



Hunter and Equitation Rule Book

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For rules not covered as part of the IEL rulebook, IEL uses USEF Hunter and Equitation Rules as guidance. Such use of USEF rules as guidance does not include access to the USEF's regulatory process, per USEF GR204.3 and GR204.4.



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Chapter HE1 – General

HE100 Helmets

All exhibitors are required to wear properly fastened protective headgear which meets or exceeds ASTM/SEI standards while mounted anywhere on the competition grounds. It must be properly fitted with harness secured. Any rider violating this rule at any time must immediately be prohibited from further riding until such headgear is properly in place.

HE101 Attire

1. Riders are required to wear dark coats; a light-colored shirt with a choker or a tie; white, buff or canary breeches, tall boots, and protective headgear.
2. When management permits riders to ride without jackets, riders must wear traditional, short, or long-sleeved riding shirts with chokers or ties. Polo shirts and chaps are not permitted except in un-judged warm-up classes.

HE102 Tack

IEL closely follows the USEF rules regarding tack for hunters and equitation. Please consult the USEF Hunter Rule book (USEF-HU125 and HU126) for rules about acceptable tack.

HE103 Horse Welfare

Per USEF-HU102

The following acts are prohibited:

1. Riding an exhausted horse.
2. Excessive pressuring of a tired horse.
3. Riding or lunging an obviously lame horse.
4. Excessive use of a whip on any horse in a stall, aisle, schooling area, competition ring or elsewhere on the competition grounds. The use of a whip must be for a good reason, done at the appropriate time, in the proper place and with appropriate restraint. Excessive whipping will not be tolerated.
5. Any striking of the horse's head (on the poll or forward of the poll shall be deemed excessive.)
6. Repeated jerking on the reins and sawing on the bit unless applied to an unruly horse that is jeopardizing his own safety or the safety of his rider.
7. Improper use of the bit resulting in bleeding, broken skin or broken mucous membrane.
8. Excessive use of the spurs or spurring resulting in broken and bleeding skin.
9. Rapping the legs of a horse with the butt end of a riding crop or other implement.
10. Use of any substance to induce temporary heat causing hyper-sensitization.
11. Poling.
12. Use of a wire or chain in conjunction with any schooling jumps.
13. Use of electronic shock devices in schooling or showing.



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14. Use of shackles, hock hobbles and similar devices, with the exception of kicking chains while the horse is in the stall or in transport. This does not prohibit the use of rubber or plastic exercising devices.
15. Showing a horse with hypersensitive, raw, or bleeding sores around the cornets, pasterns, legs, or body.
16. Use of laser beam devices anywhere on the competition grounds, except in an exhibition or if required in class specifications. (Exception: Lasers used in a therapeutic manner).
17. Withholding of feed or water for prolonged periods.
18. Letting blood from a horse for other than diagnostic purposes.
19. Inhumane treatment of a horse in a stall, aisle, schooling area, competition ring or elsewhere on the competition grounds, by any person.

Regular and local competitions.

Competitors found to be in violation of these rules by the Show Steward shall be eliminated/disqualified from competing and shall forfeit all entry fees for such competition. In addition, after consultation between the Show Management, or other official involved, and a Senior Judge in the division, additional penalties including disqualification from the balance of the competition may be imposed. All such violations must be recorded and, if cruelty or abusive behavior is evident, it will be reviewed by the Federation for such action as may be deemed appropriate to the particular circumstances.

HE104 Gate Calls

1. Riders must be ready to enter the ring when called upon. Starters will try to resolve conflicts, providing that those conflicts are presented before the class starts.
2. If any ring stands with an open gate for more than five (5) minutes, management reserves the right to eliminate a competitor after a two (2) minute gate call.

HE105 Jumping Order

If a jumping order is established, it must be posted in a conspicuous place at least 15 minutes before the class starts. The jumping order must be legible to the mounted rider.

HE106 Horse Sharing

There are four (4) divisions at each show: Varsity, Junior Varsity, Freshman, and Novice. A given horse may enter only one division at a given show. Exception: In an appropriate situation, and only with the prior permission of the IEL Board, a given horse may be shown by a second rider who is without a mount for either one (1) equitation class or one (1) dressage class, so long as the horse is shown only once in that class.

HE107 Cross Entering

A rider may enter one or two dressage classes in any given division and in a manner consistent with these rules, may also enter (with the same or with a different horse) one or more hunter/equitation /jumper classes in a different division.

HE108 Sideline Coaching

Per USEF rule EQ110.3 Outside assistance will be penalized at the judge's discretion.



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HE109 Medal Finals

1. All contestants are required to perform over a medal type course of at least (8) fences adhering to the course specifications set forth in HE126 below. Tests may be included in the course. A maximum of twelve (12) riders are required to work off on the flat, to be judged on seat, hands, and guidance and control of the horse. The flat phase performance of those riders selected to show shall count 40%. Martingales must be removed for the flat phase; no other tack changes will be allowed between phases. Nationally recognized tests may be used. Rings will be open ten (10) minutes prior to the medal classes for a course walk.
2. At the final show, the medal class will be the Medal Final class. The top fifteen (15) scoring riders from the previous medal classes will be qualified to show in the Medal Finals. In the event three (3) classes are not held or completed prior to the final show, the IEL Board reserves the right to establish new eligibility criteria for the Medal Final class. At the final show, there will also be a Freshman Horsemanship Medal Final class; riders for the Freshman Medal Final class shall qualify based on the cumulative points earned from the prior shows during the season in the Freshman Hunt Seat Equitation Over Fences classes. Those riders qualifying will be notified prior to the Medal Finals. Any previous winner of the Medal Final in a specific division may not compete again in the Medal Final of that same division. (The rider, however, may compete in the qualifying classes in the division.) The riders must pre-enter to preserve their eligibility to compete. Failure to pre-enter will result in forfeiture of the rider's eligibility to compete and the rider's spot in the finals will be awarded to the next rider on the list.

Chapter HE2 – Eligibility

The IEL Board will perform spot checks to test rider's eligibility.

HE110 Novice Hunter/Equitation Eligibility

Riders forfeit eligibility for the Novice division when they have won six (6) or more blue ribbons at any recognized show (USEF, PCHA, LAHJA, SFVHSA) over a course of 2'0" or higher.

HE111 Freshman Hunter/Equitation Eligibility

Riders forfeit eligibility for the Freshman division when they have won six (6) or more blue ribbons at any recognized show (USEF, PCHA, LAHJA, SFVHSA) over a course of 3'0" or higher.

HE112 Junior Varsity Hunter/Equitation Eligibility

Riders forfeit eligibility for the Junior Varsity division when they have won six (6) or more blue ribbons at any recognized show (USEF, PCHA, LAHJA, SFVHSA) over a course of 3'6" or higher.

HE113 Varsity Hunter/Equitation Eligibility

Open to riders that are eligible to compete over hunter and equitation courses with fences of 3'6".

HE114 IEL Horsemanship Medal Eligibility

Any previous winner of the Medal Final in a specific division may not compete again in the Medal Final of that same division. In the Freshman Division, the rider, however, may compete in the qualifying classes in the division; however, in JV and Varsity Divisions, the riders may not compete in the individual metal classes.



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HE115 Eligibility Throughout the Season

A rider's division eligibility will be determined at the beginning of the show season and should remain the same throughout the show year. If a change is necessitated by such circumstances as changing horses due to lameness, etc. mid-season please refer to HE117 below.

HE116 Inability to Move Up Divisions

A rider may compete in only one (1) Hunter/Equitation and/or Jumper division at any given show. Any rider who has won the IEL year-end overall division championship in the Novice division is not eligible for further individual points in the Novice division. If a rider is unable to move up to the Freshman division as required, the rider may still compete for ribbons, but is ineligible to receive individual or school points.

HE117 Changing Down Divisions

IEL eligibility rules are in place to make sure the competition is fair to all levels of rider. However, IEL does understand that circumstances change, and riders are no longer able to compete at a certain height for a number of reasons. If a rider has exceeded the eligibility requirements for the division they wish to move down to, they may continue to compete in the lower division but they will not be eligible for any individual high score awards. If circumstances change during the show season please contact IEL

Chapter HE3 – Section Specifics

HE118 Ride Limit Per Class

A rider may ride only one horse per class; however, a rider may ride a different horse in each of the different classes in the rider's division.

HE119 Novice Hunter/Equitation Courses

Class 111 – Novice Working Hunter

Novice riders will be asked to jump a course of eight fences set at 2'0". There will be no oxers. Horses will be judged on performance, manners/suitability, and way of going.

Class 112 – Novice Handy Hunter

Novice riders will be asked to jump a course of eight fences set at 2'0". There will be no oxers. Horse will be judged on performance, manners/suitability, and way of going.

Class 121 – Novice Hunt Seat Equitation Over Fences

Novice riders will be asked to jump a course of eight fences set at 2'0". There will be no oxers. Riders will be judged on their effectiveness, the correctness of their "hunt seat" position, and their connection to their horses.

HE120 Freshman Hunter/Equitation Courses

Class 211 – Freshman Working Hunter

Freshman riders will be asked to jump a course of fences set at 2'6". Horses will be judged on performance, manners/suitability, and way of going.



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Class 212 – Freshman Handy Hunter

Freshman riders will be asked to jump a course of eight fences set at 2'6". Courses may include an inside turn and/or a trot jump that will test the horses "handiness". Horses will be judged on performance, manners/suitability, way of going, and handiness.

Class 221 – Freshman Hunt Seat Equitation Over Fences

Freshman Riders will be asked to jump a course of eight fences. Riders will be judged on their effectiveness, the correctness of their "hunt seat position", and their connection with their horses.

HE121 Junior Varsity Hunter/Equitation Courses

Class 311 – Junior Varsity Working Hunter

Riders will be asked to jump a course of eight fences 3'0" in height. Horses will be judged on performance, manners, and way of going.

Class 312 – Junior Varsity Handy Hunter

Riders will be asked to jump a course of eight fences 3'0" in height. This course will include tests and/or options to demonstrate the horse's handiness. Horses will be judged on performance, manners, way of going, and handiness.

Class 321 – Junior Varsity Hunt Seat Equitation Over Fences

Riders will be asked to jump a course of eight fences 3'0" in height. Riders will be judged on their effectiveness, the correctness of their hunt seat position, and their connection to their horses.

HE122 Varsity Hunter/Equitation Courses

Class 411 – Varsity Working Hunter

Riders will be asked to jump a course of fences 3'6" in height. Horses will be judged on performance, manners, and way of going.

Class 412 – Varsity Handy Hunter

Riders will be asked to jump a course of fences 3'6" in height. Riders will be judged on their effectiveness in achieving their horse's optimum performance, their correctness of the hunter seat position, and their connection with their horse as they navigate the course.

Class 421 – Varsity Hunt Seat Equitation Over Fences

Riders will be asked to jump a course of fences 3'6" in height. Riders will be judged on their effectiveness in achieving their horse's optimum performance, their correctness of the hunter seat position, and their connection with their horse as they navigate the course.

HE123 Flat Classes

Class 122 – Novice Hunt Seat Equitation On the Flat

Novice riders will be asked to show their horses at the walk, trot, and canter both ways of the ring. No further tests will be required. Riders will be judged on their position, their connection with their horse and demonstration of the basic horsemanship aids.



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Class 222 – Freshman Hunt Seat Equitation On the Flat

Riders will be asked to show their horses at a walk, trot, and canter both ways of the ring. Further tests are at the discretion of the judge. Riders will be judged on the correctness of their “hunt seat position”, their connection with their horse and their demonstration of horsemanship aids.

Class 322 – Junior Varsity Hunt Seat Equitation On the Flat

Riders will be asked to show their horses at a walk, trot, and canter both ways of the ring. There will be further testing at the discretion of the judge. The riders will be judged on the correctness of their hunt seat position, their connection to their horses and their demonstration of horsemanship aids.

Class 422 – Varsity Hunt Seat Equitation On the Flat

Riders will be asked to show their horses at all three gaits both ways of the ring. Further tests will be required and will be at the discretion of the judge. Riders will be judged on the correctness of their hunt seat position, their connection with their horse and their demonstration of all horsemanship aids required to perform the tests asked of them.

HE124 IEL Horsemanship Medal Classes

Freshman Horsemanship Medal

Due to the restrictions on time the Freshman IEL Horsemanship Medal is not actually offered at each show. This class is held only at the final show.

Class 351 – Junior Varsity IEL Horsemanship Medal

Junior Varsity medal fences will be set at 3’0”. All contestants are required to perform over a medal type course of at least eight fences. Tests may be included on the course. A maximum of 12 riders are required to work off on the flat, to be judged on seat, hands, and guidance and control of the horse. The flat phase performance of those riders selected to show shall count 40%. Further testing is at the discretion of the judge. Any previous winner of the junior varsity medal final in this division may not compete again in the medal final in this division.

Class 451 – Varsity IEL Horsemanship Medal

Varsity medal fences will be set at 3’6”. All contestants are required to perform over a medal type course of at least eight fences. Tests may be included on the course. A maximum of 12 riders are required to work off on the flat, to be judged on seat, hands, and guidance and control of the horse. The flat phase performance of those riders selected to show shall count 40%. Further testing is at the discretion of the judge. Any previous winner of the varsity medal final in this division may not compete again in the medal final in this division.

HE125 Schooling of Horses Pertaining to Medal Classes

In all medal classes, trainer mounted schooling of the horse shall not be permitted between the over fences and flat portions of the medal classes and medal finals.



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HE126 IEL Horsemanship Medal Final

Freshman IEL Horsemanship Medal Final

This class will be held at the final show. Riders for the IEL Freshman Medal Final class shall qualify based on the cumulative points earned from the prior shows during the season in the Freshman equitation over fences. The top 15 point earners will qualify. Those riders will be notified prior to the medal finals. Freshman medal final fences will be set at 2'6". All riders are required to perform over at least eight (8) fences not exceeding 2'6", with at least 1 change of direction. Combinations are not permitted in the Freshman Medal Finals. There will be two judges, seated opposite each other, scoring each round and the scores will be averaged. All riders will show at the walk, trot and canter, to be judged under the current standards for the equitation division. Each rider will receive a numerical score. The flat phase will count 40%. After the flat and fences phases, the top four (4), and anyone within three (3) percentage points of the leader, will be asked to do further testing over fences; for the work-off, judges may be seated together. Nationally recognized tests may be used. In the event riders are tied after the work-off, the judges shall confer to place those tied. There will be no additional work-off.

Junior Varsity IEL Horsemanship Medal Final

This class will be held at the final show. Riders for the IEL Junior Varsity Medal Finals shall qualify based on the cumulative points earned from the prior shows in the Junior Varsity Horsemanship Medal. The top 15 point earners will qualify. Junior Varsity medal final fences will be set at 3'0". All riders are required to perform over at least eight (8) fences not exceeding 3'0", with 1 combination, and 2 changes of direction. Tests may be included in the course. There will be two judges, seated opposite each other, scoring each round and the scores will be averaged. All riders are required to show at the walk, trot and canter, to be judged under the current standards for the equitation division. Each rider will receive a numerical score. The flat phase will count 40%. After the flat and fence phases, the top four (4), and anyone within three (3) percentage points of the leader, will be asked to do further testing over fences; for the work-off, judges may be seated together. Nationally recognized tests may be used. In the event riders are tied after the work-off, the judges shall confer to place those tied. There will be no additional work-off.

Varsity IEL Horsemanship Medal Final

This class will be held at the final show. Riders for the IEL Varsity Medal Final shall qualify based on the cumulative points earned from the prior shows in the Varsity Horsemanship Medal. The top 15 point earners will qualify. Varsity medal final fences will be set at 3'6". All riders are required to perform over at least eight (8) fences not exceeding 3'6", with 2 doubles, or 1 double and 1 triple combination with a spread fence required and at least 1 change of direction. Tests maybe include in the course. There will be two judges, seated opposite each other, scoring each round and the scores will be averaged. All riders are required to show at the walk, trot and canter, to be judged under the current standards for the equitation division. Each rider will receive a numerical score. The flat phase will count 40%. After the flat and fences phases, the top four (4), and anyone within three (3) percentage points of the leader, will be asked to do further testing over fences; for the work-off, judges may be seated together. Nationally recognized tests may be used. In the event riders are tied after the work-off, the judges shall confer to place those tied. There will be no additional work-off.



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HE127 Medal Final Order of Go

The order of go for the medal finals shall be determined by the qualifying points the exhibitor has accumulated during the IEL season. In the Junior Varsity and Varsity divisions, these points will be earned in the Junior Varsity and Varsity Horsemanship Medal Class. In the Freshman division, these points will be earned in the Freshman Equitation Over Fences class. The order of go will be in ascending order from the least amount of points to the greatest amount of points earned through IEL shows 1, 2 and 3.