



## **The Mission of Special Olympics:**

To provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participation in the sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympic athletes and the community.

## **Athletes Oath:**

*"Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."*

Roman gladiators spoke these words as they entered the arena. Facing the greatest battle of their lives. Our athletes recite the oath at the Opening ceremonies of each competition to remind everyone, including themselves, that they are part of a brave tradition and that the goal is to complete with their whole effort and to exhibit bravery by pushing themselves to ever greater heights.

## **Coaches Oath:**

*"In the name of all coaches, we shall follow written and verbal instructions of Special Olympics officials at all times, have our athletes at the appropriate events and activities at the proper time and abide by the rules and policies. In the spirit of sportsmanship."*

## **Officials Oath:**

*"In the name of all judges and officials, I promise that we shall officiate in these Special Olympics Games with complete impartiality, respecting and abiding by the rules which govern them, in the spirits of sportsmanship."*

This page draws together equestrian-related information for all of Special Olympics. The coaching materials and other links will help you get a good sense of how this sport contributes to Special Olympics as of March 2012:

[http://specialolympics.org/Sections/Sports-and-Games/Coaching\\_Guides/Equestrian.aspx](http://specialolympics.org/Sections/Sports-and-Games/Coaching_Guides/Equestrian.aspx)

This page links to the Special Olympics sports Rules for Equestrian as of January 2008:

<http://www.specialolympicsmaine.org/sports/documents/equestrian.pdf>



## **EQUESTRIAN SPORTS**

The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Equestrian shall govern all Special Olympics competitions. As an international sports program, Special Olympics has created these rules based upon Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI) rules for equestrian found at <http://www.fei.org>. FEI or National Governing Body (NGB) rules shall be employed except when they are in conflict with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Equestrian or Article I. In such cases, the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Equestrian shall apply.

## **OFFICIAL EVENTS**

The range of events is intended to offer competition opportunities for athletes of all abilities. Programs may determine the events offered and, if required, guidelines for the management of those events. Coaches are responsible for providing training and event selection appropriate to each athlete's skill and interest.

The following is a list of official events available at the Special Olympics Maine competition:

- English Equitation
- Stock Seat Equitation
- Working Trails
- Showmanship at Halter/Bridle Classes
- Barrel Racing
- Unified Team Relays
- Carriage Driving

## **NOTES**

1. All athletes must have had at least 10 riding training sessions within the six months prior to competition.
2. We require proof of a negative Coggins test.
3. Entries must be received on or before the entry deadline.
4. Horses are limited to being used 4 times in each division (i.e. 4 times in Level A, 4 times in Level B, 4 times in BS, etc)
5. Equestrian athletes are not separated by male-female or by age. Athletes compete according to ability and may be grouped together regardless of tack (combined English/Western classes).
6. There will be a safety inspection of tack and equipment before riders enter the ring.
7. All people astride a horse must wear an ASTM/SEI approved helmet.
8. Coaches are encouraged to "warm up" their horses on the trail course on Friday evening.
9. Athletes are not permitted to warm up in the arena
10. No dogs will be permitted on the show grounds, except assistance dogs.
11. There will be an automatic 5-minute hold between classes to allow for change of rider/equipment. If all athletes are in the ring, the class will proceed.
12. Attendants are not allowed in the competition ring except at the request of the judge(s) or when specified in the event requirements (supported classes).
13. Outside assistance (rail side coaching) will be penalized at the judge's discretion.
14. Coaches have the discretion to replace a horse if they feel it is lame, too tired, or misbehaving.
15. Horses that require red ribbons are deemed inappropriate and will not be allowed.
16. Roughness &/or abuse of animals will not be tolerated.



### **JUDGING ~ General Information**

1. The following points have equal consideration in judging all classes:

- Balance
- Seat
- Use of aids,
- Ability to follow directions
- Ring etiquette and safety
- Sportsmanlike conduct

2. Results as shown by the performance of the horse are not to be considered more important than the method used in obtaining them.

3. Unauthorized assistance from horse handlers and side walkers will result in penalties.

4. Coaches may not act as horse handlers, side walkers or spotters for their own athlete anytime while that athlete is being judged.

5. Class Routines and Expectations

Athletes will perform the gaits appropriate for the division they are entered in.

Athletes may be required to execute any appropriate tests as determined by the judges

Competitors enter the ring at the walk.

Athletes will be expected to ride in both directions around the ring, either individually or as a group, as called for by the judge.

In the posting trot, riders are expected to be on the correct diagonal.

In the canter/lope, riders are expected to be on the correct lead.

For guidelines about judging specific events, refer to the English and Western sections of the rulebook.

### **ATTIRE**

1. Traditional attire is encouraged but not mandatory.

English:

- Short, dark colored riding jacket
- White or solid colored riding or Oxford shirt
- Tie or choker
- Breeches or jodhpurs
- Gloves

Western:

- Pants/jeans
- Long sleeved shirt with collar
- Belt
- Neckties, kerchiefs, bolos, chaps and gloves

2. All athletes must wear heeled boots.

3. Athletes who must wear other footwear as the result of a physical disability must have a physician's statement submitted with their Rider Profile.

4. Athletes must use safety stirrups.

5. Athletes must wear protective SEI-ASTM or BHS approved helmets



## **TACK**

1. Bridles must be appropriate to the class entered and meet the rule requirements.
2. Halters are required for all supported classes. A lead line must be attached to the halter and not to the bridle. The halter may be over or under the bridle as long as it doesn't interfere with the use of the bit or the reins.
3. Athletes may use adaptive equipment without penalty. Adaptive equipment must be declared on the Rider Profile.
4. Saddles:

**The saddle must fit the rider.**

Nothing that would prevent the stirrups from hanging freely may be added to or deleted from a standard Western saddle.

Safety stirrups are required.

5. Western Bits, Bridles and Equipment:

A standard Western bit is defined as having a shank with a maximum length overall of 21 cm (8 1/2"). Shanks may be fixed or loose.

The mouthpiece should consist of a metal bar 75mm (3/8") to 3cm (3/4") in diameter, varying from the straight bar to a jointed mouthpiece.

Prohibited equipment (applies to warm-up as well as competition):

Lariat or reata

Hackamores / bitless bridles

Tie-downs

Draw reins

Bosals

Wire, metal or rawhide device as part of leather chin strap

6. English Bits, Bridles and Equipment:

A regular cavesson, a dropped, crossed or a flash noseband is mandatory.

A snaffle bit is required.

All bits must be smooth and solid.

All parts of the bit coming into the horse's mouth (i.e. mouthpiece) may be made of 2 or more metals or material.

Approved Various Snaffle Bits:

Loose ring snaffle

Snaffle with jointed mouthpiece where middle piece should be rounded

Egg-butt snaffle

Racing snaffle D-ring

Egg-butt snaffle with cheeks (fulmer)

Loose ring snaffle with cheeks

Snaffle with upper cheeks only

Hanging cheek snaffle

Straight bar snaffle

Snaffle with rotating mouthpiece

Prohibited equipment (applies to warm-up as well as competition):

Bearing reins

Side reins

Running reins,

Bit-less bridles.

## **DIVISIONING**

Athletes compete according to ability; equestrian athletes are not separated by gender or by age.

1. Definitions:

Support (S)—Rider needs the physical support of one or two side walkers and/or the presence of a leader. Any help in the arena is considered "supported." Coaches may not act as a supporter.

Independent (I)—Independent riders may not be helped while competing.

Physical limitations (P)—athletes who are unable to post the trot or sit the jog. Information about their disabilities must be recorded in the Rider Profile.



2. Division Levels:

A Level: Walk, Trot/Jog, Canter/Lope. Independent only

A—Can perform any class requirements, no modifications.

B Level: Walk, Trot/Jog

BI—Independent, can perform any class requirements without assistance

BS— Supported, can perform any class requirements with some assistance which may include any combination: a leader, one or two side walkers, a spotter

C Level: Riders will ride at the walk only.

CI—Independent, can perform any class requirements without assistance

CS— Rider is assisted, rider is able to hold onto reins and control the direction of the horse

DS Level: Riders will walk only with a leader and side walkers. Fully assisted/dependent only. A leather neck strap or a leather hand hold strap attached to saddle are permitted for the rider to hold if the athlete does not prefer to hold the reins.

\*NOTE: **There is no Level DS athletes competing in Driving**

**CLASS SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

1. English Equitation and Stock Seat Equitation

Athletes will be judged on seat, hands, and ability to control and show the horse. Athletes will be judged at the walk, posting trot/jog canter, and reverse as deemed by their Division.

Results as shown by the performance of the horse are not to be considered more important than the method used by the athlete.

2. Working Trails

Athletes will ride the course individually as time allows.

An obstacle course will be made up of obstacles in a prescribed pattern.

Athletes will be judged on their ability to guide the horse through a designated course.

Athletes will be penalized if their support person is seen/heard giving instructions or making decisions for the athlete.

If a horse takes an excessive amount of time at an obstacle, the judge is encouraged to advance that horse to the next obstacle.

Off course is defined as:

Taking an obstacle in the wrong direction or from the wrong side.

Taking an obstacle in a manner other than described in the pattern.

Skipping an obstacle, unless directed by the judge.

Negotiating obstacles in the wrong sequence.

Failure of the rider to attempt an obstacle.

3. Showmanship at Halter/Bridle Classes

The emphasis is on the athlete's ability to handle and show the horse safely in a prescribed pattern.

Judging is based on the appearance of the horse, condition and thriftiness, grooming, tack, appearance of exhibitor, Poise, Alertness and Merit.

4. Barrel Racing

Barrels should be set up in a triangular configuration approximately 40 feet apart with the start/finish line designated by two cones set in between and a few feet in front of the first 2 barrels.

The rider will run barrel number 1, pass to the left of it and approximately 360 degree turn.

The rider will go to barrel number 2, pass to the right of it and complete a slightly more than 360 degree turn around it.

The rider will then go to barrel number 3, pass to the right of it and do another 360 degree turn.



The rider will then sprint to the finish line, passing between barrels 1 and 2. Time will be stopped when the horse's nose crosses the start/finish line.

#### 5. Unified Team Relays

Teams will have 1 Special Olympic athlete and 1 Partner.

Both athletes will ride at the same Division Level.

Two teams may compete at the same time.

Each athlete will begin at opposite ends of the arena.

The clock is started on the "go" command of the official race starter.

The clock is stopped when the nose of each team's last mount crosses the finish line.

#### 6. Carriage Driving

Two people (driver and assistant reins-man) must be in the carriage for all classes.

Two sets of reins shall be used in all classes

Unassisted Classes ~ as a back-up in the event the driver loses control of the horse.

Fully Assisted Classes ~ shared control of the reins by driver and assistant reins-man.

**ASTE/SEI** helmets must be worn by both the driver and assistant reins-man.

Driver shall enter the gate and be required to walk, trot, halt, and reverse direction at the request of the judge and according the Division.

Driver shall complete a simple dressage pattern, which will include circling around and driving between cones, and making a figure 8.

\*NOTE: **There is no Level DS athletes competing in Driving**