



2026 MIHA Rule Change Proposals

February 14, 2026

Annual Winter Meeting

Dear MIHA Members,

Attached please find 22 proposed rule changes for your consideration. Please review the proposals prior to the February 14th meeting and bring your questions, comments, or concerns (or if you are unable to attend, channel them through your coaches and district chairs). Please refer to the MIHA Constitution found at miha.org for specifics regarding voting eligibility, methods, etc., and reach out to your District Chair if you have any questions.

A summary of some relevant sections regarding voting:

- A team must have competed for one season to obtain a vote at the following annual membership meeting.
- Teams that have not competed for two or more years shall be deemed inactive and relinquish their voting rights.
- Teams who have submitted an intent to withdraw from MIHA will have no vote.
- The registered adult coach or person designated by the coach representing their team shall cast one vote. Votes shall be one per team. A Junior Division team shall be considered a separate team and has its own vote.
- Coaches and District Chairs (DCs), or those filling in for coaches or DCs with a properly submitted proxy, will be able to vote. There is one vote per active team or district regardless of the number of registered coaches or DCs. Proxy forms may be found at miha.org. Signed copies should be brought to the winter meeting. If possible, they should also be sent to mihaexecutiveboard@gmail.com in advance of the winter meeting to speed up the check-in process.
- If a team/coach has not submitted their prior year financial report and met all necessary financial obligations prior to the Winter Meeting, they will not be considered in good standing, they will not be allowed to vote, and no proxy will be allowed for that team/coach.
- If someone abstains from voting, they have given up their vote on that issue. Abstaining and giving up their vote results in them no longer being counted as an eligible voter for that issue.

A few points regarding the proposals:

- In the top right corner of each proposal, you'll see the proposal number (26-x), who votes on it (all coaches or high school coaches only), and the majority needed to pass (>2/3, or >50%). Please note there are no junior team only rule proposals this year. If you coach junior and senior teams, keep that in mind at sign in. You'll want to sign in as a senior division coach. (Junior team coaches, you'll only vote on the proposals marked "all vote".) One vote per person—one coach cannot vote as junior and senior even if they coach both teams (however you can proxy your junior vote to another person physically present and not already voting, if desired). Rule change proposals that deal with changes to the constitution and bylaws require greater than 2/3 approval to pass. Proposals that deal only with the show rules section require a simple majority to pass, greater than 50% approval.

- Proposals are organized in the order they will appear in the rulebook.
- Proposals 25-12 and 25-13 both deal with a proposed change in fence height for high school equitation over fences. If 25-12 passes, 25-13 will be withdrawn. If 25-12 does not pass, 25-13 will continue to a vote.
- Tracker software updates that become necessary due to approved rule changes may delay implementation of those rule changes.

A few points regarding the winter meeting itself:

- The person or district proposing the rule change will introduce the proposal. They will have the floor for up to three minutes.
- All wishing to comment on the proposal, ask questions, or propose a friendly amendment (relatively minor change to the proposal) will need to come forward to the microphone and introduce themselves by name and district. Each person will have up to two minutes to speak. If friendly amendments are proposed, it is up to the discretion of the original proposal writer to accept or reject them prior to the vote.
- Once the vote is called for, the line to speak will be closed. Those already in line will have the opportunity to speak, but no one else will be added. A balance between efficiency and healthy debate should be considered when calling for the vote.
- Each speaker will have one opportunity to speak, per rule change proposal. After all in line before the vote is called have spoken, the person proposing the rule change will have the opportunity to briefly answer any questions that were asked by speakers, for no more than two minutes.

Submitting proposals for next year's winter meeting:

- It is never too early to submit a rule change proposal. The earlier you submit, the more opportunity there is for feedback, questions, and potential updates prior to voting.
- Use the rule change proposal form at miha.org or submit using a different typed format (Microsoft Word, etc.) with all information requested on the rule change proposal form included.
- Write your proposal exactly as you want it to appear in the rulebook.
- Emailing proposals to mihaexecutiveboard@gmail.com is recommended, or a hard copy may be mailed to Lucy Brown, MIHA Rules Chair, 7737 Big Hand Rd., Columbus, MI 48063, or both.
- For each rule change proposal, submit a separate \$10 check payable to MIHA. Mail them to the address above.
- December 31st is the deadline for rule change proposal submittals each year.

Please feel free to reach out with any questions. We will be reprinting rulebooks this season and a copy will be posted at miha.org for download. Thank you in advance for your participation and see you soon!

Lucy Brown
 MIHA Rules Chair
miharuleschair@gmail.com

26-1

RULE CHANGE PROPOSAL

District Number:

Name:

Tracy Walker

Phone Number:

248-974-8159

Sr. only vote
66% +

Please state rule as written (include page number, article, and section):

No Current Rule

Please state proposed rule change (include page number, article, and section):

P.12 Article XII L. Riders and Mounts– Walk–Trot/Jog Only Rider Designation (High School)

1. A rider in grades 9–12 must be designated as a Walk–Trot/Jog Only rider for competition in Western, Saddle Seat and/or Hunt Seat equitation classes only no later than the close of registration of the current season.
2. A rider may be designated as “Walk–Trot/Jog Only” for one (1) competition season during their MIHA high school eligibility. This designation is permitted only for a rider’s first season on the team.
3. Walk–Trot/Jog Only designation shall be tracked by use of the MIHA Walk–Trot/Jog Rider Designation form. Rider may not change or cross-enter from Walk–Trot/Jog to canter/lope class during a single season.
4. A rider designated as Walk–Trot/Jog Only may not enter, compete in, or be slotted into any class requiring the canter/jog, regardless of discipline. Riders may enter showmanship classes, as those are not under saddle.
5. Walk–Trot/Jog classes shall count toward overall team slot total, as noted in section Article XIV – Team Structure and Slotting Rules.
6. Walk–Trot/Jog riders shall be awarded points towards the overall team total in accordance with Article VII – Competition, Section D.
7. At the discretion of the District Chairperson or Regional Chairperson, all Walk–Trot/Jog Only riders entered in a class shall compete together either at the beginning or at the conclusion of the class to facilitate judging, safety, and efficient class management.
8. Any rider who participates in Walk–Trot/Jog Only classes for more than one (1) competition season, or who competes in both Walk–Trot/Jog Only classes and classes requiring the canter at any level of competition (District, Regional, or State), shall be disqualified from the applicable classes and all team points earned in those classes shall be forfeited.

p 117

Please state proposed rule change (include page number, article, and section):

Pg 1-2 B. Article VII – Competition

Suggested Class Order at the high school meets shall be:

1. Western Fitting and Showing
2. Hunt Seat Fitting and Showing
3. Saddle Seat Fitting and Showing
4. Saddle Seat Equitation
5. Saddle Seat Walk-Trot Equitation
6. Saddle Seat Pattern
7. Saddle Seat Bareback
8. Hunt Seat Equitation
9. Hunt Seat Walk-Trot Equitation
10. Hunt Seat Bareback
11. Equitation Over Fences
12. Western Horsemanship
13. Western Walk-Jog Horsemanship
14. Western Bareback
15. Western Reining or Ranch Riding
16. Trail
17. Flag Race
18. Cloverleaf
19. Timed Events Pattern
20. Two-Person Relay Race

26-1
p. 2/7

Please state proposed rule change (include page number, article, and section):

P. 33 Western Performance Classes

I. Western Walk-Jog Horsemanship (High School)

1. Gaits: Horses shall be shown at the walk and jog only. Riders may be required to post or sit the jog and demonstrate correct diagonals. Loping is prohibited. Any break into a lope shall result in disqualification.
2. Patterns: No new patterns are required for Walk-Jog only classes. Existing MIHA Equitation patterns shall be used with all loping canter elements omitted. Options for riders to maintain pattern flow may include diagonal changes, sitting the jog, or other adjustments that preserve the intent of the pattern.
3. Judging: Classes shall be judged using MIHA appropriate seat equitation standards, excluding lope requirements. Emphasis shall be placed on equitation, balance, rhythm, accuracy, and correctness at the walk and jog.

Pg. 36 Saddle Seat Performance Classes

E. Saddle Seat Walk-Trot Equitation (High School)

1. Gaits: Horses shall be shown at the walk and trot only. Riders may be required to post or sit the trot and demonstrate correct diagonals. Cantering is prohibited. Any break into a canter shall result in disqualification.
2. Patterns: No new patterns are required for Walk-Trot Only classes. Existing MIHA Equitation patterns shall be used with all canter elements omitted. Options for riders to maintain pattern flow may include diagonal changes, sitting the trot, or other adjustments that preserve the intent of the pattern.
3. Judging: Classes shall be judged using MIHA appropriate seat equitation standards, excluding canter requirements. Emphasis shall be placed on equitation, balance, rhythm, accuracy, and correctness at the walk and trot.

Pg. 40 Hunt Seat Classes

F. English Walk-Trot Equitation (High School)

1. Gaits: Horses shall be shown at the walk and trot only. Riders may be required to post or sit the trot and demonstrate correct diagonals. Cantering is prohibited. Any break into a canter shall result in disqualification.
2. Patterns: No new patterns are required for Walk-Trot Only classes. Existing MIHA Equitation patterns shall be used with all canter elements omitted. Options for riders to maintain pattern flow may include diagonal changes, sitting the trot, or other adjustments that preserve the intent of the pattern.
3. Judging: Classes shall be judged using MIHA appropriate seat equitation standards, excluding canter requirements. Emphasis shall be placed on equitation, balance, rhythm, accuracy, and correctness at the walk and trot.

26-1
p. 3/7

Please state proposed rule change (include page number, article, and section):

Apdx P.14 Suggested Class Order

High School
Suggested Class Order

1. Western Fitting and Showing
2. Hunt Seat Fitting and Showing
3. Saddle Seat Fitting and Showing
4. Saddle Seat Equitation
5. Saddle Seat Walk-Trot Equitation
6. Saddle Seat Pattern
7. Saddle Seat Bareback
8. Hunt Seat Equitation
9. Hunt Seat Walk-Trot Equitation
10. Hunt Seat Bareback
11. Equitation Over Fences
12. Western Horsemanship
13. Western Walk-Jog Horsemanship
14. Western Bareback
15. Western Reining or Ranch Riding
16. Trail
17. Flag Race
18. Cloverleaf
19. Timed Event Patterns
20. Two-Person Relay Race

26-1
p. 4/7

Give a brief description of why this rule change is proposed:

Development and Skill Progression

National organizations such as AQHA Congress, 4-H, IEA, USHJA and many A rated shows recognize Walk-Trot/Jog divisions as an essential developmental step, allowing riders to build balance, confidence, and correct fundamentals before progressing to the canter. These perspectives demonstrate that Walk-Trot/Jog classes are not merely "easy" events, but essential tools for skill development, confidence building, inclusivity, and long-term engagement in equestrian sport at a time that participation in MIHA is dwindling. Including such a class aligns with best practices in youth and amateur equestrian programming and supports riders' growth in a fair, structured way. Riders are still judged against strict criteria for position, cues, and performance, all requirements of varsity-level competition.

Safety

Restricting inexperienced riders from cantering aligns with best practices promoted by USEF, 4-H, and breed associations, reducing fall risk and promoting long-term rider success.

Participation and Retention

Walk-Trot/Jog divisions increase accessibility to equestrian competition by allowing riders of varying experience levels to participate without being added to classes they are not ready for or increasing discouragement. In many cases, there are limited to no junior varsity middle school teams to allow for experience. Walk-Trot/Jog serves as a critical stepping stone, keeping students involved longer, developing their skills, and creating a stronger, more committed MIHA community.

Competitive Fairness

This rule allows students to progress appropriately within the equestrian program, moving into varsity-level competition against peers of similar skill and grade level. By encouraging advancement, we support both the development of rider skills and fair competition across all divisions, ensuring a positive and equitable experience for all riders.

Deadline: December 31st of current year

Please submit your rule change and \$10 to:

Lucy Brown, MIHA State Rules Chair
7737 Big Hand Rd.
Columbus, Michigan 48063
MIHAexecutiveboard@gmail.com

Updated 11/08/22

26-1
p. 5/7

MIHA Walk-Trot Rider Designation Form

This form must be filled out by the close of registration for rider to be designated as walk-trot only. Reminder that the rider cannot change this designation throughout the season and are only eligible for Hunt, Saddle Seat and Western equitation classes in addition to showmanship.

miharuleschair@gmail.com [Switch account](#)



Not shared

* Indicates required question

District *

Your answer

School Name (full spelling, no acronyms) *

Your answer

Rider First and Last Name *

Your answer

Birthdate *

Date

mm/dd/yyyy ☐

26-1
p. 6/7



Year Participating Walk-Trot Class *

☐ 2026-2027

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26-1
p 7/7

RULE CHANGE PROPOSAL

District Number:

Name:

Susan Holman

Phone Number:

989-600-8035

26-2
Sr. vote
66-1. T

Please state rule as written (include page number, article, and section):

No current rule

Please state proposed rule change (include page number, article, and section):

p. 4, Article VII—Competition

- O. PROTEST FEES: No fee is required for a protest at the District level. A \$25.00 fee is required for a protest at the Regional level. A \$50.00 fee is required for a protest at the State Meet. All fees must be in cash. At the regional and state level, if a District Chair, Regional Chair, or State Chair is a registered coach, assistant coach, or adult volunteer affiliated with a team, they shall not be permitted to vote on any protest involving that team. This includes situations in which the protest concerns the team, or when that team is the party submitting the protest.

p. 8, Article IX—Organization of Regions, Section D

5. Protests must be in writing and received by the show office prior to the commencement of the next class in your division. Any protest submitted at the Regional Meets, must be accompanied by a fee of \$25.00. This fee will be refunded if the protest is found to be valid. At the regional and state level, if a District Chair, Regional Chair, or State Chair is a registered coach, assistant coach, or adult volunteer affiliated with a team, they shall not be permitted to vote on any protest involving that team. This includes situations in which the protest concerns the team, or when that team is the party submitting the protest.

p. 18, Article XV—Regional/State Championship

- M. Protests must be in writing and received by the show office prior to the commencement of the next class in your division. A \$25.00 fee is required for a protest at the Regional level. A \$50.00 fee is required for a protest at the State Meet. All fees must be in cash. At the regional and state level, if a District Chair, Regional Chair, or State Chair is a registered coach, assistant coach, or adult volunteer affiliated with a team, they shall not be permitted to vote on any protest involving that team. This includes situations in which the protest concerns the team, or when that team is the party submitting the protest.

Give a brief description of why this rule change is proposed

Conflict of interest.

Deadline: December 31st of current year

Please submit your rule change and \$10 check payable to MIHA to:

Lucy Brown, MIHA State Rules Chair

7737 Big Hand Rd.

Columbus, Michigan 48063

MIHAexecutiveboard@gmail.com

p. 1/1

RULE CHANGE PROPOSAL

District Number:

Name:

Tracy Walker

Phone Number:

248-974-8159

26-3.
Sr. Vote
66% +

Please state rule as written (include page number, article, and section):

No Current Rule

Please state proposed rule change (include page number, article, and section):

P. 9 Article X – Organization of Teams

M. High School Single-Rider Intra-District Participation Exception

A student who attends a high school within a school district that has only one (1) registered rider may be permitted to join and compete as a member of another high school team within the same school district. This exception shall apply only when the student's home school is unable to form a team to meet existing MIHA team classification requirements, in the judgment of the former or current head coach, participation with another team within the district is determined to be in the best interest of the student-athlete, or when fiscally needed.

The receiving high school must be within the same public or private school district as the student's home school. The student may compete for only one team per season and may not transfer teams during the season.

Participation under this exception may only occur with the approval of the coach(s) of record and/or the school administration.

Give a brief description of why this rule change is proposed:

The intent of this provision is to eliminate the requirement to form a separate "D Team" solely to accommodate a single rider in a high school. This rule change is proposed to increase participation opportunities for students attending schools with limited rider enrollment. Allowing a single rider to compete with another school in the same district prevents unnecessary costs and time in finding a coach and avoid obtaining needed funding at the expense of a single rider. This also helps the student form bonds with other local riders in their district area. This was approved for private school students and for middle school teams in the past for similar reasons.

Deadline: December 31st of current year

Please submit your rule change and \$10 to:

Lucy Brown, MIHA State Rules Chair

7737 Big Hand Rd.

Columbus, Michigan 48063

MIHAexecutiveboard@gmail.com

p. 1/1

RULE CHANGE PROPOSAL

District Number:

Name:

Jessica Payne

Phone Number:

517-204-2639

26-4
All vote
66% +

Please state rule as written (include page number, article, and section):

Page 10 - Article XI - Coaches and Assistant Coaches - Section G

G. Coaches will be limited to the coaching responsibilities of one school. Individual hardship cases will be reviewed by the Executive Board upon petition by the (team/coach) involved, through their District Chairperson. Assistant Coaches may choose to be limited to the coaching responsibilities of one school or they may choose to assist other coaches/teams, as long as the teams they are assisting do not compete in the same division.

Please state proposed rule change (include page number, article, and section):

Remove Page 10 - Article XI - Coaches and Assistant Coaches - Section G

Give a brief description of why this rule change is proposed:

- While this rule may have been a necessity when MIHA was thriving, with current numbers dwindling over multiple years across the state, it has been increasingly difficult to find proper coaching staff. In order to boost membership, this rule should be removed.
- Assigning a "coach of record" on paper who may not be attending practices or meets does not contribute to the success of the team. Requiring safety training for a coach of record who may never attend a meet or practice is also a safety hazard.
- Allowing an individual to coach multiple teams may help bring back larger groups of kids at a single training facility. With numbers consistently down for the last 2 years, any concession to bring in new riders should be considered

Deadline: December 31st of current year

Please submit your rule change and \$10 to:

Lucy Brown, MIHA State Rules Chair
7737 Big Hand Rd.
Columbus, Michigan 48063
MIHAexecutiveboard@gmail.com

11/1

MIHA Rule Change Proposal

District: 1
Name: Greg Pavuk
Phone Number: 248-840-6526

26-5
All vote
66% +

Please state rule as written in rulebook (include page number, article, and section):

p. 14, Article XIII—Equestrians with Disabilities (EWD)

C. Modifications to equipment should maintain the intention of competition in the class.

Example: A western saddle may be an approved modification for use in Hunt Seat for its additional stability, but use of the western saddle for the same purpose in a bareback class should not be allowed.

Example: A surcingle with handle along with a bareback pad may be allowed for bareback competition if the rider's condition affects core or lower body strength.

H. Restricted classes:

1. Equitation Over Fences will be an ineligible class for EWD riders.
2. Rail classes with multiple riders and mounts in the ring at the same time will be ineligible for EWD riders that use horse leader or side walker.

Please state proposed rule change (include page number, article, and section):

p. 14, Article XIII—Equestrians with Disabilities (EWD)

C. Modifications to equipment should maintain the intention of competition in the class. ~~Eg. a western saddle may be an approved modification for use in Hunt Seat for its additional stability, but use of the western saddle for the same purpose in a bareback class should not be allowed.~~

~~Example: A surcingle with handle along with a bareback pad may be allowed for bareback competition if the rider's condition affects core or lower body strength.~~

p. 1/2

H. Restricted classes:

1. Equitation Over Fences will be an ineligible class for EWD riders.
2. Bareback classes will be ineligible for EWD riders
3. Rail classes with multiple riders and mounts in the ring at the same time will be ineligible for EWD riders that use horse leader or side walker.

Give a brief description of why this rule change is proposed:

During the 2025 season none of the riders competed in any of the Bareback classes. Given that as a group 1-2 of the riders with their accommodations could not have ridden without a saddle. This could give an unfair disadvantage to some riders based on their physical capabilities.

In the Junior level riders who only do walk/trot are ineligible for bareback, the assumption being that more experienced riders are the cantering riders who also expand into bareback. If an E-rider is doing all the classes including bareback then they might be a candidate for the District Chair to suggest they compete as an A/B/C/D rider instead.

Deadline: December 31st of current year

Please submit your rule change and \$10.00 to:

**Lucy Brown,
MIHA State Rules Chair
7737 Big Hand Road Columbus, MI 48063
MIHAexecutiveboard@gmail.com**

26-5
p 2/2

RULE CHANGE PROPOSAL

District Number: 14

Name:

District 14

Phone Number:

810-614-9390

26-6
All vote
667.5

Please state rule as written (include page number, article, and section):

Page 16

Article XIV – Team Structure and Slotting Rules

C.

Schools having 15 or more riders may have 2 teams, one being an A Team and the other a Division B or C as members warrant. The A Team must be filled with 11 or more riders before a B or C team may be formed. No rider may interchange between teams.

Schools having 25 or more riders may have 3 teams, an A team, a B team, and a C team. The A team must be filled with 11 or more riders before a B or C team may be formed. No rider may interchange between teams.

Schools having 31 or more riders may have four teams.

1. Two A teams, one B team, and one C team.
2. One A team, 2 B teams, and one C team.
3. The A team must be filled with 11 or more riders. The B team must be filled with 6-8 riders, and the C team will have 2-5 riders.

Please state proposed rule change (include page number, article, and section):

Page 16

Article XIV – Team Structure and Slotting Rules

C.

Schools having 12 or more riders may have 2 teams, one being an A Team and the other a Division B or C as members warrant. The A Team must be filled with 9 or more riders before a B or C team may be formed. No rider may interchange between teams.

Schools having 20 or more riders may have 3 teams, an A team, a B team, and a C team. The A team must be filled with 9 or more riders before a B or C team may be formed. No rider may interchange teams.

Schools having 25 or more riders may have four teams.

1. Two A teams, one B team, and one C team.
2. One A team, 2 B teams, and one C team.
3. The A team(s) must be filled with 9 or more riders. The B team must be filled with 5-8 riders, and the C team will have 2-5 riders.

p. 1/2

Give a brief description of why this rule change is proposed

A few years ago, we changed our A Division from a minimum of 10 to a minimum of 8 riders. No changes were made to the part of that rule governing the splitting of teams. Our numbers did not line up with the current minimum numbers. Allowing teams with 12 riders to split into 2 teams gives coaches more slots in which to enter developing riders so that they gain experience. This is especially helpful with large junior teams with beginning riders that are not ready to ride multiple disciplines.

Deadline: December 31st of current year

Please submit your rule change and \$10 check payable to MIHA to:

Lucy Brown, MIHA State Rules Chair

7737 Big Hand Rd.

Columbus, Michigan 48063

MIHAexecutiveboard@gmail.com

Updated 1/6/2025

26-6
p. 2/2

MIHA Rule Change Proposal

District: 1
Name: Greg Pavuk
Phone Number: 248-840-6526

26-7
All vote
667. +

Please state rule as written in rulebook (include page number, article, and section):

p. 16, Article XIV, D – Team Structure and Slotting Rules

D. EWD will be divided into divisions depending on the number of riders participating from each school. All restrictions on assigned slots per rider per section above.

1. Division E(A) team with 8 or more riders (63 slots)
2. Division E(B) team with 5 to 8 riders (42 slots)
3. Division E(C) team with 2 to 5 riders (24 slots)
4. Division E(D) team with 1 or 2 riders (15 slots)

Please state proposed rule change (include page number, article, and section):

p. 16, Article XIV, D – Team Structure and Slotting Rules

D. EWD will be divided into divisions depending on the number of riders participating from each school with slotting as follows. ~~All restrictions on assigned slots per rider per section above.~~

1. Division E(A) team with 8 or more riders (42 slots)
2. Division E(B) team with 5 to 8 riders (28 slots)
3. Division E(C) team with 2 to 5 riders (16 slots)
4. Division E(D) team with 1 or 2 riders (9 slots)

Give a brief description of why this rule change is proposed:

Other than D-division riders, A/B/C-division riders typically have slots to compete in from 70-50% to 30% in the classes they are eligible for if equally distributed between riders. There are 17 events in the show, but with fences and bareback taken out that leaves E-Division riders only eligible for 12-13 classes. 75% for a single rider would be 9 slots.

p. 1/2

Division	Slots	Riders	Slots/Rider	Events Available	Participation
D	15	1	15.0	16	94%
D	15	2	7.5	17	44%
C	24	2	12.0	17	71%
C	24	3	8.0	17	47%
C	24	4	6.0	17	35%
C	24	5	4.8	17	28%
B	42	5	8.4	17	49%
B	42	6	7.0	17	41%
B	42	7	6.0	17	35%
B	42	8	5.3	17	31%
A	63	8	7.9	17	46%
A	63	9	7.0	17	41%
A	63	10	6.3	17	37%
A	63	11	5.7	17	34%

E (D)	9	1	9.0	12	75%
E (D)	9	2	4.5	13	35%
E (C.)	16	2	8.0	13	62%
E (C.)	16	3	5.3	13	41%
E (C.)	16	4	4.0	13	31%
E (C.)	16	5	3.2	13	25%
E (B)	28	5	5.6	13	43%
E (B)	28	6	4.7	13	36%
E (B)	28	7	4.0	13	31%
E (B)	28	8	3.5	13	27%
E (A)	42	8	5.3	13	40%
E (A)	42	9	4.7	13	36%
E (A)	42	10	4.2	13	32%
E (A)	42	11	3.8	13	29%

In the 2025 season one Freshman rider only competed in 3-4 classes. The two seniors competed in 6-7 classes. And at States one rider competed in 9 classes. The 9 here seems reasonable and avoids an incentive to push an E-rider into every class they are eligible for just to be competitive for points.

Deadline: December 31st of current year

Please submit your rule change and \$10.00 to:

Lucy Brown,

MIHA State Rules Chair

7737 Big Hand Road Columbus, MI 48063

MIHAexecutiveboard@gmail.com

26-7
p. 2/2

RULE CHANGE PROPOSAL

District Number:

Name:

Morgan Weaver/Karla Kuiper

Phone Number:

616-260-1285/616-318-9022

26-8
Sr. Vote
66% +

Please state rule as written (include page number, article, and section):

N/A – no current rule

Please state proposed rule change (include page number, article, and section):

Page 16, Article XV, Q. – Regional/State Championship

At the regional and state meets, for all classes outside of timed events, each judge shall be provided a competent scribe. Judges shall turn in their score sheets for all classes to the office, and the score sheets are to be made available at the office by the end of each show day for coaches to view. For the classes that do not have an MIHA-defined scoring system (Showmanship, Hunt Seat and Saddle Seat Equitation, Horsemanship, Bareback, Eq over Fences), judges may use the scoresheets of their preference, so long as they are complete and clear for interpretation.

Give a brief description of why this rule change is proposed:

The purpose of this rule is to provide greater education and feedback to coaches and riders.

In the large classes at regional and state meets, it is helpful for a rider who doesn't place to be able to see whether they were just a point or two outside of the placings, or if they were scored far lower (or disqualified) and need to make major improvements.

The classes that already have MIHA-specific score sheets (trail, reining/ranch, and SS pattern) provide a lot of help for our riders! They could use the same kind of real feedback in the showmanship and equitation patterns as well.

This change could also allow for the rare math error to be caught and corrected on score sheets.

We are not requiring this for district meets because of the fact that rail work is sometimes used in place of patterns for some of these classes at the district level.

At breed shows as well as 4-H and open shows, judges' score cards are often made available to exhibitors for all types of pattern classes. Judges are normally happy to provide their feedback in this manner, especially when they are aware ahead of time that it will be requested.

Deadline: December 31st of current year

Please submit your rule change and \$10 to:

Lucy Brown, MIHA State Rules Chair
7737 Big Hand Rd.
Columbus, Michigan 48063

MIHAexecutiveboard@gmail.com

p. 11

RULE CHANGE PROPOSAL

District Number: **10**

Name:

David Cox

Phone Number:

517/581-6081

26-9
All vote
507.5

Please state rule as written (include page number, article, and section):

Page 26. Western Performance Classes. A,2 Appointments of Rider: Rider must wear western hat or protective headgear (not required to be of western style), protective headgear required for Western Bareback, long sleeve shirt with any type of collar...

Page 34. Saddle Seat Performance Classes. A,3 Exhibitors must wear a derby, Homberg, snap brim or protective head gear, protective headgear required for Saddle Seat Bareback.

Please state proposed rule change (include page number, article, and section):

Page 26. Western Performance Classes. A,2 Appointments of Rider: Exhibitors must wear protective headgear for ALL riding classes when mounted (not required to be of western style), long sleeve shirt with any type of collar...

Page 34. Saddle Seat Performance Classes. A,3 Exhibitors must wear protective headgear for ALL riding classes when mounted.

Give a brief description of why this rule change is proposed:

Our riders are in greater danger than football players of sustaining a head injury (1). Equine riders are 20x more likely to sustaining an injury than a motorcycle riders per year. (2) 60 number of deaths/year due to head injury (compared with 8 for Football). (2) 1 in 5 equestrian injuries, are head injuries. (3) 60% of riding fatalities occur from head injuries. 15,000 number of ER admissions for equine-related head injuries in 2009. (3) 2 feet is the number of feet at which head injury can occur. (3) Head injuries are the most common reason for admission to hospital or death among riders. According to the Northern Brain Injury Association (NBIA), injuries to the brain are among the most likely to result in permanent disability or death. (4) TBIs are among the most common injuries in equestrians. (5) The risk of an injury is higher for horse riding than for other potentially risky sporting activities, such as football, motor racing or skiing. Riders with head and neck injuries were 44 times as likely to die as those with arm/leg injuries, while those with chest and abdominal injuries were around 6 times as likely to do so (6). Head injuries are the most common reason for admission to hospital or death among riders. Sobering statistics reveal the high percentage of equine-related accidents resulting in traumatic brain injury, and helmets have been associated with reducing the risk of traumatic brain injury by as much as 50 percent. (7) Horseback riding is a leading cause of sports-related traumatic brain injury in the United States. (8) ****If you care anything about your riders wellbeing, this is a no brainer (pun intended). When you vote yes, it is because you do care about your rides. ****

1. Anna Blake, Horse Network digital publishing 2016
2. Dr. Chambliss, Vanderbilt University 2011
3. The American Association of Neurological Surgeons 2014
4. Horse Journals magazine, 2019
5. Gates, BA; Lin, MD, FACSM, *Current Sports Medicine Reports* (American College of Sports Medicine) 2020
6. Insurance Journal, 2021
7. Margaret Evans; Horse Journals, 2023
8. American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons 2024

Deadline: December 31st of current year

Please submit your rule change and \$10 to:

Lucy Brown, MIHA State Rules Chair

7737 Big Hand Rd.

Columbus, Michigan 48063

MIHAexecutiveboard@gmail.com

P. 1/1

Updated 11/08/22

RULE CHANGE PROPOSAL

26-10

Name

District Number

Phone Number

Please state rule as written in rulebook (include page number, article, and section):

All vote
50% +

NA - There is no current rule

Please state proposed rule change (include page number, article, and section):

Ranch Riding: Page 32, Section F 3 (new section under "on the pattern")

The obstacles should remain constant throughout the class. After the obstacles have been placed on a course, the setup crew will use marking chalk, flour or another safe material under the objects to indicate where they should be reset if a horse moves them while negotiating the course. The course must be returned to its original design after each horse has worked.

Give a brief description of why this rule change is proposed:

The above proposed rule is copied from the Trail Class rules Trail Class, Section B.8 as this rule is already in place for Trail Classes.

During the state finals, a rider was signaled to begin her course only to discover that the poles had not been properly reset from the previous competitor. The poles were neither marked nor measured when they were repositioned. As a result, half of the class completed their patterns with incorrectly placed poles before officials decided to apply flour markings for the remaining riders. Obstacles should be clearly marked and consistently set for all competitors, as is standard practice in our Trail Classes.

Deadline: December 31st of current year

Please submit your rule change and \$10.00 to:

Lucy Brown, MIHA State Rules Chair

7737 Big Hand Road

Columbus, MI 48063

MIHAexecutiveboard@gmail.com

p. 111

RULE CHANGE PROPOSAL

26-11

Name Brittany Mathes

District Number 1

Phone Number 517-861-9506

All vote
50%+

Please state rule as written in rulebook (include page number, article, and section):

Hunt seat classes Clothing and Equipment b. Only hunt seat bridles and dressage style bridles are perm

Please state proposed rule change (include page number, article, and section):

b. Only hunt seat bridles and dressage style bridles are permitted. A cavesson or drop nose band is requ

e permitted.

Give a brief description of why this rule change is proposed:

This is a popular bit that is allowed for jumping and eventing. Needs to be in rule book as many are not fa

Deadline: December 31st of current year

Please submit your rule change and \$10.00 to:

Lucy Brown, MIHA State Rules Chair

7737 Big Hand Road

Columbus, MI 48063

MIHAexecutiveboard@gmail.com

p. 1/2

Pg 36

Hunt seat classes

Clothing and Equipment

b. Only hunt seat bridles and dressage style bridles are permitted. A cavesson or drop nose band is required (except in timed events). Only regulation snaffles, English pelhams, kimberwicks and full bridles (curb and bradoon snaffle) will be allowed. References to snaffle bits mean conventional O-ring, Egg-butt or D-ring, Half Cheek, and Full Cheek. A Waterford style bit is allowed for Equitation over fences classes only.

This is a popular bit that is allowed for jumping and eventing. Needs to be in rule book as many are not familiar with it and inconsistently being used in competition.

26-11
p. 2/2

26-12
All vote
50%+

RULE CHANGE PROPOSAL

District Number: 16

Name:

Karla Kuiper/Morgan Weaver

Phone Number:

616-318-9022/616-260-1285

Please state rule as written (include page number, article, and section):

Page 39, Hunt Seat Classes, D) Equitation Over Fences
Page 39, Hunt Seat Classes, E) Equitation Over Fences Course
Page 39, Hunt Seat Classes, H) Equitation Over Fences (Junior Division)

Please state proposed rule change (include page number, article, and section):

Page 39, Hunt Seat Classes

D) Equitation Over Fences

The class is judged on the rider's ability over the fence not the horses. Only the effect the rider has on the horse is to be considered. How the rider elects to ride the course, the pace and approach to the jumps is used to evaluate the rider's judgment and abilities. Each competitor may circle once before approaching the first obstacle and then proceed around the course keeping an even hunter pace. Correct &/or consistent strides between jumps should be rewarded. Riders should obtain correct leads when making turns throughout the course. At the end of the course riders should display a courtesy circle and leave the arena at a walk.

1. Fence height for the High School division will be 2".
2. Three refusals (cumulative) on course will eliminate the entry. Except for refusals, jumping faults of the horse such as touches and knockdowns are not to be considered unless it is the result of the rider's ability.
3. If a rider is off course, this automatically eliminates the ride.
 - 3a. Adding a circle where not called for in the pattern, including circling more than once before the first fence, is considered off course.
 - 3b. In the case of a downed fence that needs to be reset for the ride to continue, rider may stop or circle until the course is cleared. Jumping a downed fence before it has been reset is cause for elimination.
 - 3c. Failure to trot a jump where called for in the pattern should be considered a major fault but is not considered off course.
 - 3d. In the case of a refusal of the second fence in a line of two jumps, the rider may elect whether to re-jump the line or just the second fence – neither option shall be considered off course.
4. Other causes for elimination may include bolting, dangerous loss of control, unsafe jumping by horse or rider (judge's discretion), abusive use of aids (judge's discretion), or fall of horse or rider.
5. If a fall, three refusals, or off-course occurs during a work-off, the entry shall be placed last of all those chosen for a work-off.
6. ASTM/SEI protective headgear must be properly fitted and secured with chin strap when jumping. Infraction of this rule will result in disqualification.
7. Riders will be allowed to walk the course with a coach, following approval of the course by the judge.
8. One practice fence will be set up inside or outside the ring 1/2 hour before the jump class. A coach must be present for riders to jump the practice fence. Jumping any set fence in the arena besides the designated practice fence will result in elimination of the entry with no substitution from that team allowed.

E. Equitation Over Fences Course

1. Pattern or course to be determined annually by Board of Directors from suggested list (See Appendix).
2. Patterns will have a maximum of four fences. Allowable pattern elements:
 - a. Trotting a fence
 - b. Standard or broken 2-fence line (minimum 3 strides – see striding recommendations below)
 - c. Jumping roll-back
 - d. Change of lead (simple or flying)
 - e. Hand gallop (performed on the flat, not over any fence. A hand gallop is a controlled lengthening of the canter stride. Excessively fast gaits will be penalized.)
 - f. Halt, back, and stand quietly.
3. Ground poles are required on the approach side of each jump, to be placed 8"-12" in front of the jump's base.
4. Use of double poles or fillers, such as bales, barrels, plants, or other fillers is optional.

p. 115

5. Any variation of obstacles is up to the discretion of the District Chairperson or Show Committee. Should a coach feel an obstacle to be hazardous to the rider or horse, they may protest. The Judge's decision as to its change or elimination shall be final. (This must be done prior to the start of the class.)

6. It is recommended the jumps be set at distances of multiples of 12 feet, with minimum of 46 feet between jumps.

Recommendations for stride distances:

46' = 3 strides for horses and 4 strides for ponies

58' = 4 strides for horses and 5 strides for ponies

70' = 5 strides for horses and 6 strides for ponies

82' = 6 strides for horses and 7 strides for ponies

Appropriate striding will be noted on Regional and State Meet Patterns.

F. English Equitation Walk/Trot (Junior Division) – H. English Equitation Over Fences (Junior Division)

– *NO CHANGES TO THE WORDING IN THESE THREE SECTIONS. New Jr Division courses would replace the current ones in the Appendix.*

Give a brief description of why this rule change is proposed:

Right now, Equitation Over Fences has the lowest participation of any MIHA class. The jumping class would serve our organization better if it were accessible for more riders to enter.

The low entry numbers in Equitation Over Fences currently, including at the regional and state levels, make it obvious that something needs to change. At the state meet, half a day of warm up is being used up for the handful of riders in each division who currently enter the jumping class. At district meets, 6 jumps are set up and removed for just 1-2 entries in some cases.

This rule change replaces the current format of Equitation Over Fences with a format that more closely resembles an Equitation Medal or Handy Hunter course. Rider ability shall be judged rather than the horse's form. The change would apply to both Junior High and Senior High. The class is still called Equitation over Fences.

The new format would lower the height and number of fences, however, other elements of Equitation over Fences seen at rated shows but not previously utilized by MIHA will be added (listed at line E, 2.). These elements will enhance the showcasing of the rider's ability without relying on fence height to do so.

This format of fewer, lower jumps with other flatwork elements is much more inviting to newer jumpers and safer for the riders and horses. It has been growing in popularity at 4-H, open, and breed shows in the form of Hunter Hack classes.

See attached for two sample patterns. Four different, rotating patterns could easily be made from the elements listed above to replace the jumping patterns currently in rotation for each division.

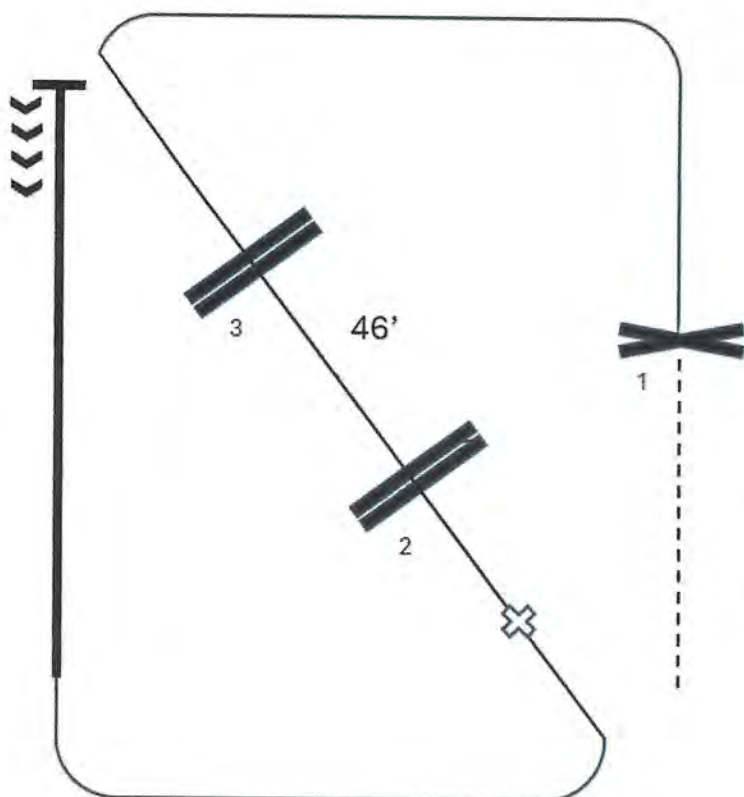
The elements of this type of course will encourage riders and coaches to focus on control, transitions, and safe and correct riding technique.

The ultimate purpose of this change is to:

1. Address safety issues in the current jumping format,
2. decrease the burden of jump setup and teardown, and
3. encourage more riders to participate.

20-12
p. 2/5

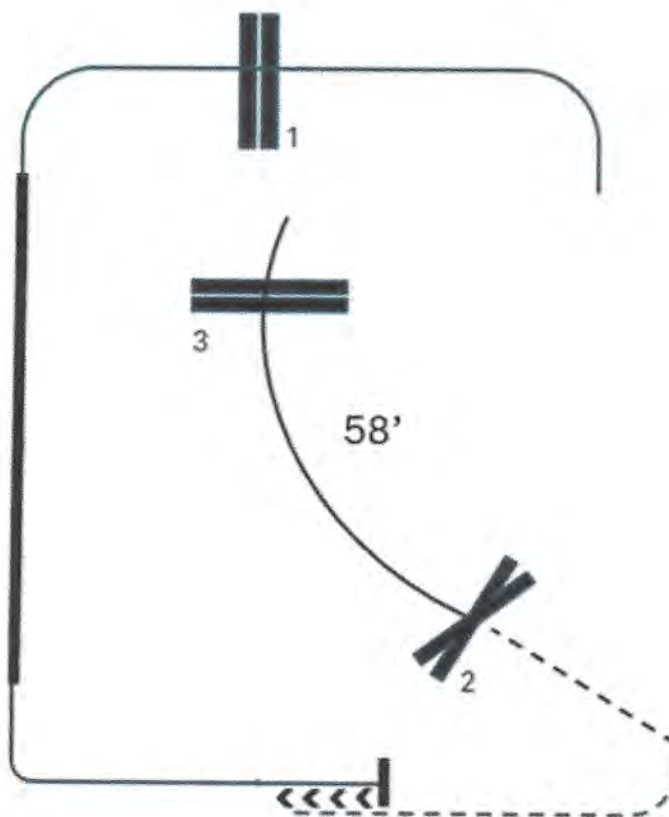
ATTACHMENT 1: Sample Patterns (Just presented as example of possibilities)



1. When acknowledged by Judge, trot to and over Jump 1.
 2. Left lead canter around the short end of the arena and over Jumps 2 and 3.
 3. Change leads before the corner.
 4. Right lead canter around the short end of the arena.
 5. Build to a hand gallop along the long side of the arena.
 6. Halt before the corner.
 7. Back approximately 1 horse length. Drop reins to demonstrate completion.
- Exit at a walk on a loose rein.

1. When acknowledged by Judge, perform a curtesy circle and canter to and over Fence 1.
2. On the Left Lead, build to a hand gallop along the long side of the arena. Return to a working canter before the corner.
3. At the center of the short side of the arena, halt and back approximately 1 horse length.
4. Trot to and over Fence 2 (cross-rail).
5. Canter bending line to and over Fence 3. Break to a walk.

Test is complete. Exit the arena at a walk.



26-12
p. 3/5

ATTACHMENT 2: Judge Testimony

We shared our proposal with Michigan horse show judges who have judged MIHA meets across multiple districts and regions in recent years. Here's what they said:

Judge and former DC Katherine Higley: *"I would like to see the jumps lowered and would not mind seeing a hunter hack class. From a district chair perspective, I viewed coaches putting kids in this class because their team needed the points and it was a filler. To which, I think this would parallel with safety, because this is the reality of this association with competitiveness. It is not to create a negative opinion but recognize that there is a need to create a safety net for the kiddos. Along with protecting the kiddos, we are also fostering the conception of being good stewards to our horses. I remember over my tenure, there were at least 7 or 8 riders in these classes and sometimes only 2 or 3 would actually place. This was the case in several other districts as well. Mostly due to the horse refusing, knocking over the jump completely, or evading it all together. Hardly ever was there a horse that [did not have] a fault. Also, this would be more financially feasible for districts who may have limited amounts of poles, which are used for trail, jumps, or western riding/ranch. I mean a lot of them do not realize they need different lengths for these classes and have to just make do. This would make it easier for them to setup other classes without having to worry if they have enough for the day. One district does jumping the night before their meet, so they enough poles for trail and the other classes. Think about how that could impact the way they hire judges and cutting costs."*

Judge Kimberly Rathsburg: *"MIHA board - As a seasoned Michigan 4H Judge I have had many times stood in the center of the ring for MIHA. Thank you for that opportunity. MIHA is a great way to build a sense of teamwork among what is largely a singular sport - and the spirit and comradery I see at each of the meets makes my heart warm! Overall I feel this organization does a good job uniting schools with the horse show community, however, I do have concerns with the over fences portion of the showbill."*

While judging this class, too many times I see riders who are charging fences with speed, not counting strides, and failing to provide balance to their horses. The sheer determination to fide fast and stay on seems prevalent in MIHA. Jumping is far more than that."

The height of the fences or trajectory of the course are not paramount for judging a rider who can properly guide themselves and their mounts successfully through a course. Strong equitation is. And with learning to ride over fences, this equitation starts at the lowest levels of ground poles and cross bars. I feel this class has room for improvement to provide better safety to both riders and horses, and am supportive of Ms. Weavers and Ms. Kuiper's proposal."

Judge Lori Arthur: *"I support replacing the jumping class with a hunter hack type equitation over fences class. Perhaps two fences, followed by group rail work. You could also do a 2'-2'3" height option. Since most regions and staff are concerned with setup/teardown TIME, HH would be much more efficient. I have never seen the entry numbers to support keeping the jumping class. It is also the class that I have seen the most riders fall off, mostly due to being ill-prepared for jumping multiple fences of the current rulebook height requirement. Regards, Lori Arthur-10 year Michigan carded horse show judge."*

Judge Laura Parsons: *"I would love to see jumping eliminated and Hunter Hack used. It's a struggle for some districts that do not have an experienced volunteer with jumping knowledge. The labor and time involved setting the course sure could be used in other ways, plus the expense of maintaining safe jumping equipment would definitely help some districts."*

26-12
p. 4/5

Judge Kimberly Rutledge: *"Over Fences or the Jumping class is that it is a very nerve-racking class! I don't believe the height is really the biggest issue, it is the lack of experience in horses and riders! After many years judging MIHA District Shows, Regional Shows and multiple State Finals, I do not believe I have ever seen more than a handful of successful quality performances at the MIHA meets. I believe pursuing the Hunter Hack type class while keeping the main focus is on Equitation this class could be much more beneficial and hopefully a safer class for the kids to enter. Lowering the heights may help a newer horse/rider combination and should not deter a more advanced rider. As you know we can judge equitation good or not so good under many circumstances. So, I guess I'm very in favor of The Hunter Hack option. Its a great place for beginners to get their feet wet but its also a great class for kids with more experience to show us their talent."*

Judge Kelly Dykstra-Nichols: *"I feel that a hunter hack class will still allow the riders to show off their equitation."*

Judge Karen Waite Warner: *"I think a rider could show their equitation most effectively and safely over lower fences."*

Judge Kathy Whitmer-Motycka: *"I am for the hunter hack!"*

Judge Jennifer Kiser: *"I have to say that MIHA equ over fences has always been the scariest class to watch. I'd love to see smaller fences!"*

20-12
P.5/5

RULE CHANGE PROPOSAL

District Number: 16

Name:

Morgan Weaver/Karla Kuiper

Phone Number:

616-260-1285/616-318-9022

26-13
Sr. Vote
50% +

Please state rule as written (include page number, article, and section):

Page 39, Hunt Seat Classes, D) Equitation Over Fences:

"1. Fence height for horses/equine over 14.2 hands competing on the High School team will be 2'6".

"2. Fence height for ponies/equine 14.2 hands and under competing on the High School team will be 2'3", when requested by a coach."

Please state proposed rule change (include page number, article, and section):

Page 39, Hunt Seat Classes, D) Equitation Over Fences:

"1. Fence height (measured to the top of the rail sitting in the cup) for horses/ponies/equine competing on the High School team will be 2'0".

(Line 2. to be removed)

(This proposal does not impact the junior jumping height of 18".)

Give a brief description of why this rule change is proposed:

The purpose of this rule is NOT to dumb down anything for our riders. This rule is about increasing participation in what is currently the least-entered class at the MIHA district, regional, and state level.

In 2025, the state meet saw a total of 26 participants in Equitation over Fences (from the 41 total teams in the A-D divisions). Compare this with the approximately 100 total entries in divisions A-D for most other classes.

Why the low participation?

One major factor is that, **while many riders have the experience and ability to jump 2'6", they do not the horse to do it on.** Whether due to a horse's age, health, athleticism, or size (or a leased horse's owner being hesitant to allow such a risk of injury), there are simply not a lot of horses at the MIHA level who can enter the jumping class at its current height.

Judges and trainers experienced in this discipline will tell you that the riders who are currently winning at 2'6" will also win at 2'. It does not take a 2'6" jump to evaluate a rider's equitation, experience, and skill over fences, as well as their readiness to jump higher. **Lowering the jump height is NOT a threat to the best jumping riders maintaining their opportunity to be rewarded for their skills.**

There are also plenty of ponies who are simply too small for the current 2'3" pony height, but who could manage 2' safely. The change also does away with the necessity of adjusting height between horses and ponies and protests over whether certain ponies measure under the maximum height.

We also note that to make up for the decreased height, the executive board could select more complex jumping courses to test riders' skills, such as courses that include rollbacks, bending lines, in-and-outs, halts, or hand gallop. These elements are common in equitation tests at larger jumping shows, and they allow the best jumping riders to shine while not relying on higher fences to do so.

12.11.2

ATTACHMENT 1: Judge Testimony

We shared our proposal with Michigan horse show judges who have judged MIHA meets across multiple districts and regions in recent years. Here's what they said:

Judge and former DC Katherine Higley: *"I would like to see the jumps lowered and would not mind seeing a hunter hack class. From a district chair perspective, I viewed coaches putting kids in this class because their team needed the points and it was a filler. To which, I think this would parallel with safety, because this is the reality of this association with competitiveness. It is not to create a negative opinion but recognize that there is a need to create a safety net for the kiddos. Along with protecting the kiddos, we are also fostering the conception of being good stewards to our horses. I remember over my tenure, there were at least 7 or 8 riders in these classes and sometimes only 2 or 3 would actually place. This was the case in several other districts as well. Mostly due to the horse refusing, knocking over the jump completely, or evading it all together. Hardly ever was there a horse that [did not have] a fault."*

Judge Kimberly Rathsburg: *"MIHA board - As a seasoned Michigan 4H Judge I have had many times stood in the center of the ring for MIHA. Thank you for that opportunity. MIHA is a great way to build a sense of teamwork among what is largely a singular sport - and the spirit and comradery I see at each of the meets makes my heart warm! Overall I feel this organization does a good job uniting schools with the horse show community, however, I do have concerns with the over fences portion of the showbill.*

While judging this class, too many times I see riders who are charging fences with speed, not counting strides, and failing to provide balance to their horses. The sheer determination to fide fast and stay on seems prevalent in MIHA. Jumping is far more than that.

The height of the fences or trajectory of the course are not paramount for judging a rider who can properly guide themselves and their mounts successfully through a course. Strong equitation is. And with learning to ride over fences, this equitation starts at the lowest levels of ground poles and cross bars. I feel this class has room for improvement to provide better safety to both riders and horses, and am supportive of Ms. Weavers and Ms. Kuiper's proposal."

Judge Laura Parsons: *"I agree that a good rider is going to look good at 2", 2'6", or 4 feet. I'm always concerned with the riders that are slotted for jumping, when they actually are leaping with the dream of staying on."*

Judge Terri Delbridge: *"Absolutely agree with lowering the jump height."*

Judge Karen Waite Warner: *"I think a rider could show their equitation most effectively and safely over lower fences."*

Judge Jennifer Kiser: *"I have to say that MIHA equ over fences has always been the scariest class to watch. I'd love to see smaller fences!"*

Judge Chelsea Erler: *"Lowering the maximum height to 2 feet maintains a meaningful physical challenge while making the goal significantly more achievable for newer riders. This change prioritizes confidence-building and correct mechanics over raw scope."*

26-13
p. 2/2

RULE CHANGE PROPOSAL

26-14

Name Lapeer Equestrian Team

District Number 2

Phone Number 810-614-3691

All vote
50%+

Please state rule as written in rulebook (include page number, article, and section):

Hunt Seat Classes: Section D Equitation over Fences (Page 39, section D.3)
Three refusals (cumulative) on course will eliminate the entry. Except for refusals, jumping faults of the horse such as touches and knockdowns are not to be considered unless it is the result of the rider's ability.

Please state proposed rule change (include page number, article, and section):

Page 39, Section D.3.:
Three refusals (cumulative) on course will eliminate the entry. Except for refusals, jumping faults of the horse such as touches and knockdowns are not to be considered unless it is the result of the rider's ability. If a pole is knocked down during the course on a jump that is jumped twice, it needs to be reset before the rider reaches the second jump. If a ring steward moves a pole while a rider is on course and interferes with the jump or cadence of the horse, that rider may request a reride.

Give a brief description of why this rule change is proposed:

At the state finals, a rider was approaching a jump that needed to be jumped a second time. That rider had to halt their horse because a ring steward was in front of the jump. This interfered with the jump line. The rider then had to circle and take her jump again which impacted the cadence and rhythm. As current regulations did not provide for a reride under these circumstances, one was not granted. This rule should be approved to help advocate for our riders in the event that someone impacts their ride.

Deadline: December 31st of current year

Please submit your rule change and \$10.00 to:

Lucy Brown, MIHA State Rules Chair

7737 Big Hand Road

Columbus, MI 48063

MIHAexecutiveboard@gmail.com

p. 1/1

RULE CHANGE PROPOSAL

District Number: 16

Name:

Morgan Weaver

Phone Number:

616-260-1285

26-15
All vote
50% +

Please state rule as written (include page number, article, and section):

N/A – no existing rule

Please state proposed rule change (include page number, article, and section):

Page 39, Hunt Seat Classes, D) Equitation Over Fences, 8.

"Judge will use individual score sheets to be provided by MIHA."

Give a brief description of why this rule change is proposed:

Currently, every individually-judged class has an MIHA score sheet to guide judges and provide feedback to riders, **except** for Equitation Over Fences.

The MIHA score sheets in Saddle Seat Pattern, Reining, Ranch Riding, and Trail provide consistency in judging, clear expectation for riders and coaches to use when preparing for the class, and feedback to help facilitate improvement at future meets.

Implementing a score sheet for Equitation Over Fences would provide the same benefits.

Attached to this rule change is a **draft** score sheet. It has been designed based on AQHA, APHA, and several state's 4-H guidelines for Equitation Over Fences. It has also been intentionally designed to leave room for judges' interpretation and opinions, while clarifying penalties. It is a draft in that the state executive board may make edits as they see fit (or based on additional feedback from coaches at the winter meeting) for a final version.

One example of an ambiguity in the class currently is when a rider fails to trot the cross rail. Some judges consider this a DQ. Others hardly penalize it. The consequences are unclear for both judges and coaches/riders. When a rider doesn't place in jumping, was it because they were just outscored by other riders? Or did the judge see major errors? Was the way of going the issue, or was it their position over the fences, or both? What should they work on to do better? Implementing a score sheet will help provide clarity.

p. 1/2

Michigan Interscholastic Horse Association

Equitation Over Fences Score Sheet

Scoring Guidelines:

Each jump shall receive a score of 0.0 -10.0 with scoring increments of .5 points.

There is an additional 0 - 30 points awarded for Way of Going.

Knocked rails are only considered a fault when caused by the rider.

Emphasis shall be placed on the rider's skill and rider's influence on the horse's performance.

Example of score interpretation (judge's discretion applies):

8 - 10 Rider exhibits excellent execution with no faults.

6 - 8 Rider exhibits above average execution with at most 1 minor fault.

4 - 6 Rider exhibits average execution, potentially multiple minor faults.

2 - 4 Rider exhibits below average execution and/or multiple minor faults or 1 major fault.

0 - 2 Rider avoids elimination but with unsafe jumping, 1-2 refusals, or other major faults.

Way of going Score reflects rider's ringmanship, subtlety of aids, consistency of pace, correct leads and diagonals, overall presentation.

Division	Back #
----------	--------

Minor Faults	Poor takeoff spot (distance excessively long or short) Swapping leads in approach to a jump Rider's release is insufficient to avoid catching horse's mouth Rider's lower leg is swinging or unstable over the fence Rider's motion is excessively ahead of or behind horse's motion
---------------------	--

Major Faults	Loss of stirrup or rein First or second cumulative refusal Knocking over a jump standard Failure to trot crossrail
---------------------	---

Elimination	Bolting/dangerous loss of control Jumping fences out of order, or adding or omitting a fence Circling where not called for in the pattern (1 curtesy circle before the first fence is allowed) Abuse of horse, as determined by judge's discretion Jumping a downed fence before it has been reset Cumulative 3 refusals on course Fall of horse or rider
--------------------	---

Score	Fences (0 - 10 pts each)								(0 - 30 pts)	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Way of Going	Total Score
Comments										

26-15
p. 2/2

RULE CHANGE PROPOSAL

District Number: 4

Name:

Jessica Payne

Phone Number:

517-204-2639

26-16
All vote
50%+

Please state rule as written (include page number, article, and section):

Page 42, Trail Class, Section C "Course Description

C. Course Description Obstacles should simulate situations that are naturally encountered on the trail, not situations that are designed to trap or eliminate exhibitors. Courses should be designed to require exhibitors to show their horse's three gaits (depending on the breed) for the judge to evaluate: Note: Junior Division Trail courses for walk-trot riders must be adjusted so that exhibitors are not required to lope or canter.

Mandatory Obstacles (choose three):

1. Side pass
2. Ride over at least four logs or poles on the ground. The logs can be placed in a straight line (measured at center), curved (distance measured at middle of log), zigzag (measured at ends), or a combination. The recommended spacing between the logs as follows: -Walk-overs-20 inches to 24 inches -Trot-overs-3 feet to 3 feet, six inches, or increments thereof -Lope-overs- 6 feet to 7 feet, or increments thereof -Each gait counts as an obstacle (i.e., 1. Walk-over, 2. Trot-overs, 3. Lope -overs) -Multiple ride overs can be combined with other obstacles (i.e., walk over logs, walk over bridge)
3. Ride over wooden bridge. Bridge should be at least 36 inches wide and at least 6 feet long, and must be sturdy, safe, and negotiated at a walk.
4. Open, pass through and close a gate. Course instructions should designate whether gate is to be negotiated as a right-hand push or pull or a left-hand push or pull, and the gate must be set up accordingly. The gate must not endanger horse or rider.

Please state proposed rule change (include page number, article, and section):

Page 42, Trail Class, Section C "Course Description

C. Course Description Obstacles should simulate situations that are naturally encountered on the trail, not situations that are designed to trap or eliminate exhibitors. Courses should be designed to require exhibitors to show their horse's three gaits (depending on the breed) for the judge to evaluate: Note: Junior Division Trail courses for walk-trot riders must be adjusted so that exhibitors are not required to lope or canter.

Mandatory Obstacles (choose three for senior patterns, choose 2 for junior patterns):

1. Side pass
2. Ride over at least four logs or poles on the ground. The logs can be placed in a straight line (measured at center), curved (distance measured at middle of log), zigzag (measured at ends), or a combination. The recommended spacing between the logs as follows: -Walk-overs-20 inches to 24 inches -Trot-overs-3 feet to 3 feet, six inches, or increments thereof -Lope-overs- 6 feet to 7 feet, or increments thereof -Each gait counts as an obstacle (i.e., 1. Walk-over, 2. Trot-overs, 3. Lope -overs) -Multiple ride overs can be combined with other obstacles (i.e., walk over logs, walk over bridge)
3. Ride over wooden bridge. Bridge should be at least 36 inches wide and at least 6 feet long, and must be sturdy, safe, and negotiated at a walk.
4. Open, pass through and close a gate. Course instructions should designate whether gate is to be negotiated as a right-hand push or pull or a left-hand push or pull, and the gate must be set up accordingly. The gate must not endanger horse or rider.

Give a brief description of why this rule change is proposed:

Reducing the number of mandatory Obstacles for the Junior division will allow simpler, more efficient patterns. Obstacles like the side pass and gate are resulting in frequent "no scores" in the Junior division.

Deadline: December 31st of current year

Please submit your rule change and \$10 to:

Lucy Brown, MIHA State Rules Chair

7737 Big Hand Rd.

Columbus, Michigan 48063

MIHAexecutiveboard@gmail.com

p. 1/1

RULE CHANGE PROPOSAL

26-17

Name Brittany Mathes

District Number 1

Phone Number 517-861-9506

Please state rule as written in rulebook (include page number, article, and section):

All vote
50%+

Page 45 TIMED EVENTS CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT- Appointments of the Horse: Saddles, headst

Please state proposed rule change (include page number, article, and section):

To allow War Bonnet style tie downs to be legal western gymkhana equipment made of rope, flat nylon w

e permitted.

Give a brief description of why this rule change is proposed:

to align with AQHA rule- SHW305.9.3 Bonnets (tie-down that goes over the poll and/or across the forehe

Deadline: December 31st of current year

Please submit your rule change and \$10.00 to:

Lucy Brown, MIHA State Rules Chair

7737 Big Hand Road

Columbus, MI 48063

MIHAexecutiveboard@gmail.com

p. 1/2

Page 45 TIMED EVENTS

CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT- Appointments of the Horse: Saddles, headstalls and bits must match the seat ridden (Western, Saddle Seat or Hunt Seat.) and conform to the rules and regulations of that seat. The exceptions being that hackamores, snaffles, gag bits, tie downs, **INCLUDING WAR BONNETS** and standing or running martingales are allowed. Splint, skid, shin, sport and bell boots are also allowed. If split reins are used, they must be tied or fastened together, a single rein is recommended

Rationale:

To align with AQHA rule - SHW305.9.3 Bonnets (tie-down that goes over the poll and/or across the forehead) made of rope, flat nylon webbing or leather only (minimum 3/8 inch diameter) are permitted.

26-17
p. 2/2

RULE CHANGE PROPOSAL

District Number:

Name:

Susan Holman

Phone Number:

989-600-8035

26-18
All vote
50%+

Please state rule as written (include page number, article, and section):

Page 46

B. General Rules—Timed Events

6. Running through the chute or gate to enter or exit the arena will result in a disqualification.

Please state proposed rule change (include page number, article, and section):

Page 46

B. General Rules—Timed Events

6. Running (defined as **loping, cantering, or third gait**) through the chute or gate to enter or exit the arena will result in a disqualification.

Give a brief description of why this rule change is proposed

This year I had judges tell me different versions of "running". Some stated that running is "rodeo running" not a pleasure lope. Defining this rule makes it clear to all.

Deadline: December 31st of current year

Please submit your rule change and \$10 check payable to MIHA to:

Lucy Brown, MIHA State Rules Chair

7737 Big Hand Rd.

Columbus, Michigan 48063

MIHAexecutiveboard@gmail.com

p 1/1

Updated 1/6/2025

RULE CHANGE PROPOSAL

District Number:

Name:

District 14

Phone Number:

810-614-9390

26-19
All vote
50% +

Please state rule as written (include page number, article, and section):

Page 46

Timed Events – B. General Rules – Timed Events

16. Rubber banding of the rider's feet, or use of any device designed to hold the rider in the saddle is strictly prohibited.

Please state proposed rule change (include page number, article, and section):

Page 46

Timed Events – B. General Rules – Timed Events

16. Rubber banding of the rider's feet, or use of any device designed to hold the rider in the saddle is strictly prohibited. Manufactured devices designed to hold the feet in the stirrups with a safety release or quick release will be allowed.

Give a brief description of why this rule change is proposed:

Devices with a quick release or safety release buckle (Better Band) allow the rider's feet to stay secure within the stirrups while adding the safety feature of detaching in an emergency. Riders with shorter legs are more at risk of stirrup loss which can affect balance and control while turning. We see this as an added safety measure for our speed riders, especially the younger ones.

Deadline: December 31st of current year

Please submit your rule change and \$10 check payable to MIHA to:

Lucy Brown, MIHA State Rules Chair

7737 Big Hand Rd.

Columbus, Michigan 48063

MIHAexecutiveboard@gmail.com

p. 1/1

RULE CHANGE PROPOSAL

District Number: 16

Name:

Nicole Thomas

Phone Number:

616-635-8199

26-20
All vote
50%+

Please state rule as written (include page number, article, and section):

N/A – no existing rule

Please state proposed rule change (include page number, article, and section):

Page 45, Timed Events, B) General Rules – Timed Events, 25.

*"The show committee is responsible for maintaining safe running conditions by dragging or raking a **minimum** of every 10 runs, depending on the arena's footing and weather factors. Dragging every 5-7 runs is encouraged, especially at Regional and State meets. The number of runs between every drag shall be determined by the show committee **before** the start of timed events and communicated to the coaches at the required speed meeting. (Judges may override the show committee and request additional dragging or raking at any point that they feel the footing has become unsafe.)"*

Give a brief description of why this rule change is proposed:

This rule is meant to protect the horses and riders participating in timed events from dangerous footing conditions. It also facilitates fairness.

Currently, it can be unclear between the show committees and judges about which party will determine dragging intervals. Judges will attest that they are often pressured by show committees to call for fewer drags, in order to speed up the meet, but this comes at the cost of rider and horse safety. Other times, dragging timing gets determined on the fly, as the events take place, which can lead to accusations from coaches of unfair timing.

Setting a dragging/raking interval before speed begins, and then sticking to it, will force show committees and coaches to consider the footing and weather and make an informed determination, rather than playing it by ear. It also gives the coaches a chance to be informed of the plan, cutting down on the complaints that the show committee will have to deal with later.

We are aware that there is no one magic number that is appropriate for all arenas. The rule's wording intentionally leaves leeway for different drag intervals at different arenas and in different weather conditions, while still setting a minimum to improve safety and fairness.

p. 111

RULE CHANGE PROPOSAL

District Number 19

Name: Sheryl Dreyer

Phone Number: 616-366-3733

Email Address: mihadistrict19@gmail.com

26-21
Sr. Vote
50%+

Please state current rule as written in rulebook (include page number, article, and section):

Appendix - Apdx 11 - High School - Western Reining Pattern #4

Please state proposed rule change (include page number, article, and section):

Appendix - Apdx 11 - High School - Western Reining Pattern #4

Give a brief description of why this rule change is proposed:

I would like to propose that we get rid of the current High School Western Reining Pattern #4 as it is posted in the rule book and replace it with a shorter pattern. Please see proposed pattern attached. I feel the current pattern takes a long time to complete and when we get to regional and state this will cut the time down by quite a bit as well.

Deadline: December 31st of current year

Please submit your rule change and \$10 check payable to MIHA to:

Lucy Brown, MIHA State Rules Chair

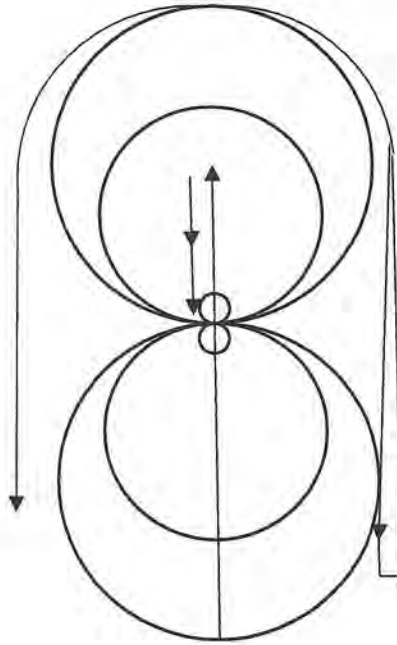
7737 Big Hand Road

Columbus, MI 48063

MIHAexecutiveboard@gmail.com

p. 1/2

High School
Western Reining Pattern #4



1. Run down center past marker and stop; Back 8-10 feet, $\frac{1}{4}$ turn left
2. Beginning on the right lead complete 2 circles to the right, 1 large fast and 1 small slow, stop
3. 1 spin right
4. Continue on the left lead complete 2 circles to the left, 1 large fast and 1 small slow, stop.
5. 1 spin left
6. Right lead lope but do not close circle, go past middle marker, stop. Roll back left.
7. Run down past middle marker, stop. Hesitate to show completion of pattern.

26-21
p. 2/2

RULE CHANGE PROPOSAL

District Number:

Name:

Jessica Payne

Phone Number:

517-204-2639

26-22
All vote
50% +

Please state rule as written (include page number, article, and section):

Appendix Page 13
Appendix Page 27

Please state proposed rule change (include page number, article, and section):

Appendix Page 13 - Insert attached rotational Senior Trail Patterns
Appendix Page 27 - Insert attached rotational Junior Trail Patterns

Insert
text
here

Give a brief description of why this rule change is proposed:

Including the Trail patterns in the yearly rotation will allow riders more time to practice throughout the year. Doing the same trail patterns at all senior meets will give riders more opportunity to improve. We are currently seeing few DQ's in the patterns included in the rotation such as ranch riding. Including Trail in this yearly rotation would reduce the number of DQ's and OP's

Deadline: December 31st of current year

Please submit your rule change and \$10 to:

Lucy Brown, MIHA State Rules Chair

7737 Big Hand Rd.

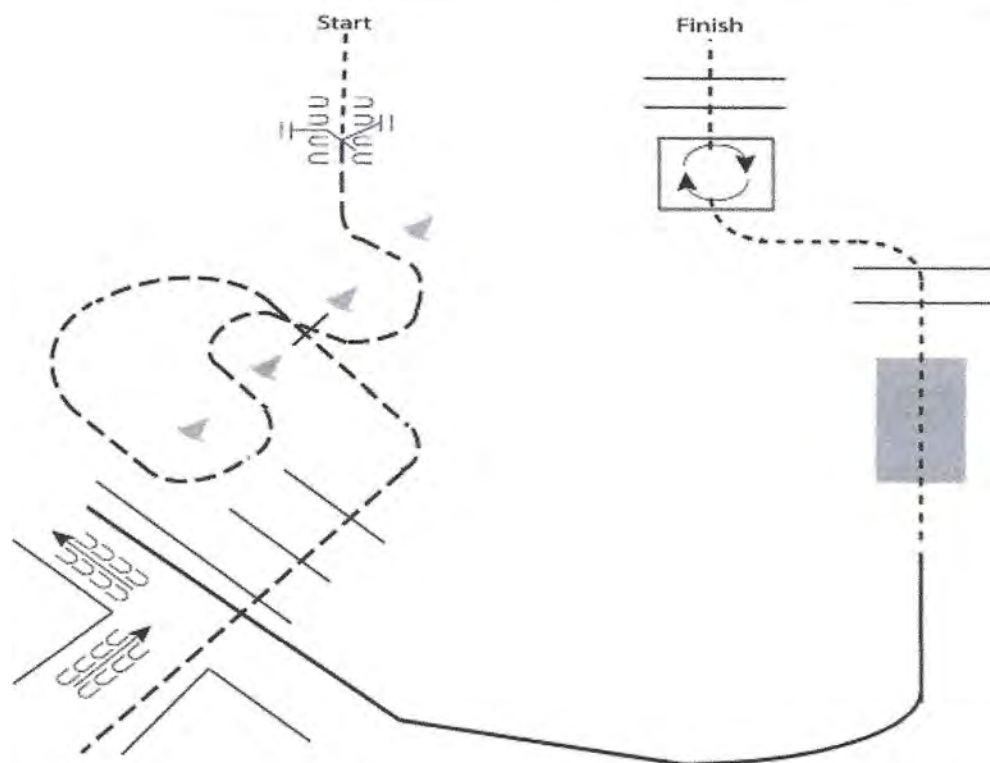
Columbus, Michigan 48063

MIHAexecutiveboard@gmail.com

p. 1/9

SENIOR PATTERN 1

www.horsepatterns.com



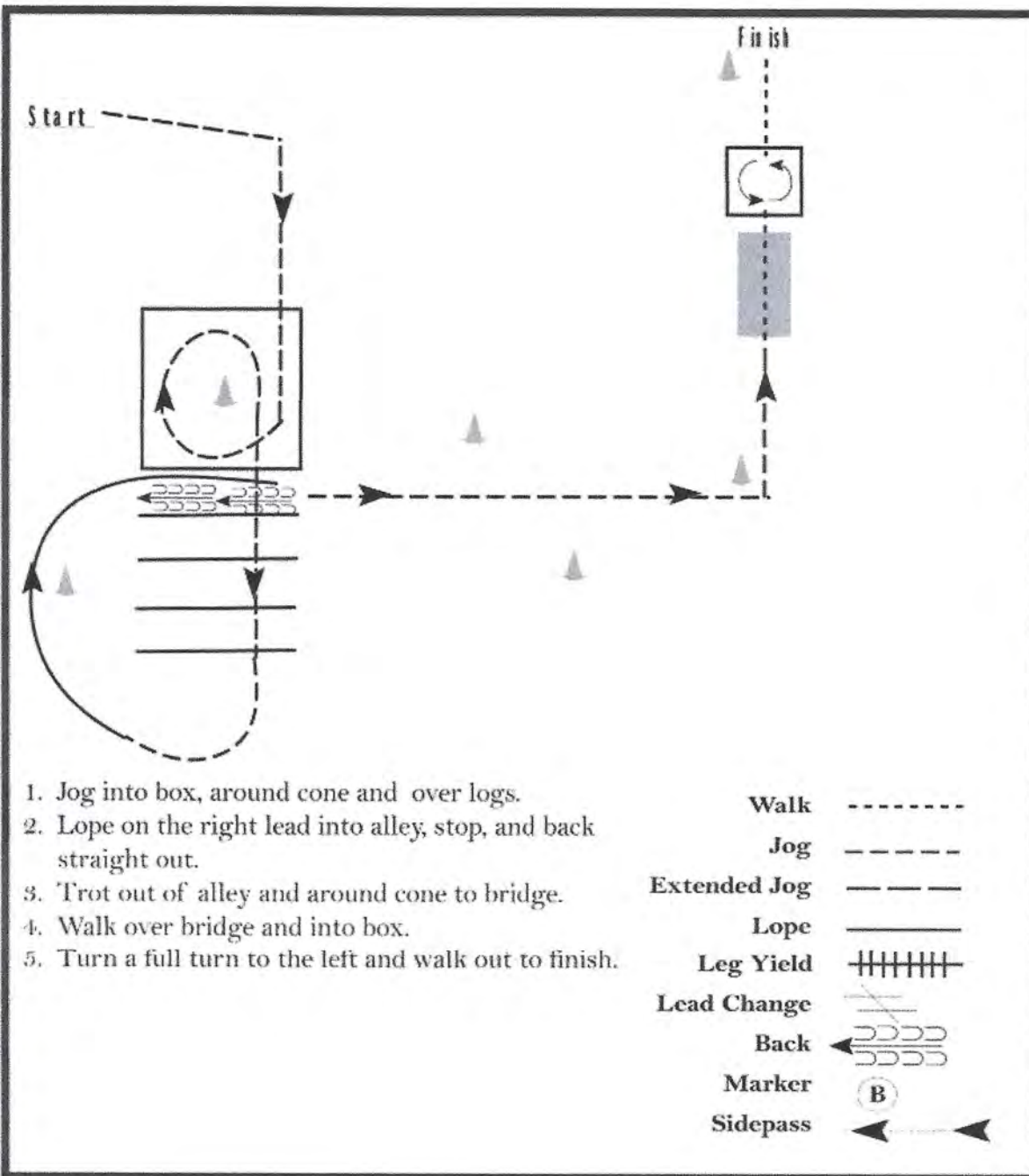
1. Walk to and work gate.
2. Jog through cones and into chute.
3. Back the L.
4. Lope on the left lead to bridge.
5. Walk over bridge and elevated poles.
6. Walk into box and perform a 360 degree turn to the right.
7. Walk out of box and over elevated poles to finish.

Walk	-----
Jog	- - - - -
Extended Jog	- - - - -
Lope	=====
Leg Yield	
Lead Change	↗ ↘
Back	← ← ← ← ←
Marker	(B)
Sidepass	← ←

26-22
p. 2/9

SENIOR PATTERN 2

www.HorseShowPatterns.com



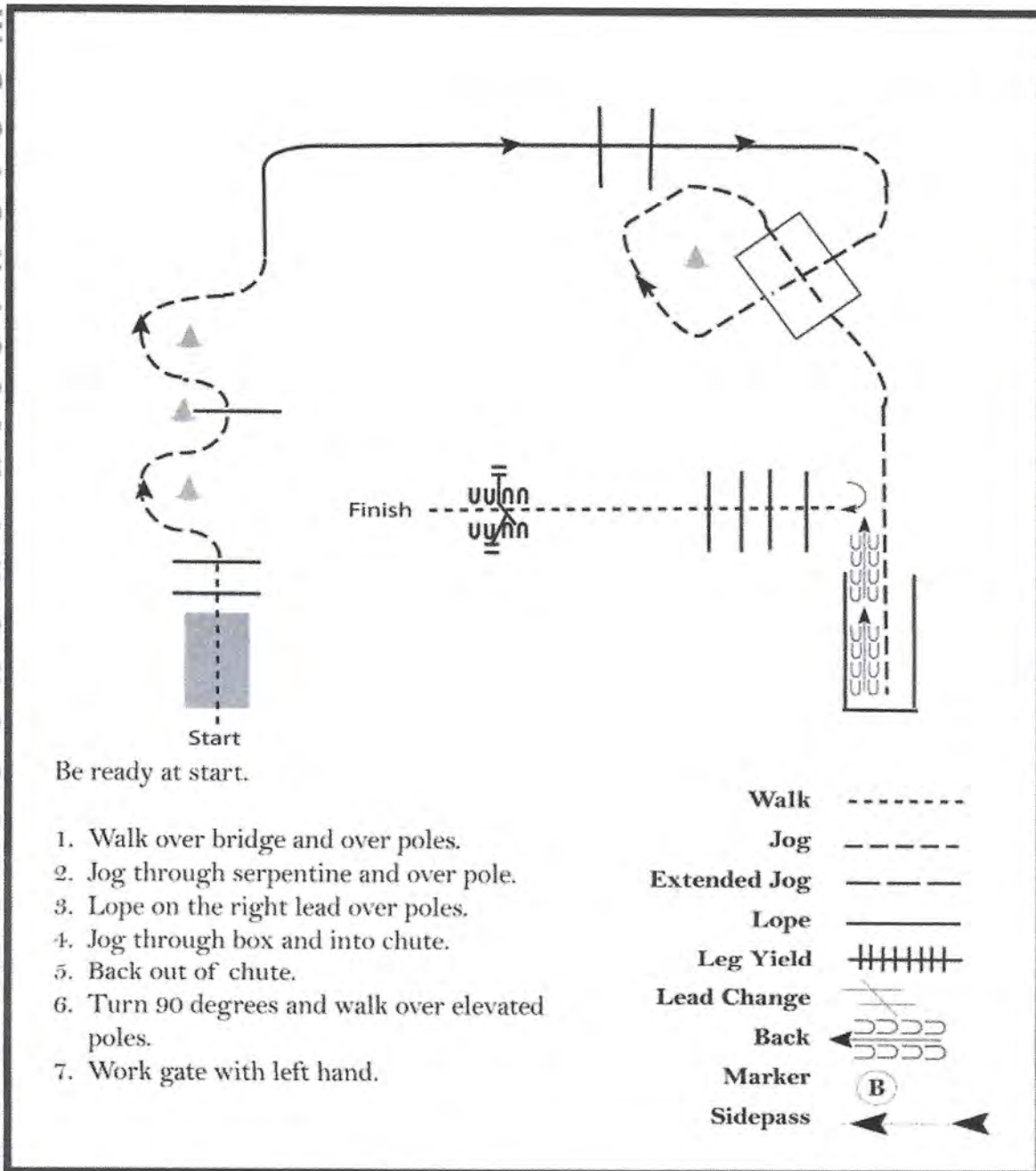
www.HorseShowPatterns.com

26-22
p. 3/9

SENIOR PATTERN 3

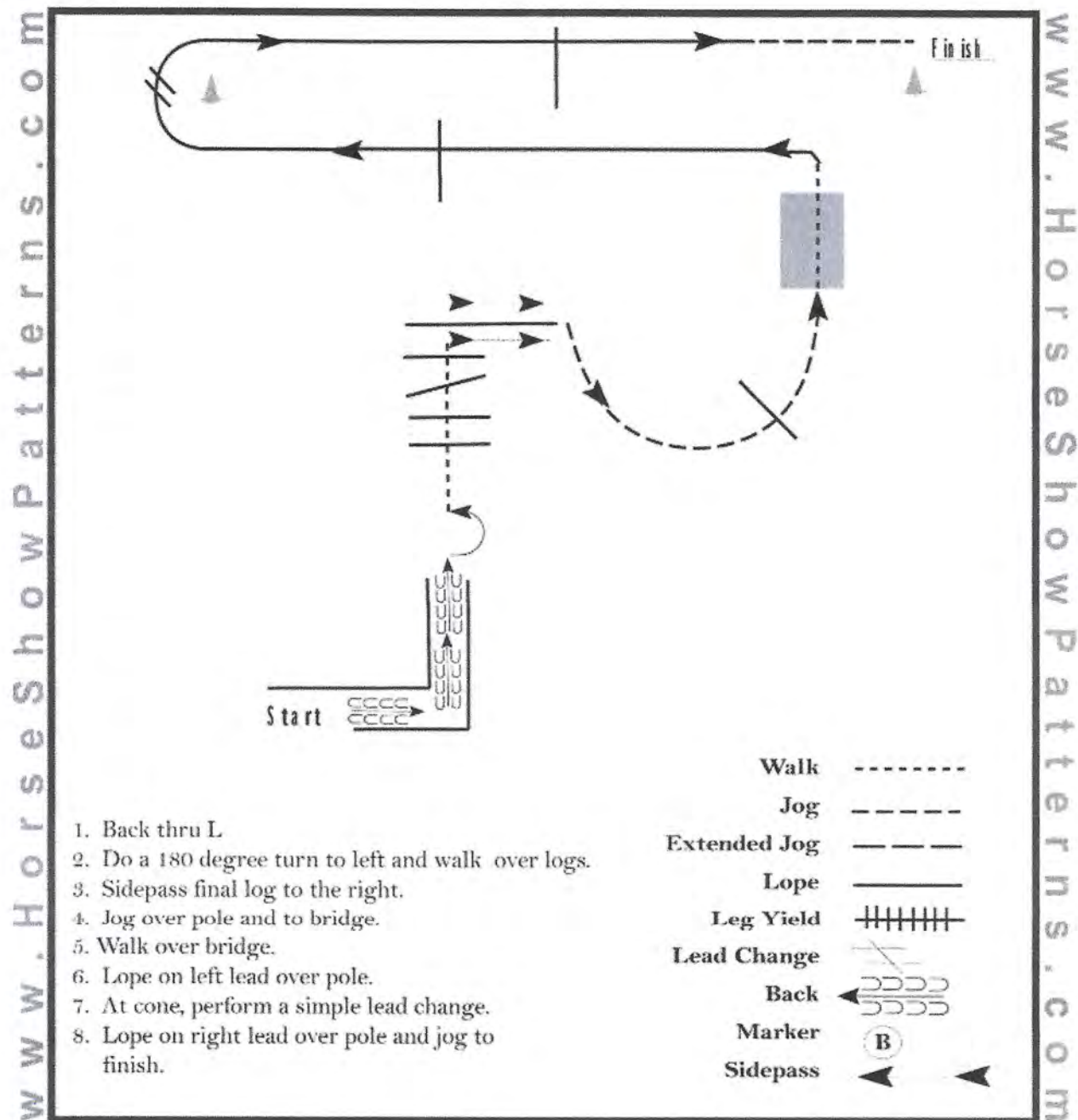
www.HorseShowPatterns.com

www.HorseShowPatterns.com



26-22
p.4/9

SENIOR PATTERN 4

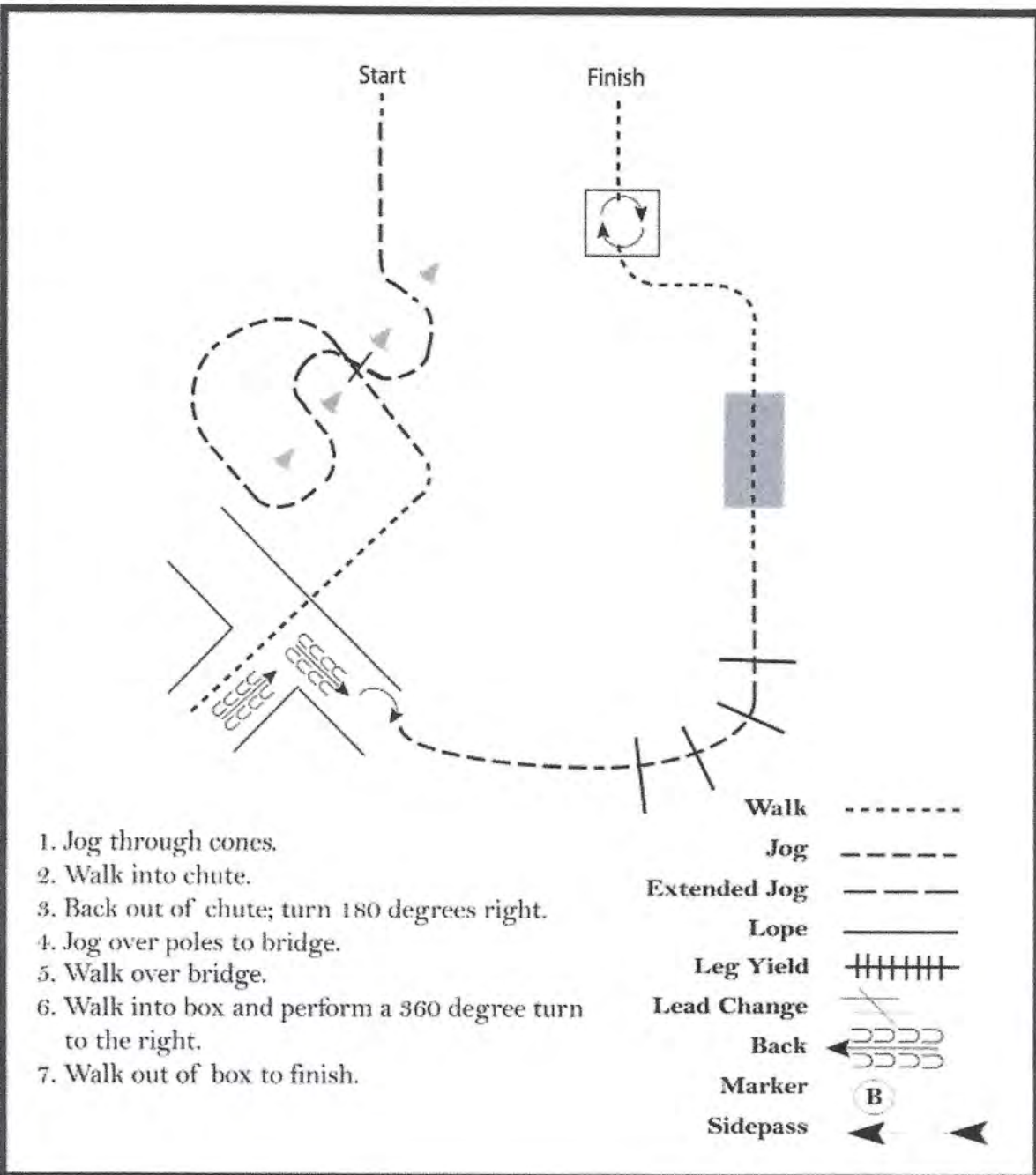


26-22
p. 5/9

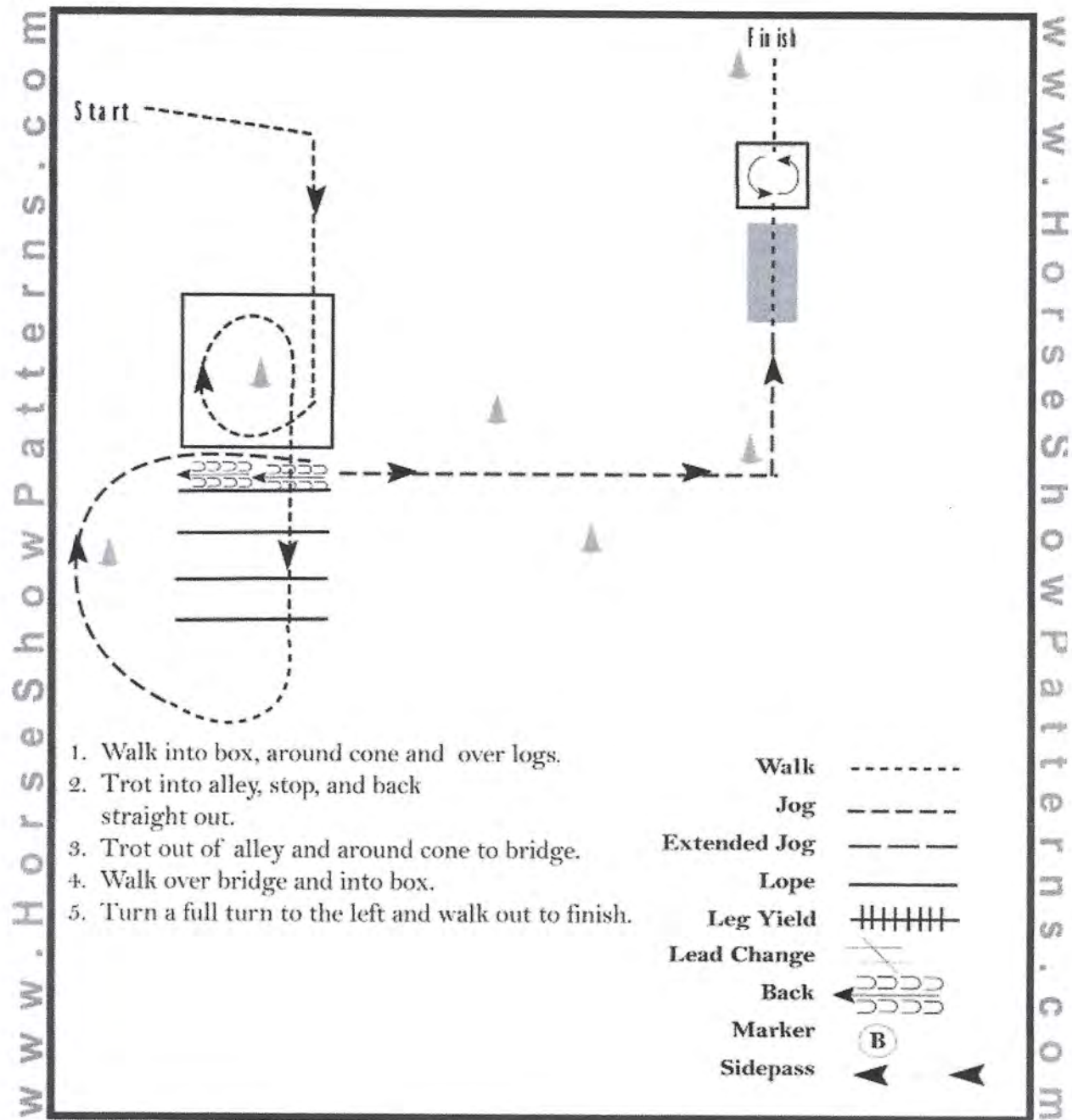
JUNIOR PATTERN 1

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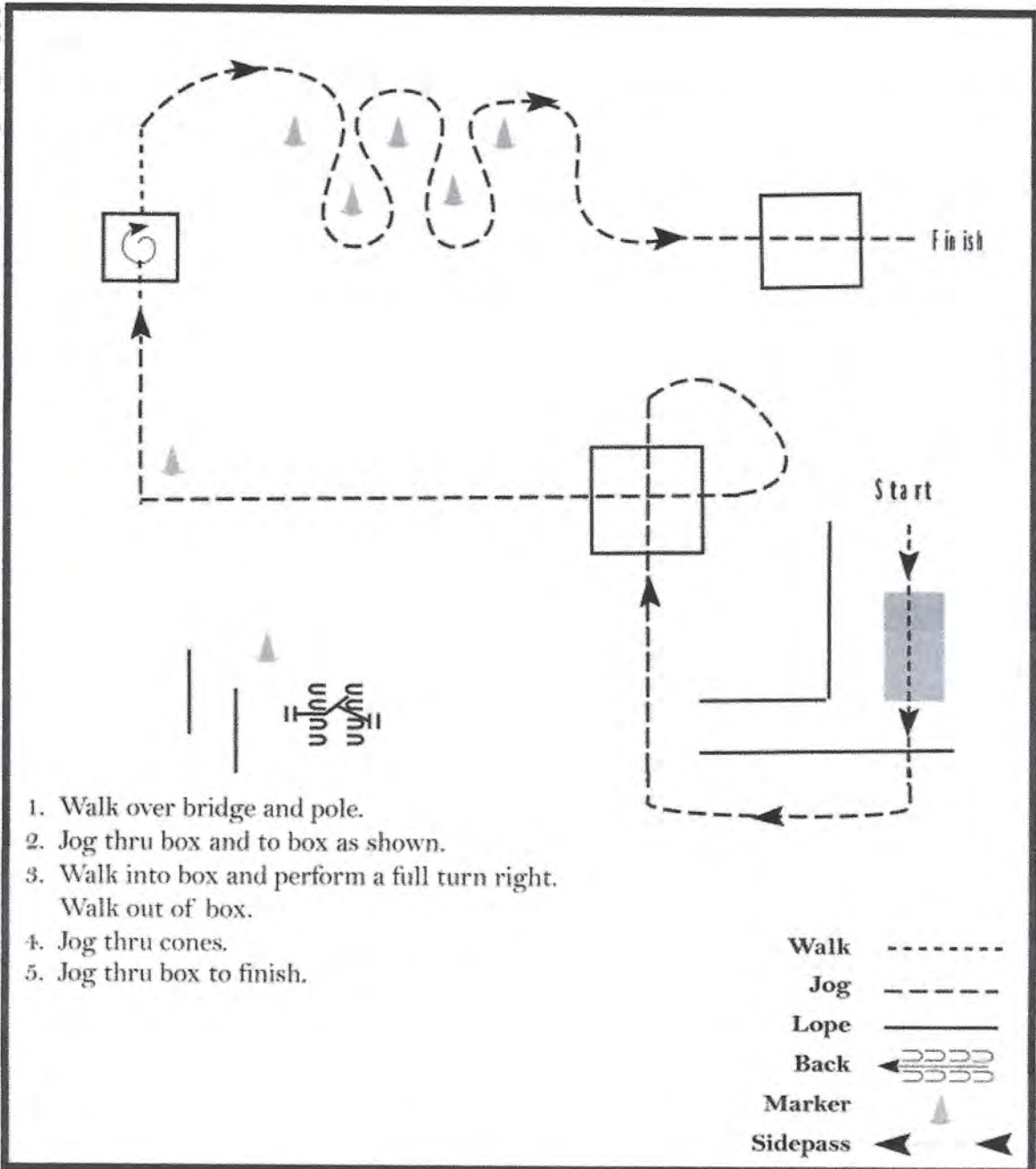
JUNIOR PATTERN 2



26-22
p.7/9

JUNIOR PATTERN 3

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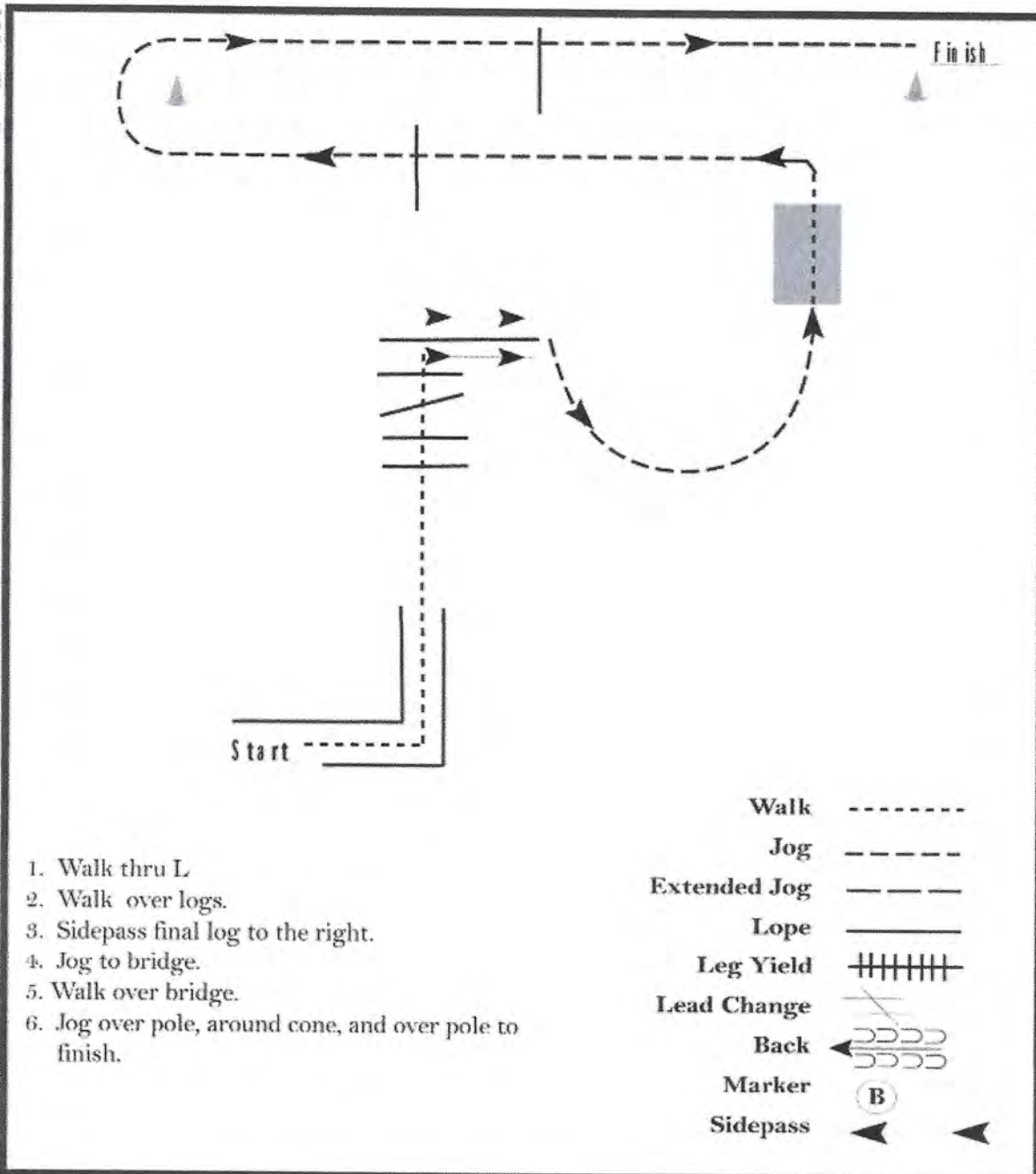


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26-22
p. 8/9

JUNIOR PATTERN 4

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26-22
p. 9/9