2026 Proposed Rule Changes

Red indicates new language. Strikethrough indicates removed language.

1 Proposed by: Becca Bailey with support of various show managers
New VHJA Affiliation Categories. No longer require VHJA shows to affiliate with NEHC, though they always have the choice and may be encouraged.

Rules Committee Recommendation: The Rules Committee supports continued conversation on this topic and has reviewed the proposed rule. The pros and cons of this discussion continue to come up over the recent years.

Current Rule Adjusted:

RULEI-RULES GOVERNING VHJA HORSE SHOWS
A. APPLICATION FOR HORSESHOW AFFILIATION

~~Level 1:USEF& VHJA Affiliation Horse shows that are fully pointed in all recognized VHJA divisions and classes (includingVHJA medals) and may hold USEF medal classes. Show may also affiliate with NEHC and hold NEHC Medals as well as Marshall & Sterling League classes. Level 1 horse shows to be governed by USEF, NEHC and VHJA rules. This affiliation applies to Vermont horse shows only. All Level 1 shows must use the VHJA numbering system. Any show failing to use the current VHJA numbering system will pay an additional affiliation fee of $100 per show.~~

Level 1 ~~2~~: Full VHJA ~~& NEHCAffiliation (no USEF affiliation);~~ Horse shows that are fully pointed in all VHJA divisions and classes (including VHJA medals) ~~but do not assess a USEF federation fee per horse. Level 2 horse shows are not eligible to hold USEF medals or USEF pointed classes. Horses are not required to have an USEF identification number to compete. Judges and steward sat these shows are not required to be USEF rated, but must be NEHC rated.~~ Judges and Stewards at these shows must be USEF or NEHC rated. ~~If show management wishes to hire judges or stewards that are unrated by USEF, they must be NEHC rated. Level 2 horse shows to be governed by NEHC and VHJA rules.~~ This affiliation applies to Vermont horse shows only. All Level 2 1 shows must use the VHJA numbering system. Any show failing to use the current VHJA numbering system will pay an additional affiliation fee of $100 per show.

Level 2 ~~3~~:VHJA Medal Class Affiliation;
Horse shows that are affiliated for points in VHJA medal classes only. Competitors riding in VHJA medal classes at Level 2 ~~3~~ shows must be VHJA members. Level 2 ~~3~~shows may be held outside the state of Vermont.

Level 3 ~~4~~:VHJA Jumper Division Affiliation

Horse shows that are fully pointed in the Jumper divisions only and classes. Judges at these shows are not required to be USEF or NEHC rated. Level 4 shows must still use a USEF or NEHC licensed Steward. Level 3 ~~4~~ horse shows to be governed by NEHC and VHJA rules. All Level 3 ~~4~~ shows must use the VHJA numbering system. Any show failing to use the current VHJA numbering system will pay an additional affiliation fee of $100 per show. Results may be submitted without the use of ShowPro.

~~Levels1& 2VHJA shows~~:

Affiliated Shows:

-In the event that a rule is not outlined by the VHJA rulebook, VHJA defaults to USEF and/or NEHC.

-enjoy the privileges of receipt of the VHJA rulebook, receipt of the VHJA mailing list, participation in the VHJA annual meeting and show managers meeting, and the right to advertise their shows as being conducted according to the rules of VHJA

-must be held in Vermont, except for Level 2 horse shows.

-are subject to the same affiliation fee/s with VHJA

2. Proposed by: Ashley Gallison

Intention: Remove Traditional Leadline from the Pre-Beginner Division and allow it to stand alone.

Change Pre-Beginner division to add Pre-Beginner Equitation

Rules Committee Recommendation: The Rules Committee supports this change, and questions whether the division should be opened up to 10 year olds to encourage participation and not force new riders into Beginner if they aren't ready but encourage safe showing.

101.LEADLINE TRADITIONAL: Open to riders 8 years old and under to be led by and adult on foot. To walk and trot individually at the judge's discretion. All riders will receive a BLUE ribbon. All riders who are VHJA members and participate in at least three(3) shows in class 101 will receive a Champion ribbon as a year-end award. Riders in the Leadline class may also compete in the Pre-Beginner division. Not USEF/NEHC rated.

099.PRE-BEGINNER HORSEMANSHIP: Open to riders ~~8~~ 10 years old and under, and may be led by an adult on foot. To be judged as an equitation class at the walk and trot individually or as a group at the judges discretion. Handlers/Trainers may lead in hand, stand nearby, or stand in the middle of the ring. Handler/Trainer positioning will not be rewarded in judging. The judge will ask one question of each contestant. Points will be awarded towards year-end awards. In the event of a tie for Champion, the Pre-Beginner Poles class will break the tie. ~~In order to qualify for Champion of the division, theTraditional Leadline class must also be entered.~~

100.PRE-BEGINNER POLES:Open to riders ~~8~~ 10 years old and under, and may be led by an adult on foot. To be judged as an equitation class at the walk and trot individually over a simple course of 4 ground poles. Handlers/Trainers may lead in hand, stand near by,or stand in the middle of the ring. Handler/Trainer positioning will not be rewarded in judging. Points will be awarded towards year-end awards. In the event of a tie for Champion, thePre-Beginner Poles class will break the tie. In order to qualify for Champion of the division, the Traditional Leadline class must also be entered.

098. PRE-BEGINNER EQUITATION: Open to riders ~~8~~ 10 years old and under, and may be led by an adult on foot. To be judged as an equitation class at the walk and trot individually or as a group at the judges discretion. Handlers/Trainers may lead in hand, stand nearby, or stand in the middle of the ring. Handler/Trainer positioning will not be rewarded in judging. Points will be awarded towards year-end awards. In the event of a tie for Champion, the Pre-Beginner Poles class will break the tie.

3. Proposed by: Becca Stech

Intention: Create consistent chart for awarding division Champion & Reserve among all shows to avoid confusion among competitors. The chart below matches the USEF "C" Level Show Chart.

New Rule:

Champion and reserve in each division based on points given to the first 8 places.

1st 10 points	5th 2 point
2nd 6 points	6th 1.5 point
3rd 4 points	7th 1 point
4th 3 points	8th .5 point

4. Proposed by: Becca Stech

Intention: This rule change would align with USEF division of the Itty-Bitty Jumpers at .65

Current Rule:

490/ 491/ 492/493. PUDDLE JUMPERS: Open to all riders on horses or ponies. Horse and rider combination not to compete at the same show at over .80 m/2'7". Fence height not to exceed.70 m/2'3", no in and out. USEF Table II.

New Rule: 490/ 491/ 492/493. ~~PUDDLE JUMPERS~~ ITTY-BITTY JUMPERS: Open to all riders on horses or ponies. Horse and rider combination not to compete at the same show at over .80 m/2'7". Fence height not to exceed.65 m/2'0, no in and out. USEF Table II.

5.

Rules Committee Proposal:

Clarify the specifications more for GMHA. The Hopeful Division should be one or two rails with flowers and no additional fill.

381./382.HOPEFUL HUNTER O/FENCES: Open to all horses and ponies. Horse/rider combination may not cross-enter into any class which exceeds 2'3" at the same show. Ponies may not cross-enter into Children's Hunter Pony division. To be shown over a course of not

Less than 6 obstacles at 2' - no oxers, no in and out. Simple changes will be deemed acceptable. Minimal Fill: No gates, walls, rolltops or coups. Jumps will be one or two rails with flowers.

83. HOPEFUL HANDY HUNTER: Open to all horses and ponies who are not competing in any classes which exceed 2'3" at this show. Ponies may not cross-enter into Children's Hunter Pony division. To be shown over a course of not less than 6 obstacles at 2'; two or more of the following must be included:trot fence, halt, back, dismount, roll back turn, or hand-gallop (at course designer's discretion). No in and out. Simple changes will be deemed acceptable. Minimal Fill: No gates, walls, rolltops or coups. Jumps will be one or two rails with flowers.

358/359. HOPEFUL EQUITATION OVER FENCES: Open to junior and amateur adult riders who have not competed in a division at a show requiring entries to jump over 2.80m/2'7" in the past two (2) years. Simple changes are deemed acceptable. Over fences class will include a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 8 fences not to exceed **2'.** Cross rails are acceptable, no oxers or combinations. Must include at least one change of direction. No person entered may have previously in the current show season competed in any other class requiring entries to jump over 2'3". Minimal Fill: No gates, walls, rolltops or coups. Jumps will be one or two rails with flowers.