trailers or trees. Horses must not be tied to fences or anything that cannot withstand the pressure of a horse pulling back. Horses may be tied to a picket line. If your horse needs to be tied to a tree, we suggest using a Tree Saver Tie. Contestants may use portable electric fences or portable corrals if permitted by the Ride Host.
- b. Rider MUST enter with a serviceably sound equine and assumes all responsibility for the horse's actions.
- c. All horses MUST finish the event at a "sound trot" or comparable gait which will be determined by a judge. Disputes as to soundness will be resolved by ride host sending a video to ACTHA where a final determination will be made.
- d. Competing with Stallions.
  - i. Stallions are permitted in ACTHA events but MUST NOT be shown by a minor rider (under the age of 18 years of age).
  - ii. Stallions MUST be identified by securing a yellow ribbon to its tail.
  - iii. Stallions MUST be double tied to trailers.
  - iv. Stallions may be kept in permanent stalls, but may not be kept in portable stalls, portable electric or portable non-electric pens. Stationary, heavy duty arena/gate panels may be used, providing they have been pre-approved for use by sending photo to ACTHA and with permission of event host.
  - v. When with other riders, the stallion rider MUST give verbal notification to other participants that he/she is riding a stallion.
  - vi. Stallion riders/handlers must make every effort to ensure the safety of their stallion and the safety of other horses, riders, and spectators.
  - vii. Stallions behaving in an unruly manner may be disqualified and asked to be removed from the premises.
  - viii. Stallion riders will be disqualified and asked to remove the stallion from the premises if the rider does not comply with the "Stallion Handling" rules.

## **9. Rules Governing Attendance at an ACTHA Event**

- a. Riders MUST produce appropriate state required health papers for their horse to the ACTHA Ride Host, and it is the rider's responsibility to be aware what is required by their individual state. (E.g. Coggins, Health Certificate, Brand Inspections)
- b. ACTHA does not approve of the use of any performance enhancing equine pharmaceuticals. Any ACTHA participant who is able to be held accountable for such behavior will face suspension from ACTHA for up to one full competition season from the incident date, which will be determined at ACTHA's discretion.
- c. The use of any excessive force or unsportsmanlike behavior by an ACTHA participant directed towards another rider/ride staff/equine is subject to disqualification, at a length which will be determined at ACTHA's discretion.
- d. Alcohol MUST NOT be consumed or carried on a CTC/AOC by an ACTHA participant before or during the event.
- e. Firearms MUST NOT be carried on a CTC/AOC.
- f. If permitted by the Ride Host, and if allowed at the venue, dogs MUST be on a leash at all times. Pets MUST NOT accompany a rider on the CTC trail or in the AOC arena; this includes pets on the ground, on the horse, or on the person.
- g. Accidents/injuries are handled by Ride Management. All riders are expected to continue riding the trail in the competition, so as not to hold up the ride. If an accompanying rider chooses to stay at the scene of an accident, the rider bears the responsibility.

## **10. Rules Relating to Event Sizes, Divisions and Points.**

- a. All events, no matter the size of any division will carry points towards the medal achievements program.



b. In order for an event to count towards national or state standings the following attendance must be reached for a division. Open, Competitive Pleasure, Rookie Pleasure, and Junior Divisions will be considered “qualified events” for the purposes of determining National and State rankings based on the following:

- i. Masters Division 4 unique riders
- ii. Open Division – 20% of entered unique riders (rounded up) or 4, whichever is fewer
- iii. Competitive Pleasure Division – 30% of entered unique riders (rounded up) or 5, whichever is fewer
- iv. Rookie Pleasure Division 30% of entered unique riders (rounded up) or 5, whichever is fewer
- v. Junior Division - 20% of unique riders (rounded up) or 3 riders, whichever is fewer
- vi. In Hand – 30% of unique riders (rounded up) or 5, whichever is fewer

*Example 1: An event has 12 riders. 20% of 12 = 2.4 riders (rounded up to 3) 3 riders would be necessary to make it a qualified open division.*

*Example 2: An event has 52 riders. 20% of 52 riders = 11.4 riders (rounded up to 12) 4 riders would be necessary to make it a qualified open division (Based on the rule 20% or 4, whichever is less).*

- c. An event may have one division qualified and not another. In other words, each division is qualified, not the entire event.
- d. A unique rider is defined as one rider. While a participant is allowed to ride more than one horse in an AOC, the rider is counted only once per division as making the division qualified. A rider may be counted once for each division, meaning if the rider competes in open on horse A, and then in pleasure on horse B, the rider would count in both open and pleasure as a unique rider. A horse may be ridden only once in an AOC, with the exception of in the Therapeutic Division.
- e. Riders who appear on the roster, but “no show” are counted towards a qualified event. ACTHA recognizes that “no-shows” happen, however, abuse of this rule by host or rider may result in ACTHA removing the rider from the roster.
- f. Events with fewer than 12 participants 36 hours from start of event **may** be cancelled or rescheduled, depending on several factors, including geographic location, the host’s efforts, and the likelihood of having a number of competitors that makes an event viable.
  - i. If event is cancelled, all registration fees will automatically credited to the rider’s ACTHA account. A refund to the rider’s credit card will be made promptly upon request. There will be no fees associated with refunding a credit card for an event that has been cancelled. The event host will send an email and make an effort to reach riders by phone, however it is the rider’s responsibility to check the event status prior to leaving to attend for an event in the event of last minute changes due to weather or lack of attendance. ACTHA will make every attempt to assist the event host to exceed 12 riders by actively marketing their event.

## **11. Rules Governing Participation at an ACTHA Event & Event Sign Up**

- a. Rude or unsportsmanlike behavior to a host, judge, volunteer, another participant, or ACTHA staff member may result in being disqualified from the event and membership revocation.
- b. Minors **MUST** wear a SEI/ASTM approved riding helmet and **MUST** have a release form signed by a parent/guardian at the event. Parents and legal guardians of minors must review the ACTHA Rules and safe riding procedures with their child prior to their participation in a CTC/AOC. A minor is not eligible for jackpot cash prizes. Minors **MUST** wear a helmet when competing “In-Hand.”
- c. Participants **MUST NOT** ride the course or practice the obstacles on the course prior to the event.
- d. If a horse or rider is added incorrectly to a roster, corrections may be made before the ride close date or by notifying ACTHA.
- e. *Hosts may, at their discretion accept late registrations after the event close.* The post entry fee is \$20. No Cash accepted – credit card only. Riders with or without an ACTHA Membership or ACTHA account are eligible for post entries. Hosts can add this option and disclosure will show on their event page. It may not be removed within 48 hours of the event.
  - i. Late fee will be waived for riders who have already registered for one event and wishes to compete in additional events at the same location with the same (or partnered) hosts (*registered for Saturday and now wants to stay and ride for Sunday*).
- f. Late registrations (after event close) in Open or Pleasure Divisions will not participate in POP Cash Prize.
- g. Event close date is determined by the Ride Host. It is the responsibility of the competitor to register prior to closing date to avoid possible late fees or inability to participate.

## **12. The ACTHA Logo and Images**

- a. The ACTHA logo may be used on any printed advertisement, website, or flyers to advertise any scheduled ACTHA sanctioned event.

- b. The ACTHA logo may be used on any banner or signage that a Ride Host wishes to have printed for their event.
- c. ACTHA Ride Hosts may use the ACTHA logo for print on any awards which are to be given out at an ACTHA sanctioned event.
- d. Merchandise with the ACTHA logo MUST NOT be printed for resale in any manner without explicit written permission from ACTHA.
- e. The ACTHA logo or the ACTHA name MUST NOT be used in conjunction with any clinic or organized event that is not approved by ACTHA.
- f. Any ACTHA member wishing to use the ACTHA logo for any other purpose MUST contact ACTHA for permission.

### **13. Rules Governing Event Organization & Responsibility of Hosts**

- a. ACTHA recognizes that every ride is different, every ride host is an individual and we are excited to offer our ride hosts and riders the opportunity to make their event personalized for a unique experience. We require hosts to fully disclose any restrictions, or special events; it is the rider's responsibility to read each event's offerings carefully, as they may vary from event to event. Any fees for 'extras' are collected by the host, at the event.
- b. An Event Host MUST NOT ride in an event that they are hosting. A family member of the Event Host may participate only if they have no knowledge of the obstacle course for that particular CTC/AOC.
- c. CTC's and AOC's can be held any day, any time at the Ride Host's discretion.
- d. ACTHA is responsible for providing adequate judging criteria and information to event hosts. It is the responsibility of the event host to ensure that all judges have reviewed and understand ACTHA rules, judging procedures and standards.
- e. CTC's and AOC's must be stand-alone events and no other events shall take place during the actual event causing it to change format.
- f. Ride host MUST NOT hold any competing event on the same weekend as their ACTHA event at the same location or use ACTHA name, logo or materials to promote a similar type event without explicit permission from ACTHA management prior to event.
- g. Ride Hosts have the latitude to change an obstacle it is determined that weather has created an unsafe situation. Host and judges MUST use safety and common sense. An example may be a water crossing that has become boggy. The event host or the judge has the authority to move the obstacle to a safer water crossing further up or down from the original. Every attempt will be made to keep the obstacle exactly the same or as close to the original obstacle as possible. If unable to do so (in the opinion of the host), all scores from the obstacle will be discarded.
- h. Donations given directly to an Event Host are not tax deductible using ACTHA's non-profit status. The donation is being given to the Event Host not to ACTHA. In order for any donation to be considered a tax deductible donation, the immediate recipient must be a registered non-profit. Example – The ride host is a non-profit organization.
- i. Donations given directly to ACTHA are considered tax-deductible contributions and donations. A receipt for any contributions or donations may be requested by calling our office or emailing [support@actha.us](mailto:support@actha.us).

### **14. Competition Rules, In General**

- a. A competitor MUST only complete obstacles at their division level. For example, a Pleasure Division rider MUST NOT complete Open Division obstacles during an event for extra points if they are riding as a Pleasure Division rider. Stay in your Division, and complete the obstacles of your division for the entire event. The exception to this rule is for the Masters Division. They may add elements to the execution of their obstacle to show finesse, control, and partnership, however time constraints will still apply.
- b. Event Host MUST hold a mandatory Riders Briefing. It SHOULD cover the rules, the course, the obstacles, and the "flow" of the event.
- c. Participants MUST be given a list of the obstacles and the expectation for performance prior to the start of the competition.
- d. A rider MUST NOT 'Pony' a horse from another horse during a CTC at any time, with the exception of helping another rider to safety. If a rider requires the help of any other rider in the assistance of being 'ponied', that rider will be disqualified. The rider ponying the horse needing help will not be penalized.
- e. A rider may voluntarily dismount from their horse at any time, but MUST remain mounted when moving forward, with the exception of walking forward a SHORT distance to find a suitable mounting aid.
- f. A rider may not lead his horse in order to advance any distance down the trail. If a rider cannot safely maintain forward movement down the trail while being ridden, the horse may be led or 'ponied' to a place of safety, but the rider will receive a disqualification. An example of this may be a water crossing with no alternative route. In this case, a horse refusing to cross water may be 'ponied' or led across the water, but will incur a disqualification.

- g. A rider may stop their horse to water at any stream or pond during a CTC ride, but they **MUST NOT** be watered at a judged obstacle, due to time constraints on the ride (this will cause a ride to back up). A rider can allow their horse to drink before or after a water obstacle but a rider **MUST NOT** allow their horse to drink during a judged obstacle.
- h. A 'Fall' of a Rider is a disqualification. A 'fall' of a rider is described as any involuntary dismount. This will be based on the honor system. Any ACTHA participant who displays dishonest character will face suspension from ACTHA for up to one full competition season from the incident date, which will be determined at ACTHA's discretion.
- i. A 'Fall' of a Horse is a disqualification. A 'Fall' of a horse can be described, as when a horse drops to the ground at a point above his knees, such as their shoulders for any reason, to include "laying down" of a horse. Any fall which involves the horse falling to their knees or below is regarded as a stumble. This will be based on the honor system. Any ACTHA participant who fails to report a fall will face suspension from ACTHA for up to one full competition season from the incident date, at ACTHA's discretion.
- j. Any harsh or unusual use of bits, spurs, or tack will be penalized by the judges as they see fit. Riders **SHOULD** use tack and ride in the style that is traditional and accepted by their discipline. A trail horse needs the use of his head and neck for balance and eyesight, therefore, a soft use of the reins will be appreciated by the judges.
- k. A rider **MUST NOT** interfere with another contestant's performance of an obstacle. To do so will incur a disqualification. (An example of this would be, allowing a horse to water in such a way as to impede the movement of another contestant within the obstacle).
- l. No contestant is to knowingly stray from the trail or cut off distance (short cuts). This will result in a disqualification. Trails should be **WELL MARKED**, so getting lost is not an issue. If a rider does get lost, they should return to the trail as soon as possible. We will leave this matter in the hands of the Ride Host, as to whether the violation was deliberate or the result of getting lost.
- m. A rider **MUST NOT** 'double up' or 'double ride' on a single horse at any time during the CTC/AOC. Two riders **MUST NOT** ride the same horse, at the same time.
- n. If you are at the sight of an obstacle, anywhere within the judge's realm, that judge may judge the horse and rider. For example, a horse misbehaves and refuses to enter through the start cones, points may be deducted from that horse and rider score. If a judge can see you, they may judge you.
- o. All riders ride the same trail/course and have the same obstacles. The difference in the divisions is only the degree of difficulty and performance expectations in executing the obstacle. Typically, when planning obstacles, it **SHOULD** be simple (for juniors), average (for pleasure & scout), difficult (for open and mentor). Buddy riders **DO NOT** perform obstacles, they simply pass them by and ride the trail only.
  - i. Example of how obstacles **SHOULD** be designed to accommodate the different divisions.
    - Cavaletti – Poles – Instructions for all divisions: Navigate the first 6 poles and stop on the 7th pole.
      - a. Junior Division: Trot over the first 6 poles and stop with your horse's front feet just before the 7th pole. Count to 3 and continue down the trail. (30 seconds)
      - b. Pleasure/Scout Division: Trot over the first 6 poles and straddle stop the 7th pole. Count to 3 and continue down the trail. (30 seconds)
      - c. Open & Masters Division: Approach the poles centered, trot over the first 6 poles, straddle stop the 7th pole. Stop for a count of 3, sidepass to the right to the end of the pole. Stop, sidepass left completely off the pole. Stop momentarily and canter out of course. (60 seconds)

## **15. Prizes and Special Events at AOCs and CTCs.**

- a. *POP (Pleasure/Open Pairs)* may be offered at the Event Host's discretion at AOCs and CTCs. At each event every Open rider will be randomly paired with a Pleasure rider and their scores will be added and the highest scoring "pair" will win \$50 CASH (to be shared). The open rider is not required to ride with "their" pleasure riders and visa versa. We encourage camaraderie and helping each other along the way.
- b. *Cash Jackpot.* This may be offered at the discretion of the host. Open and Pleasure (Competitive and Rookie) divisions may ride for monetary prizes provided by an optional Jackpot. Cash is contributed by participating competitors and is collected on the day of the event at registration (\$20 for open/ \$10 for pleasure). All money is disbursed as shown below.
  - i. 1-5 entries pays 1 place 100%
  - ii. 6-10 entries pays 2 places 60/40%
  - iii. 11-15 entries pays 3 places 50/30/20%
  - iv. 16-20 entries pays 4 places 40/30/20/10%
  - v. 21+ entries pays 5 places 30/25/20/15/10%

c. *Cavallo "Judge's Pick" Award.* Each judge will be looking for the horse/rider team that really stands out to them for whatever reason they see fit. It could be the wise old horse that takes care of a novice rider, the cute pony with the adorable child, the rider that opts to dismount and take the zero because it is the "right choice" for the horse, or it could be the rider who just "bombs" the obstacle, but laughs all the way through it without punishing their horse. It is a great reason to give a prize to someone who may not necessarily earn a performance ribbon, but was having a good time, doing the right thing, or exhibiting good sportsmanship at an obstacle. At the awards ceremony, judges will recognize their "Judges Pick", explain why, and award a Cavallo hoof pick to the winner. Winners of the Judges Pick Awards (one for each obstacle) are automatically entered into the drawing for The Cavallo/ACTHA Equine Adventure. You do not have to be a member to win a Judges Pick Award but you have to be a member in order to win the Equine Vacation. A rider is only eligible to be picked once per event as a 'Judges Pick' recipient. The judge SHOULD explain why he/she chose their recipient during the awards ceremony.

## **16. Rules Governing Arena Obstacle Challenges (AOCs)**

- a. An AOC may be held in an arena (open, covered, or indoor), or in a field.
- b. An AOC may have 8-10 obstacles, chosen from the list on the ACTHA website. ACTHA may approve obstacles not on the list that have been submitted in advance, in detail prior to the event. These obstacles are intended to simulate obstacles that might reasonably be expected to find on the trail.
- c. There is a 60 second time limit for each obstacle, or a maximum time on course of 8 minutes total, whichever is less.
- d. Each host may, at their discretion offer the following divisions/classes/formats at their AOC:
  - i. *In Hand Division in Partnership with Parelli.* This Division is open to members only, equines of any age. Participants have 60 seconds to complete each obstacle or a total of 8 minutes in the arena. Horse and competitor are judged on finesse, balance and communication and execution of the obstacle. Any horsemanship philosophy or training method is welcome. A horse may be shown in hand by one person and then ridden in a competitive division by another participant, but the horse may only compete once "In Hand."
  - ii. *Double Down Format.* All riders complete the course once. Scores are not announced. Each rider then has the option to make a second run of the course and the highest score from each obstacle is used to create their official score.
  - iii. *Gamblers Choice Format.* All riders compete the course once. Scores are not announced. EACH rider has the option to throw out their scores from the first run and "re-run" the course in the opposite order, gambling that their second attempt will result in a better score.
  - iv. *Therapeutic Division* - This is available ONLY at accredited therapeutic centers, who have the skills and resources to accommodate riders who are participants in a therapeutic riding program.
- e. There must be a minimum of two judges for an AOC, in which case Judge #1 would be responsible for obstacles 1 through 4 and Judge #2 would be responsible for obstacles 5-8. There may be as many as one judge per obstacle.
- f. Ribbons will be awarded for 1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> place for Open, Competitive Pleasure, Rookie Pleasure, Scout and Junior Division.

## **17. Rules Specific to In Hand Division**

- a. In Hand Division is open to members only.
- b. Equines may be of any age, but MUST be weaned.
- c. Participants in this division may compete in both "In Hand" and in a mounted division (masters/open/pleasure/junior/scout), however mounted "run" MUST be done first.
- d. Rope halter SHOULD be used.
- e. Ribbons 1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> place will be awarded.
- f. A horse may be shown in hand by one person and then ridden in a competitive division by another participant, but the horse may only compete once "In Hand."

## **18. Rules Governing Competitive Trail Challenges (CTCs)**

- a. A CTC SHOULD be 6 miles. Events whose mileage is less than 6 miles or more than 6 miles, MUST be disclosed on the event page. Every effort should be made to be accurate in mileage and terrain.
- b. A CTC may have 6-8 obstacles, chosen from the list on the ACTHA website. ACTHA may approve obstacles not on the list that have been submitted in advance, in detail prior to the event. These obstacles are intended to simulate obstacles that might reasonably be expected to find on the trail.
- c. There SHOULD be at least one judge per obstacle. In an emergency, a judge may be required to judge two obstacles, with prior approval from ACTHA. Approval can be obtained by calling the Host Support Line.



## 19. Rules Governing Judges and Judging

- a. An individual may apply to become a ‘Certified ACTHA Judge’ after meeting the criteria
- b. Judges will earn a complimentary standard membership after judging 5 events (must be registered on the event as a judge).
- c. An ACTHA appointed judge has the right to disqualify a competitor from that judged obstacle, or the remainder of the event, for whatever reason they see fit. Whether it is for safety reasons, unsportsmanlike conduct, dangerous conditions or unsoundness problems exhibited by their horse.
- d. A judge may instruct a particular rider to dismount at any time without incurring a penalty. For instance, a rider drops a rope in the drag. The rider may ask and receive permission to retrieve the rope (time will not stop). If the rider dismounts within an obstacle, when there is no written or verbal instruction to do so, will incur a zero for the rider.
- e. A judge may instruct a rider to dismount for a safety reason during the execution of an obstacle, in which case the rider and horse will receive a zero/zero. Horse may have gotten rope under his tail in a drag obstacle and a wreck is imminent, or a horse is observed in a bog-type situation.
- f. A competitor may ask to be notified when half their time has been completed. (Notification is at the judge discretion and is a courtesy.)
- g. ACTHA will not penalize any rider who rides with two hands on a shanked bit. ACTHA is looking that the horse is offering absolutely no resistance to the bit and is working in a relaxed and comfortable manner. The rider SHOULD not change from one hand to two (or two to one) during the execution of an obstacle (Except where expected to do so in the execution of that particular obstacle i.e. Barrel Pin Wheel, Don’t Feed The Bears, Drag, Frog In The Pond, Gate, Hat Pick Up, Mailbox, Perfect Picture, Slicker, Spanish Pole, Squirt or the new Broken Rein). There is no objection to a rider switching from one hand to two hands between obstacles, whether on the trail or in the arena. ACTHA is looking for no resistance to the bit and that the horse and rider are communicating harmoniously.
- h. Judges SHOULD add comments for any score under a 4.

## 20. Rules Relating to Scoring

- a. ACTHA is committed to ensuring Ride Hosts are educated in ensuring consistency in training and appointing judges for a CTC/AOC. Discrepancies are inevitable. All scores given during an event are FINAL, and MUST NOT be adjusted after the judge has handed in their score cards and they have been processed. Competitors DO NOT have the right to protest or object to a score which they have received.
- b. If a score is entered into the system incorrectly, it may be adjusted/fixed to reflect the scores given at the event and recorded on the original judge’s score sheets. Hosts may be required to submit original judging score sheets to ACTHA by sending photo by phone, fax, scan or snail mail.
- c. Ties SHOULD be broken by any plus points given to horse and rider. If a tie is still present, it may be broken by referring to the hardest obstacle score, and then the next hardest and so on. It is the ride host’s discretion as to the hardest obstacle.
- d. It is optional for Ride Hosts to share the judges handwritten score sheets at the ride.
- e. Points – Horse and rider begin each obstacle with a score of 20 points. Horse and rider team can score a maximum of 20 points for each obstacle (10 for horse, 10 for rider). Plus Points are to reward for a high level of communication, superb performance or for an excellent try with a green horse and are solely at the judge’s discretion. With the exception of the Masters Division, riders MUST NOT gain extra points by performing an obstacle in another manner or with criteria from a different division.  
**SCORING SCALE: 10=Excellent, 9=Very Good, 8=Good, 7=Fairly Good, 6=Satisfactory, 5=Sufficient, 4=Insufficient, 3=Fairly Poor, 2=Very Poor, 1=Extremely Poor, 0=Not Executed/No Try**
- f. A score other than ZERO must be given to the horse and rider team making a legitimate attempt at executing an obstacle, regardless if they are unsuccessful at executing the obstacle or go over the time allotted. Riders will receive a score for a legitimate attempt, even if they are not successful at the obstacle, so long as they do not otherwise do something to warrant a zero (see below).
- g. Zeroes will be given for
  - i. NO attempt
  - ii. Voluntary dismount in the obstacle when not specifically called for during obstacle execution.
  - iii. “Safety call” – when the judge requests you dismount for safety reasons.
  - iv. Going completely “off course.” We intend this to mean that the horse and rider leave the general area of the obstacle, not a hoof “out of bounds.” It is intended that the rider has adequate control of their mount to keep it within the general boundaries of the obstacle.
  - v. There is NO LONGER A ZERO FOR A TIME OUT.

- h. *Time Penalty* – A 5 point penalty will apply against each horse and rider for going over time (-5 for horse and -5 for rider), but in no instance will team be allowed to continue more than 30 seconds over time allotted. Judge will thank the rider and ask them to move along. The score may be anything less than zero/zero.
  - i. Example: Rider A adequately performs and completes the obstacle, but goes over the allotted time by 10 seconds. Let's assume he would have scored an 8 and a 9. With the time penalty, the score would be 3 and 4.
  - ii. Example: Rider B struggles, but completes the obstacle, also goes over the allotted time by 10 seconds. Let's assume he would have scored a 4 and a 5, barring a time penalty. With the time penalty the score would be a 1 and a 1 (because a score other than zero must be awarded for a try). No negative numbers are allowed in scoring.
- i. *Disqualifications* – ACTHA strives not to have any DQ's on a ride. Reasons for a DQ would be
  - i. Improper equipment on the trail – No sneakers, no bareback pads, no shorts, no tie downs, no martingales, no training equipment of any kind that will restrict head movement.
  - ii. Stallion not identified – Stallions MUST have a yellow ribbon in their tail and double tied when tied.
  - iii. Involuntary fall of horse or rider. Horse is considered down if any point of the horse above the knee touches the ground for ANY reason.
  - iv. Intentionally going off trail to create a short cut
  - v. Very noticeable lameness or injury. (ie. Severe girth gall, bleeding cut, or metabolic stress)
  - vi. Rude or unsportsmanlike behavior to anyone – 4 legged or 2.
- j. (+) Pluses are used at the judge's discretion and will help break ties. A plus can be given for a high level of communication, a superb performance or for an excellent try with a green horse, for example. Judge can award just one plus to horse and/or one plus to rider for any score range. You can only give one plus to each member of the team (horse/rider), for a total of 2 per obstacle

## **21. Rules Violations and Protests**

- a. Any rider who wants to file a protest for a rule violation may do so by submitting the protest in writing to ACTHA (637 Soda Creek Rd., Spicewood, TX 78669). The rule violation must be witnessed and signed by 2 ACTHA riders along with a check for \$50. The written protest must be received within 3 days of the event. A staff member of ACTHA, along with the Ride Host and a judge will decide the outcome of the protest. If the protest is in favor of the rider, the check will not be cashed. Protests must relate to rule violations and may not refer to scoring issues. Scoring issues will be taken up with the Ride Host directly.
- b. ACTHA Steering Committee is the forum within ACTHA that reviews alleged violations of rules and protests by participants. A participant may be disciplined, suspended, and/or expelled, and may be denied any or all ACTHA privileges.

## **22. ACTHA Rules and Guidelines**

- a. *ACTHA Rules.* ACTHA 2015-2016 Rules supersedes all previous editions. The rules published on our website are effective as of the date on the top of the rule book. The rules will remain in effect except as superseded by rule changes enacted by the ACTHA Board of Directors. Every effort will be made to avoid mid-season rule changes, however if a change becomes necessary to maintain a level playing field for all participants, for safety reasons, or to accommodate special circumstances that did not exist at the beginning of the season, such changes will be posted on page 1 of the rules with the effective date of the change, the reason for the change. Any changes will have at least a 30 day notice, with the exception of a rule for safety concern. Refer to ACTHA's website for the most updated version of the rules. Any differences between rules and information on our website, publications, or social media shall be governed by the official rules on our website.
- b. *Rule Changes.* Any member may request a rule change for the next season by submitting the proposed change, in writing to ACTHA, 637 Soda Creek Rd, Spicewood, TX 78669. It must be accompanied by the signatures of 20 ACTHA members in good standing who are in support of the proposed rule change. Proposed rule changes will be reviewed annually by ACTHA Steering Committee, Board of Directors and ACTHA management by April 30th of each calendar year

## **23. State and National Champions**

- a. 2015-2016 season will begin on June 1, 2015 and end on June 30, 2016 (13 months). Thereafter it will begin on July 1<sup>st</sup> of each year and end on June 30<sup>th</sup>.
- b. ACTHA will recognize the 'Top Ten' ranking participants in the Open, Competitive Pleasure, Rookie Pleasure, In Hand, and Junior Divisions.
- c. Winners must have a current ACTHA membership.
- d. The National Champion in each division is not entitled to earn the State Championship on the same horse.

- e. A rider may win national titles in several divisions on different horses, or national title in one division and state title in another division on a different horse.
- f. *Determining National Champion Rankings.* The average of your 7 best finishes in events with a qualified division are used for National standings. You must have competed in at least 7 qualified division events in the same division, only two of which may be AOCs.
  - i. The average of the top 7 finishes will be calculated to determine the winner. Ties, if any, will be broken by adding the next level (8<sup>th</sup>) best ride to determine the highest average. If a tie still exists, the next (9<sup>th</sup>) best ride will be used, and will continue until the tie is broken. Pluses (+’s) will not play a factor in winning the National Championship.
  - ii. For tie breaking purposes, both CTCs and AOCs will be counted. This is only in tie breaker situations.
- g. *Determining State Champion Rankings.* The average of your best 5 finishes in events with a qualified division are used for State Rankings. You must have competed in at least 5 qualified division events in the same division, only two of which may be AOCs.
  - i. Each state must have at least 5 events in that state to be eligible to claim a State Champion.
  - ii. State winners will use their top 5 finishes, regardless of what state they have ridden in, only two of which may be AOCs.
  - iii. In cases where a rider has ridden in multiple states multiple times, the points will go towards their average in the state in which they live (their home state). It doesn't matter where you ride, you're competing for the state championship in the state in which you live.
  - iv. Ties, if any, will be broken by adding the next level (6<sup>th</sup>) best ride to determine the highest average. If a tie still exists, the next (7<sup>th</sup>) best ride will be used, and will continue until the tie is broken. Plus points will not play a factor in winning the national or state championship. For tie breaking purposes, both CTCs and AOCs both will be counted. This is only in tie breaker situations. Example: Participant A has 7 rides - 3 AOCs and 4 CTCs.. We will use the 5 highest points, two of which may be from AOCs.
- h. Prizes for National and State Champion Winners will be shown on the ‘Scores’ page of our website.

**24. Achievement Awards Program.** ACTHA recognizes and embraces the efforts of every competitive trail organization’s efforts and that they play a vital role in the success of our mission. In keeping with our mission as well as every equine organization’s shared responsibility to our equine friends, beginning June 1, 2015, ACTHA will recognize other organizations competitive trail challenges and arena challenges (or comparable events) to count towards ACTHA Achievement Awards.

- a. The organization must be recognized as a legal and legitimate equine organization with the ability to verify event roster and placements.
- b. The points must be earned while the horse and rider are registered and active members of ACTHA.
- c. We will recognize competitive trail events both on the trail and in the arena, where riders receive a score/placement (not a trail ride). Examples are organizations such as AERC, NATRC, SOCA, EXCA, ECTRA, TTC, AQHA, breed shows, or any recognized trail class, comparable to our AOC. The list of organizations we include in this program will be posted on our website on June 1, 2015 and will be updated regularly. To recommend an organization be included in this program please contact [medals@actha.us](mailto:medals@actha.us) for consideration.
- d. Points will be awarded only for achievement awards and will not count towards state or national standings.
- e. Horses earn points towards achievement awards so long as the horse is ridden by an ACTHA member in approved divisions (masters, open, pleasure, junior or comparable divisions).
- f. Scout and Buddy division participants do not receive points towards achievement awards.
- g. Points stay with the horse throughout its lifetime, regardless of the owner’s membership status or change in ownership of the horse. Every attempt will be made to track the horse’s accomplishments, regardless what organization the horse may compete in.
- h. Achievement Awards are given to the owner of record at the time that the award level is achieved. An owner may assign an “authorized rider” to ride the event in ACTHA competitions to earn points towards achievement awards. Both horse owner and rider must have valid member accounts. Points earned while owner or rider is not a member do not count towards achievement awards.
- i. Points will be awarded as follows for AOCs and CTCs:
 

1 <sup>st</sup> place=7 points	2 <sup>nd</sup> place= 6 points	3 <sup>rd</sup> place=5 points
4 <sup>th</sup> place=4 points	5 <sup>th</sup> place= 3 points	6 <sup>th</sup> place = 2 points
Completion with no DQ = 1 point		

In keeping with our expanded mission of better horsemanship and improved education opportunities for our participants, we have reaffirmed our relationship with PNH and embraced their goal to help raise the level of horsemanship worldwide for the benefit of horses and the people who love them. To that end, we are pleased to announce ACTHA Arena Challenges “*In Hand Division*” *inspired and in partnership with Pat & Linda Parelli*. They graciously provide educational materials, judging criteria and generously share how developing skills and partnership in hand leads to a better riding experience for horse and rider.

### ACTHA AOC PARELLI IN- HAND DIVISION

The skills/obstacles will be the same as listed on the riding challenges, with some variation... In Hand Challenges are based on the principals, concepts and criteria of Parelli Natural Horsemanship which is broad enough to encompass all effective in hand training methods.

While any training method or philosophy may be used to participate in our In Hand Division, we feel strongly that Parelli Natural Horsemanship program encompasses and embraces the experience of the master horsemen, Tom Dorrance, Ray Hunt, Ronnie Willis, and Dr. Robert Miller. For more information on Parelli Natural Horsemanship go to Parelli.com.

#### JUDGING:

Parelli uses “PHASES”, in other words, subtle cues that start with an almost invisible “SUGGESTION”, and then if needed, a polite “ASK” -(very soft communication). A little more obvious pressure has a mild penalty and is considered a “TELL” -(pressure applied to the horse’s personal bubble), and a more severe penalty for following through with a “PROMISE” -(which is pressure applied to the horse itself either with the lead rope or training stick). A horse’s positive response to a request will be just as important as if being ridden. Horse should look at obstacle, then calmly follow the suggestion of the handler, demonstrating trust and respect.

Phases:            1) Suggestion            2) Ask            3) Tell            4) Promise

#### ZONEOLOGY:

There are 5 Zones for ease of identifying the position of handler and his tools that will affect the movements of his horse. Zone 1 is in front of the horse, the muzzle, up to the front of the halter (nose). Zone 2 is behind the halter to the withers and chest. Zone 3 is behind the withers, includes the front legs, rib cage, to the hip. Zone 4 is behind the hip, includes the hind legs to the dock of the tail. Zone 5 is the tail (and behind the horse). If a handler is leading his horse, he will be in Zone 1. If the handler is sending his horse on, he will be in either Zone 2, 3, or 4. For long lining, he will be standing in Zone 5, safely out of kicking range. (**Picture chart of Zones**)

#### EQUIPMENT:

Horse must be wearing a halter, rope halter suggested but not required, lead rope (approx. 12’ or 22’in length) OR long lines (driving reins). A carrot stick (training stick) or Dressage style whip may be utilized. No mechanical devices, chains, side reins or other restricting equipment, however long lines may be used.

Different lengths of rope will be used and rewarded in judging criteria according to how far away the handler is from his horse. (approx. 12 feet, 22 feet or long (driving) lines). The farther (and less influence) the handler has on enforcing the completion of the obstacle, the better, and pluses can be earned. Ropes are to be folded in a ribbon VS looped in a coil for safety. Long Line Driving from Z5 for Open Division only.

#### COMMUNICATION:

There are 7 Games in Parelli communication that are understood by the horse. In essence, it is the language of the horse. The first three are the **Principle Games**- the alphabet for horses.



Game 1 is the Friendly Game and is defined as rhythmic motion (a rub, a scratch, a rest period, etc.)

Game 2, the Porcupine Game, (rub, press, rub.) is **steady** pressure that increases if no yield is given. (The difference between a yield and evasion is, the horse moves his feet only when there is contact, then stops moving when the pressure stops VS the horse jumps away from, and avoids, the Handler.)

Game 3, the Driving Game is **rhythmic** pressure. The Phases for each should always be soft and subtle, using Phases, never big and frightening. Like with riding, we are looking for a dance between partners.

The Porcupine game (steady pressure) will always score higher than the Driving Game (rhythmic pressure) and The Friendly Game (stroking, scratching, etc.) will score highest when used to reward a try. (**Video demo**)

The other 4 Games are **Purpose** Games, Yoyo (forwards and backwards), Circle, Sideways and Squeeze (over, under, through something).

The ACTHA obstacles are examples of the Purpose Games!

Stick to me Game is another game where the handler walks next to horse in Z2 as they travel together. Horse is responsible for staying with his human like a mare and foal. For safety, handler will always be on SAME SIDE as an potentially spooky obstacle. (**Video demo**)

## **TECHNIQUE:**

**SAFTY FIRST!** To send a horse to an obstacle, the horse goes first, **WITHOUT** being lead.

Horses held too close to the lead rope clip, have a chance to push into and step on their handler! There should be plenty of space between horse and human. To do this, the handler will back horse out of his personal space, then with the leading hand, ask the horse forward with a little feel, driving with the stick or end of lead rope at the shoulder, to encourage the horse to move out and away from the Handler, towards the obstacle. **REFINEMENT** looks like the handler subtly motioning the direction of the horse- as “step this way...” with a light Phase 1 or 2.

Ropes should be loose, any horse pulling (showing resistance) on the rope will be penalized. The rope should be long enough for the horse to take full responsibility for his actions, yet short enough not to get stepped on. **TOOL HANDLING SKILLS** are necessary to complete a smooth and responsive look, and will be judged accordingly. (**Video demo**)

Any obstacle that can be efficiently and safely completed on the off side (right side) of the horse will earn a plus.

Handler must hold rope at all times, and holding the clip will be penalized.

Handler will not stand in front of a horse crossing a bridge, jump, water obstacle, etc.

If Long Line Driving, Handler will keep safe distance from horse. Horse is to respect the Handler's personal space.

Jr/Sc- Lead rope and stick or dressage whip (optional, can use popper at end of lead rope instead of stick)

Pleasure- Lead rope and stick or dressage whip (stick/whip is optional, can use end of lead rope)

Open- Lead rope OR long lines, (stick/whip/surcingle optional)

## **OBSTACLES:**

*360 degree turn/spin-* Handler will stand in Z2 to complete this obstacle, using either Porcupine or Driving Game to ask horse to turn/spin.

*Animal on the Run-* Handler stands either in Z1 (Jr/Sc/Pl) with the animal passing in front of the horse OR in Z5 (Open) with the animal passing behind the horse.

*Back-* The handler stands in Z1 (Jr/Sc/Pl) to back the horse, OR in Z5 (Open), using either the Porcupine or Driving Game to complete obstacle.

*BANK Down-* Handler stands in Z 2, 3, 4, OR 5 using the Driving game.

*BANK Up-* Z 2, 3, 4, OR 5 using Driving Game.

*Barrel Board Pin Wheel-* This will be a Stick to me Game (Z 2) where the handler walks between the horse and the Pin Wheel, one hand holds the end of the board and the other remains close enough to pet the horse on the neck as they circle together. All ropes will be ribboned VS coiled for safety. If the horse spooks, his lead can be let out to allow him to safely drift out and away.

*Bridge* Z 2, 3, 4, or 5, Driving Game.

*Campsite-* Stick to me Game, Z 2

*Canter-* This is done as a Circle Game (horse circles human) at canter. Minimal aids used, horse canters easily from walk or trot, without stopping on his own, and leaves the rope loose. Open: Walk canter transition or a change of direction may be used or Z5 with long lines- showing leads and lead changes.

*Close Encounters-* Jr/Sc/Pl: Handler stands between obstacle and horse, asks horse to turn and face the obstacle, and remain still as it passes, can then follow it to build confidence. Open: Horse is asked to back up as object approaches, then follow it.

*Curbside-* Jr/Sc/Pl: Z1 Driving Game. Handler asks horse to swing HQ to simulate mounting. Open: Z3, Driving Game, side pass towards the mounting object.

*Dismount-* Jr/Sc/Pl: Stand next to horse, picking up both front feet from just one side. Open: Pick up all four feet from just one side.

*Don't Feed the Bears-* Z1 while backing away from the obstacle, horse behind you. Open- Handler in Z5 while driving horse forward away from obstacle, one hand on lines, one on pulley rope (ribboned, not coiled), back up to lower.

*Don't Spray Me-* Send the horse to the object to see if he will touch it with his nose as a Friendly Game. Spray neck. Open: Spray ears, neck, belly, and legs.

*Downhill-* Can use Stick to me Game (Z2) or Driving Game Z2, 3, 4. Open: Stop at bottom of hill for 10 count.

*Drag-* Z1 with handler pulling drag and horse following. Horse travels straight. Open: Z5 Driving with handler pulling drag behind him, (one hand on lines, one on the drag rope, (ribboned, not coiled) OR Z1, backing horse in front of Handler as he pulls the drag toward horse. Horse backs straight.

*Frog in a Pond-* Jr/ Sc/ Pl: Toss frog from Z1, horse behind handler. Open: Toss frog from other side of pond towards horse into the water.

*Gate-* Send horse through without bumping into gate. Keep one hand on gate at all times. Horse turns and faces on other side, can send back through the other direction. Open- horse backs through with handler at Z1 or long line through from Z5. (one hand on the lines, one on the gate.)

*Hat Pick up-* Send horse to touch hat with his nose as a Friendly Game. Open- Can tell horse to fetch the hat.

*Jump-* Z2, 3, 4 Send horse over the jump using Driving Game. Open- Send horse at canter. Z5 long lines- jump, halt back up.

*L-Back-* This is completed as a Porcupine Game from Z1 Open Z1 or Z5 with long lines. Optional, can back by the tail for a plus.

*Labyrinth-* Porcupine Game at Z1. Open- Z1 OR Z5 with long lines. May back by tail for a plus.

*Mailbox-* Send horse (Driving Game) to put his nose on the mailbox (Friendly Game.) Open: Side pass horse to mailbox.

*Mount-* Simulate mounting. Handler gets up on block, stump, fence, etc. and asks horse to side pass toward it. Rub and scratch horse's back. Open- horse straddles log for simulated mounting.

*Noise Control-* Jr/Sc/Pl stands in Z1 between horse and noise. Open- Horse is asked to follow noise with Handler in Z1, 2, 3. Z5 long lines, back horse towards noise for plus. (DO NOT back towards noise from Z1).

*Perfect Picture-* Jr/Sc/Pl: Send horse to stand in ring. Take picture as horse stands quietly. Open: Have 2 rings, one for the horse and one for the handler. Stand in small ring and send the horse to his. Take his picture as he stands quietly.

*Poles-* Jr/Sc/Pl: Z2, 3, 4. This can be done as a Stick to me Game or a Driving Game. Open- 45' lariat or long lines.

*Recycle-* Jr/ Sc/ Pl: Z2, 3, 4 as a Driving Game. Open: Handler has horse stand quietly in center, then back out.

*Side Pass-* To be completed from Z1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 as a Porcupine Game or Driving Game. Open: Handler asks horse to side pass both directions.

*Slicker-* Jr/Sc/Pl Friendly Game. Send your horse to put his nose on the raincoat. Rub your horse in Z2. Open- Send horse to put his nose on it then rub all over.

*Spanish Pole-* Lift pole and send horse through to turn and face on other side. Open- send through, holding pole, turn and send through the other direction.

*Spider web-* Stand in Z2, 3, 4, or 5 using the Driving Game to send through. Open: Horse trots through.

*Squirt- Friendly Game-* stand in between horse and target in Z1, 2. Open- can complete as a Stick to me Game.

*Stop- Z2, 3, 4, or 5. Driving Game.* Open: Stop and Back 10 steps

*Straight Arrow- Z2, 3, 4, or 5. Stick to me or Driving Game.* Open: Go through and Back 10 steps.

*Tarp- Z2, 3, 4, or 5. Driving Game.* Open: Stop in middle for 10 seconds, back out.

*Trot transitions- Z2, 3, 4, or 5. Stick to me or Driving Game.* Open: Afterwards, stop for a count of 10 seconds.

*Trot Weave- Use cones, barrels, etc. (low ground objects for this obstacle). Z2, 3, 4, or 5. Stick to me or Driving Game.* Open: Handler on off side.

*Turn on the Forehand- Z4 Using Porcupine or Driving Game.* Open: Both directions.

*Turn on the Haunches- Z2 Using Porcupine or Driving Game.* Open: Both directions.

*Uphill- Z2, 3, 4, or 5. Can be completed as Stick to me Game or Driving Game.*

*Vine Simulator- Z2, 3, 4, or 5. Send horse through, turn, face, and wait.*

*Wagon Wheel- Stand on one side of the wheel, send horse through. Open can long line around wheel.*

*Water Obstacle- Z2, 3, 4, or 5. Driving Game.*

*Wildlife Box- Z2, 3, 4, or 5. Driving Game.*

*Narrows- Z2. 3, 4, or 5. Driving Game.*

*Broken Rein- Stand next to horse at the shoulder, and bend his head around as an indirect rein, yielding his HQ 360% both directions, rub face while bent to a stop. Open- 360 % both directions AND back horse from Z2 by lifting rope straight up (towards horse's ears.)*