

April 24, 2026

Hi everyone,

I hope you've all been able to enjoy some sunshine and warm weather this spring! Before we get into the details of what you need to know for 2026, I first need to apologize for getting this out to you so late. So far, it's definitely been a year where I just can't get caught up, and I know a lot of you can sympathize. On to the rulebooks. Changes from 2025 are highlighted in grey. As a reminder, we don't plan to print rulebooks again until 2028, so take good care of this one, and let me know if a catastrophe happens. Check miha.org in March (or so) of 2027 for next year's updates.

2026 Rulebook Change Summary

By Law Changes:

- New language regarding conflict of interest prevention during protest voting
- Removal of bareback equitation/horsemanship from the EWD class list
- Slotting rule updates for breaking large teams into multiple smaller teams

Show Rule Changes:

- Addition of requirement to chalk, flour, etc. logs in Ranch to maintain consistency
- Specification that Waterford style bits are allowed in Equitation Over Fences only (reference article for anyone needing to become more familiar with Waterford bits: <https://www.horseandhound.co.uk/features/why-use-a-waterford-bit-115590>)
- Lowering of fence height to 2'0" for High School Equitation Over Fences, for both horses and ponies (no change to 18" junior height)
- In Equitation Over Fences, specification that the coach or DC may request a re-ride if fence resetting interferes with a ride—Note: Granting or denying a re-ride remains at the judge's discretion.
- Addition of individual Equitation Over Fences score sheets provided by MIHA—Note: Judges need not change their current note/scoring system. Emphasis is on providing feedback. Draft score sheet enclosed. Symbols, notes, numbers, etc. may be recorded for each fence, or not. Comments are encouraged.
- Specification that war bonnets meeting AQHA rules are allowed in gymkhana
- Defining running the gate as loping, cantering, or third gait
- New High School Reining pattern #4

In 2026, we'll be using pattern 2 for Saddle Seat Pattern, Equitation Over Fences, and Reining. The timed event will be Keyhole.

There has been some movement on the MIHA Executive Board for 2026. Sheryl Dreyer has moved to the role of First Vice Chair and we welcome Myra Zolynsky to the board as Second Vice Chair. As always, please feel free to reach out to any of us with questions. All Executive Board contact information can also be found at www.miha.org. You can reach me directly at miharuleschair@gmail.com or via call/text at 586-855-3215 if the matter is urgent, or better in conversation.

Have a great season and thank you for judging for MIHA!

Lucy Brown
MIHA Rules Chair