



The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Equestrian dated June 2016 will be in effect for the 2017-2018 SONC program year. This section is intended to be used in conjunction with the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF), American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA), and SOI Rules. Therefore, those rules are not repeated here but they will be enforced unless in direct conflict to SONC modifications.

Appropriate Attire and Equipment

- For guidelines about appropriate attire and tack for different styles, please refer to the English and Western portions of the SOI Summer Sports Rules for Equestrian.
- **Anyone** mounted on a horse is required to wear an SEI-ASTM¹ approved helmet, jeans or long pants, hard-soled shoes or boots with a heel or must use safety stirrups, jackets or long-sleeved shirts². These requirements pertain to competition as well as practice sessions.³
- **Anyone** entering arenas being used for competition or warm-up of riders and horses may not enter such arenas in sandals or clogs.
- Jacket/coat (English) and long sleeves (Western) are required.⁴
- Logos and trademarks, including names of riding centers or barns, are prohibited from being on the uniforms of athletes and coaches (including leaders and side walkers) during competition, and for the entire delegation during Opening Ceremonies. Riding apparel that is manufactured with a logo or trademarks is acceptable, as long as they are not altered.
- As per AQHA rules, an optional curb-strap attached below the reins on a snaffle bit is acceptable for Western classes.⁵
- All horses must have bits before entering the competition and warm-up rings. Horses without bits will not be allowed in divisioning or competition.
- Athletes who enter the competition ring and are not dressed appropriately for their events will have points deducted by the judge.
- Delegations should bring horse(s), appropriate tack, stable equipment, muck bucket and rake, feed, hay to the state-level competition (SONC will provide shavings for horses).
- All horses **must** wear a halter, regardless of class.

Competition Interpretations and Modifications

- **There will be three gate calls for riders and their appropriate classes. If the athlete has not reported to the warm-up arena by the final gate call, they will be scratched from the event and receive no award for that event.**
- Please refer to the amended Rider Division Level grid located at the end of the sport notes for corresponding events and acceptable rider levels.
- **For the 2017-2018 program year, the test patterns will be Test #7 for trails and showmanship; Test #1 for dressage and western riding. These are posted on the [SONC equestrian web page](#).**
- **In fall of 2017, Western classes will start, followed by English.**
- For trails competition, two rings will be run simultaneously and judged separately.
- A rider must use the same horse in all events during the entire competition.⁶

¹ SEI stands for the Safety Equipment Institute. ASTM stands for the American Society for Testing and Materials.

² Short sleeves may be worn during practice, Section 4.6

³ Please refer to SOI Rules Section 4-ATTIRE for general attire requirements. The Judge may wave due to weather.

⁴ SOI Rules Section 9.2.2 and 15.2.2. Judges may waive coat (English) and long sleeves (Western) in extreme weather.

⁵ Emphasis on AQHA rules.

- Only two riders are allowed to compete on one horse. If two riders share one horse, only one of them can be A level, unless previously cleared by SONC.⁷
- The soundness and/or suitable temperament of a horse are at the discretion of the Equestrian Sport Development Team and the Judge, and they will make the final decision regarding a horse's ability to compete.⁸
- Athletes who have visual or hearing impairments are allowed an interpreter in the ring. Local programs are to notify SONC of such impairments in writing by the registration deadline for state-level competition. Athletes with a hearing impairment are encouraged to use cue cards as designated in the SOI Rules.⁹
- All athletes in mounted classes are required to ride in divisioning "classes" on Friday afternoon to be eligible to compete during the weekend. If the athlete does not participate in divisioning, they will not compete during the weekend.
- The following bits will not be allowed for use: Kimberwicks, Pelhams, Hackamores, or Elevators.¹⁰
- For English classes, the use of curb straps or chains on any kind of bit is also prohibited.
- Athletes may compete in up to two individual classes and one team event. Unified Partners may compete in only relays, and cannot be in two relays of the same class/distance.
- Athletes will be judged on their ability to control the horse and follow the commands of the judge. Judges will penalize an athlete whose leader and/or side walkers give too much assistance with control of the horse or the following of commands. Athletes will not be judged on the amount of physical support they need but rather on the way they control the horse.¹¹
- Athletes will compete at a walk or walk/trot for gymkhana and/or relay team races.
- Due to safety reasons, all coaches, youth coaches, leaders, sidewalkers must be certified in equestrian in order to enter the competition ring during state-level competition. Wrist bands will continue to be used to designate those who have received SONC equestrian training and are allowed in the competition arena.
- Commands to be used by the announcer during the event include:
 - Western: walk (C class), jog (B class) and lope (A class)
 - English: walk (C class), trot (B class) and canter (A class)
 - Both: back, circle, halt, reverse and line up on the ring master/ring mistress

Special Notices

- All riders should have a coach (i.e. may not come to competition without a coach). This coach may be shared by several athletes but may not go into the ring when judging is in progress unless he/she is a leader or side walker. Each athlete should have the number of support personnel that he/she needs to perform safely. Head Coaches must remain in the "Coaches Box" during judging.¹²
- Coggins tests will be checked when you arrive at the horse complex for state-level competition and a copy must be posted on the stall door. These should be dated after October 1, 2016 (completed within the last year).
- Local programs will be required to exhibit appropriate conduct with their horses. Abuse of a horse is grounds for immediate dismissal from the competition.
- Unified Partners who are also certified in equestrian may assist athletes in the warm up ring, and may enter the competition ring as a coach, leader or side walker.
- No on site athlete changes or event switching will be permitted.
- Unified Partners and relays will be allowed for the 2017 SONC Equestrian Tournament. SONC and the sport development team are looking at ways to incorporate Unified Sports in other ways throughout the year. This is being done in anticipation of potentially removing all Unified competition from state-level events starting in the 2017-2018 program year.

⁶ SOI Rule 3.14

⁷ Modification of Rule 3.15

⁸ Modification of Rule 3.17

⁹ Rule 3.9. SOI require the use of such cue cards. SONC allows the use of an interpreter in lieu of cue cards.

¹⁰ Addition to SOI Rule 17.1.1.2

¹¹ Entire statement is an emphasis and interpretation of SOI Rules 6.3.1 and Rule 13.2.6

¹² Modification of SOI Rule 6.3.3 in that coaches are allowed to act as horse handlers (i.e. leaders), side walkers or spotters for their own athletes while in the competition ring.

Tentative Order of Equestrian Events – 2017 SONC Equestrian Tournament		
Friday Divisioning for all levels Western followed by English (start with A and work towards CS where applicable)	Saturday (all day) Showmanship Working Trails (start with CS and work towards A where applicable; Western followed by English) Gymkhana Events (may change based on schedule)	Sunday (all day) Dressage Western Riding Equitation (start with A and work toward CS where applicable; Western followed by English) Four-Person Team Relays Two-Person Team Relays

Rider's Division Levels

Event	C-S	C-I	B-S	B-I	A
English Equitation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dressage		Yes		Yes	Yes
Western Riding				Yes	Yes
Western Equitation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Working Trails	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Showmanship	Yes ¹³	Yes	Yes ¹⁴	Yes	Yes
Team Relays	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (athletes will compete at trot/jog or walk only)
Pole Bending				Yes	Yes (athletes will compete at trot/jog or walk only)
Barrel Racing				Yes	Yes (athletes will compete at trot/jog or walk only)
Figure 8 Stake Race				Yes	Yes (athletes will compete at trot/jog or walk only)

¹³ SONC allows athletes competing in CS to compete at the C level for Showmanship with the understanding that they must enter the ring independently. Modification of 8.3.4

¹⁴ SONC allows athletes competing in BS to compete at the B or C level for Showmanship with the understanding that they must enter the ring independently. Modification of 8.3.4.