National Capitol Equitation League (NCEL) Rules and Procedures

1. PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS & TEAMS

a. Participating Schools

i. A "Participating School" or "Host School" is defined as an entity which has a regular lesson program with a sufficient number of school horses suitable for this level to run a meet.

ii. A participating school is not required to have access to an indoor ring.

iii. Participating schools in NCEL will compete with teams composed of up to 12 riders, (there is no minimum number of riders), which shall be designated at the beginning of the season as Novice, Limit or Open Riders. A maximum of 9 riders may participate per team at any show, including Finale. **A team may have no more than 5 riders in any division.** Team rosters must be submitted to the NCEL administration prior to the start of the season at a date to be determined by NCEL administration. Riders will remain in their designated divisions for the duration of the season. A rider must be designated by a participating school as part of their team roster to participate in any meet. A participating school may designate a new rider to the team in accordance with the rules after the start of a season if such school has fewer than 12 riders on its team. A new rider may not be added for Finale. A participating school may remove a designated rider from the team after the start of a season due to unforeseen circumstances, however such rider will remain ineligible to be a designated rider for that team or any other NCEL team for the remainder of the season. A participating school seeking to add or remove a rider after a roster has been finalized must attain written consent from NCEL administration for such a change. NCEL reserves the right to disapprove a roster or roster changes if it does not comply with league rules. See below for additional Rider Eligibility and Division Specifications.

iv. Each participating school competes in 4 regular meets during the season, one of which is hosted by that barn. A participating school may choose to defer serving as a host school for one year if such school has not been a member of NCEL previously, however such school must be able to demonstrate suitability and commitment to conduct an NCEL home meet the following year or partner with another participating school to host a home meet. The season ends with a Finale meet whereby all participating schools shall be invited to bring their own horses or ponies to compete.

v. Full payment of the season's league fees, the Finale deposit, and the administrative fee, must be submitted to the NCEL Treasurer prior to the start of the season. The deadline for those payments will be provided by NCEL administration at least two months prior to the start of the season. The participating school's roster including the name, address and phone number of each team member, as well as their signed Participation Agreement and Media Consent Form (which may be found on the ncelus.com website), shall be submitted to the NCEL Administrator prior to the start of the season.

vi. A rider who has not turned in a completed agreement or a team that has not paid their fees may not compete.

vii. Any team who decides not to participate after submitting all league fees shall be responsible for the registration fee, but the deposit and administrative fee will be refunded.

viii. Participating schools may require a parent or guardian to complete a waiver of liability or release prior to a meet at such participating school. A rider may not be entitled to participate at a NCEL meet if the required liability forms or releases have not been completed.

ix. Each participating school must abide by the rules and bylaws of NCEL and must act professionally and respectfully at all NCEL activities, shows, and events.

x. A participating school may be suspended or expelled from active participation in NCEL for just cause as determined by the prevailing standards and rules of NCEL, which may, but need not, incorporate the standards and rules of other recognized equestrian associations, including but not limited to, the USEF, USDF, AQHA, NRHA, IHSA, IDA and the U.S. Center for SafeSport. Expulsion of a member can also be determined by a vote of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the NCEL Board of Directors, excluding the offending participating school. Written notice shall be given to the member in question ten (10) days in advance of such vote, stating the charges and inviting the member to provide a rebuttal. The Board of Directors shall determine the suspension and/or sanctions, if appropriate. A participating school that is suspended or expelled from active participation in NCEL shall forfeit all league fees and administrative fees.

b. Rider Eligibility

i. Each team member is to be a rider who is not older than 20 years of age prior to October 1 of the current competition season. Riders 18 years of age and older may not concurrently participate in NCEL and any other collegiate riding league (such as the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association or National Collegiate Equestrian Association) during the same calendar year.

ii. Each team member must be enrolled at their home barn as a student in a regular lesson program (at least weekly) as of October 1 of the current competition season.

iii. All riders must wear secured ASTM-approved helmets when mounted.

c. Division Specifications

i. Novice Riders

1. Have not jumped higher than 2'7" at local or rated competitions.
2. May not ride in this division if they have competed previously as an Open rider in this league.
3. May ride in <u>any</u> flat class and may jump in the Novice (21"-2'0") classes.

ii. Limit Riders

1. Have not jumped higher than 2'11" at local or rated competitions.
2. May ride in Limit or Open flat classes and may jump in the Limit (2'0"-2'3") classes.

iii. Open Riders
    1. Have no restrictions as to previous show experience.
    2. May only ride in Open flat classes and jump in Open (2'3"-2'6") classes.
iv. Each rider will ride in 2 classes at the coach's discretion.
v. *THE HIGHEST SCORING RIDER FROM EACH TEAM IN EACH CLASS WILL EARN POINTS TOWARD THE TEAM SCORE FOR THE MEET THAT DAY.* All points a rider earns count toward their year-end individual point totals *EXCEPT FOR FINALE CLASS POINTS* and only each team's highest ribbon points for that class will be added to the team's final score for that day.

2. HOST SCHOOL

a. Host schools will:

i. Send out a "welcome" email no later than 1 week before their scheduled meet to the visiting teams confirming meet address, draw time and stable policy on the use of outside saddles. (See Rule 3Bvi)
ii. Provide an adequate number of school horses. (See Rule 3B which describes suitable horses and tack). Warm up horses as necessary prior to the start of the meet.
iii. Provide suitable, safe tack for all school horses and notify visiting teams if they may bring their own saddles. (See Rule 3B iv.)
iv. Report the results of the meet by returning the score sheet back to the Secretary within one week after the conclusion of the meet. The League Secretary will send the score sheet to the host barn no later than 5 days prior to the meet. The Judge's cards are to be scanned and emailed, as well as the Sportsmanship and Coaches' nomination forms to the Secretary at: admin@ncelus.com
v. Provide and compensate a qualified judge (see Rule 2.B) and ensure that the judge is familiar with NCEL procedures, rules and League Study Guide.
vi. Manage the competition and ensure that it runs in a timely and orderly fashion. To that end, the host school shall:
    1. *Provide clean, adequate facilities for the meet, including rest rooms and a dressing area for each team.*
    2. *Provide sufficient personnel for the preparation, tacking and care of the horses and for the efficient management of the show.*
    3. *Provide each coach with a packet which includes the description of each horse and whether or not a crop and/or spurs may be used. Also include copies of the courses, nomination forms, (see NCEL website), and host barn waivers as needed.*
    4. *Provide adequate space for coaches and one assistant to gather for a coaches' meeting with the judge after the draw and prior to the start of the meet.*
    5. *Provide the judge with a packet/clip board which includes prepared judge's cards, courses, a copy of the pertinent rules and the league study guide*
    6. *Prepare and supervise the draw.* ***BARNS MAY OPT FOR AN ONLINE DRAW WHEN ALL COACHES AGREE TO THIS USING THIS METHOD AT A PARTICULAR MEET.***
    7. *Post scores and judge's cards after each class.*
    8. *Present ribbons.*
    9. *Provide sufficient food/drinks for snacks/lunch that may be purchased by participating teams.*
vii. Host schools must ensure *when possible* that riders remain anonymous to the judge, including not announcing a rider's name or team while being judged, or sharing lists of riders' names, teams, and numbers.

b. Qualified Judges

i. A judge who works locally or is recognized by VHSA, MHSA, BHSA or USEF and has experience judging team competitions formatted in a way similar to NCEL is considered qualified.
ii. A host school may not use the same judge 2 years in a row for such host school's home NCEL meet/s. Once a judge has judged a regular season meet, he or she is ineligible to judge the season end Finale. A judge may, however, judge more than one regular season meet that year, so long as it is at a different barn. To avoid possible conflicts, teams should choose the Finale meet judge at the season opening meeting.
iii. A year end Finale judge must be recognized by either VHSA, MHSA, BHSA or USEF and may not judge the Finale 2 years in a row.

3. REGULAR MEETS

a. Procedure at Regular Meets

i. The schedule for the regular season will be organized in a way which allows each team to play against all others in the league at least once during the season whenever possible.
ii. Visiting teams should arrive at the host school within 15 minutes of the scheduled draw time but no earlier than 30 minutes ahead of time.

iii. At the scheduled time, approximately 30 minutes before the first class, the riders or coaches will draw the horses by lot for all classes. The exception shall be if all teams have agreed to an online draw prior to the day of the meet. Coaches will have the opportunity to request changes to the results of the draw during this time if a horse or pony does not match rider suitability. For example, a small pony and a larger rider. All coaches must consent to such change.

iv. Coaches must designate riders for each class prior to the draw. A rider may not change classes once the draw has begun, unless all coaches must consent to such a change.

v. A draw will be held to choose the 2 riders from each team who will ride in the Finale class. Those riders or their coaches will then draw their horses for the Finale class. Coaches will choose the 6 riders whom they want to place in the Finale Class draw and include this list with their entry. Any rider participating at a regular season show is eligible for selection for the finale class. A coach may choose to exclude a point rider from the draw if such rider is entered in only flat classes for that show. The coach must communicate that exclusion to the host team prior to the draw with their entries for the show. NCEL coaches are required to submit six riders for the draw at each regular season show unless the team does not have six riders who compete in an over fences class at such show.

vi. In the event a visiting team is not present in time for the draw, the host school may draw horses for that team.

vii. A host school may, but is not required to delay the start of a meet for up to one hour if a visiting team is running late.

viii. If the start of a meet is not delayed for a tardy visitor, once that team arrives, they will be allowed to participate in all remaining classes, but no classes will be repeated.

ix. If a majority of the coaches at any meet agree that a particular horse appears unsafe or unsound, then the host school shall withdraw that horse from competition and substitute with another suitable horse/pony. Priority shall always be given to the safety of both riders and horses.

x. All meets shall be governed by the rules established by NCEL. If there is not an NCEL rule addressing an issue, thenUSEF rules shall apply and if there is no USEF rule, then the decision shall be made in accordance with the usual and customary practices at regular recognized shows.

b. Horses and Tack

i. All horses and ponies used in NCEL meets must be school horses or horses which are used regularly in the host school's lesson program. A rider on the host school's team may not compete on a horse that they own or lease which is used in the regular lesson program.

ii. Horses must be suitable for use and high strung or extremely difficult horses shall not be used. Horses with a tendency to kick must wear a red tail ribbon. No horse shall be used which has been administered a tranquilizing substance.

iii. If a host school cannot provide the necessary number of horses, they may borrow or lease horses from another barn.

iv. All horses may be ridden in the tack they are accustomed to, including drop nose band type cavessons; martingales are permitted in **all** classes. Bridles and reins must be made of leather or leather-like material.All saddles should be jumping or all purpose saddles. Dressage saddles should not be used.

v. No bit or tack adjustments will be allowed unless approved by the host school.

vi. At the discretion of the host school, riders may use their own saddles. The host school shall provide saddle pads and girths.

vii. Crops and spurs may be used at the express discretion of the host school.

c. Regular Classes

i. Equitation on the flat: Riders to be judged at the walk, posting and sitting trot and canter both ways of the ring. To be judged on position, hands, seat, legs and control. A team may have riders who ride in 2 flat classes and no jumping classes.

ii. Equitation over fences: To be judged on position, hands, seat, legs and control. Riders shall not be penalized for a simple change of lead. All riders shall enter and exit the ring at a walk. Unless otherwise stated the jump course shall be ridden at a canter. Riders may not participate in 2 jumping classes, unless one of those classes is the finale class.

iii. Jump courses should be built of traditional materials and include single fences and measured lines. Bending lines, roll backs, oxers, and end fences are permitted. Combinations and lines of fewer than 3 strides are not permitted.

iv. There will be 2 jump courses offered in each division, a 4 fence jump course which must include a halt and a trot fence, and a 6 fence jump course. Coaches must choose one of these options for each rider in each division.

v. Riders may change classes (but not divisions) during the season provided that they do not violate Rules 1.C. and 3.F.ii. For example, a novice rider may be designated to compete in novice flat and limit flat at one meet, and then be designated to ride in novice flat and open flat at a different meet.

vi. A rider who falls off during a class (with the exception of the warmup portion) will be eliminated from the class.

d. Sportsmanship and Coaches' Award

i. Before participating schools leave a meet, all coaches must turn in their Sportsmanship and Coaches' nomination forms to the host school. The 3 riders nominated for this award must be riders from the other teams participating that day, and not from the team which is submitting the nominations. The nominated coach should be one from a team other than that which is submitting the nomination.

e. Finale Class

i. Riders in the Finale Class to be judged at the walk, trot, sitting trot and canter with stirrups both ways of the ring. Riders shall also be asked to walk, sit and post the trot without stirrups in at least one direction, however this may be waived at the discretion of the judge based on safety of the riders and horses.
ii. Riders to be tested over 2 fences, with stirrups. The judge will design the test using jumps which were included in regular class courses. When possible, jumps should be jumped in the direction previously jumped. Jumps may be set no higher than 2'0" in the Finale Class.
iii. Riders will be asked to respond to one question selected by the judge from the NCEL Study Guide: (https://ncelus.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/NCEL-Questions-2019.pdf). Each rider will be asked the same question; no follow up question may be asked (with the exception of asking the judge to repeat the question).
iv. To be judged on position, hands, seat, legs, control and response to the question.
v. Placing of the class is determined after weighting each rider's performance as follows: 25% for flat work, 25% for work without stirrups, 25% jumping test, 25% response to question. If the judge foregoes the no stirrup portion of the Finale class, the flat work, jumping test, and response to question shall be weighted as 1/3rd each.
vi. Points earned by a rider in this class are applied only to that rider's overall team score and not to their individual score and only the top placing rider in each Finale class earns points which will be added to that team's score.
vii. A rider who falls off during the Finale class (with the exception of the warmup portion) will be eliminated from the class.

f. Regular Meet Format

i. A regular season meet will be a 3 or 4 team meet. 8 – 12 horses will be needed to do a meet. There are 3 classes per division, plus the Finale Class. Classes may be split based on the number of riders. Flat classes with more than 8 riders will be split and jump classes with more than 12 will be split (i.e. a flat class of 9 or more and a jumping class of 13 or more must be split. Splits may not occur below that threshold.) for the purposes of judging. The host school shall determine the order of classes and must notify visitors of the order no later than 1 week prior to the meet. For the over fences portion of each division the host team may opt to set their fences at a lower height (as outlined below). However, all riders must be prepared to jump at the maximum height for their division at any regular season show.
ii. The divisions will be as follows:
- Novice Equitation on the Flat (open only to Novice riders).
- Novice Equitation Over 4 Fences at 21"-2'0" (open only to Novice riders).
- Novice Equitation Over 6 Fences at 21"-2'0" (open only to Novice riders).

- Limit Equitation on the Flat (open to Novice and Limit riders).
- Limit Equitation Over 4 Fences at 2'0"- 2'3" (open only to Limit riders).
- Limit Equitation Over 6 Fences at 2'0"-2'3" (open only to Limit riders).

- Open Equitation on the Flat (open to Novice, Limit and Open riders).
- Open Equitation Over 4 Fences at 2'3"-2'6" (open only to Open riders).
- Open Equitation Over 6 Fences at 2'3"-2'6" (open only to Open riders).

iii. Finale Class (Riders are randomly drawn from each coach's entry of 6 team members. In the event that a team has fewer than 6 riders, all riders from that team are placed in the draw, unless the team does not have six riders who compete in an over fences class at such show).

g. Class Procedures

i. In all flat classes, there will be a short, (no more than 2 minutes), warm up in both directions under the supervision of the coaches in order to acquaint the riders with their horses. At the completion of the warm up and a brief conference with their riders, the coaches will leave the ring and the class will begin.
ii. In classes over fences, each rider will be allowed to jump 2 fences unjudged and chosen by their coach, briefly confer with the coach and then begin their round. The host school may opt to run the warm ups and rounds in rotations of 3 or 4, in which case a rider will come out of the ring after their warm up and wait until all warm ups in that rotation are finished before returning to the ring for their judged round.
iii. No warm up on the flat or practice fences are allowed in the Finale class. Coaches are asked not to coach from the rail once the Finale class is underway.
iv. All jump courses shall be ridden at a canter and simple changes of lead shall not be penalized.

4. VISITING TEAMS

a. Coaches

i. Coaches should email their team's entry in to the host school as soon as possible, but no later than 1 week prior to the meet. Details of any very small or large riders should be included for the host's planning purposes. A maximum of 9 riders may participate in each meet.
ii. See to the transportation and timeliness of their riders.

iii. Ensure sportsmanlike behavior of their riders and parents.
iv. Make prompt payment of the designated entry fee to the host school.
v. Participating schools must ensure that their riders do not have logos, colors, etc. that would associate them with a particular team while in the show ring being judged.

5. FINALE MEET

a. Format

i. The NCEL Finale meet is held in March. Fees will apply and will be announced in a timely manner once the season is underway.
ii. The final prize list for each season's Finale will be announced once the regular meets have begun and will look very much like the list of classes in the regular meets.
- Novice, Limit, and Open over fences shall run as follows:
  - Novice equitation over 4 fences shall consist of 4 jumps including a trot fence and a halt. Jumps shall be set at a height of 21" with a high jump option of 2'0" set 'derby style' at a singular canter fence.
  - Novice equitation over 6 fences shall consist of 6 jumps to be cantered. Jumps shall be set at a height of 21" with a high jump option of 2'0" set 'derby style' at no more than two fences.
  - Limit equitation over 4 fences shall consist of 4 jumps including a trot fence and a halt. Jumps shall be set at a height of 2'0" (with the exception of the trot fence) with a high jump option of 2'3" set 'derby style' at a singular canter fence.
  - Limit equitation over 6 fences shall consist of 6 jumps to be cantered. Jumps shall be set at a height of 2'0" with a high jump option of 2'3" set 'derby style' at no more than two fences.
  - Open equitation over 4 fences shall consist of 4 jumps including a trot fence and a halt. Jumps shall be set at a height of 2'3" (with the exception of the trot fence) with a high jump option of 2'6" set 'derby style' at a singular canter fence.
  - Open equitation over 6 fences shall consist of 6 jumps to be cantered. Jumps shall be set at a height of 2'3" with a high jump option of 2'6" set 'derby style' at no more than two fences.

iii. A schooling period in the Finale ring will be assigned to each team prior to the start of the show. After that, no schooling by riders in the show ring is permitted.
iv. All participating schools in good standing in the League are invited to participate. A team which chooses not to participate in the Finale will not receive any refund of fees.
v. Each participating school will bring its own horses as described in Rule 3.B. Schools may make arrangements to borrow/lease another participating school's horses.
vi. Coaches will designate which horses their riders are to show.
vii. A team may only have a maximum of 9 riders participate at the finale meet.
viii. If a horse is privately owned or leased, the owner or lessee may not ride that horse in the Finale meet.
ix. Each coach will choose 2 riders to ride in the Finale class out of their top 3 high point riders from that season.
x. If there are more than 20 riders in the Finale class, it will be divided.
xi. The specifications and scoring for the Finale Class and all other classes will be the same as in regular season meet classes.
xii. Regular Flat or Jumping classes with more than 12 entries will be split.
xiii. Braiding for Finale is prohibited.

6. POINTS AND AWARDS

a. Awards

i. Ribbons for all meets will be secured by the Treasurer and provided to the host school prior to the start of the new season.
ii. Six ribbons will be awarded in each class for both the Regular meets and Finale meet.

b. Points

i. Individual points **and team points** will be valued as follows:

1st Place – 7 Points
2nd Place – 5 Points
3rd Place – 4 Points
4th Place – 3 Points
5th Place – 2 Points
6th Place – 1 Point

ii. All points a rider earns at regular meets or at the Finale meet, **except Finale class points,** will accumulate and be applied to the calculations for Year End High Point Division Rider awards.
1. If a rider competes in classes in two different divisions (as permitted under Rules 3.F.ii. and 1.C.) then all points shall be applied to that rider's designated division. For example, if a rider competes in Novice Jumping and Open Flat then all earn points shall be applied to the Novice division.

iii. After adding together each team's points from each class in a meet, **(remember to count only the highest ribbon earned by each team in each class),** the team with the most points in that calculation is the winner of the meet and team points will be recorded as shown above.
iv. Points are calculated and recorded in the same manner for both regular meets and the Finale meet.
v. Points from each meet will accumulate and be added to the year-end total as described in Sec. 1. C. v., in order to determine the year-end team placing.

c. Point adjustment in the event of a forfeiture at a regular meet:

i. In the event of a forfeiture of a team at a Regular Meet individual and team points shall be calculated as follows:
   1. If three teams compete then points shall be awarded in accordance with Rule 6.B.i.
   2. If two teams compete then points shall be adjusted according to the chart below.
   3. If all teams other than the host school forfeit, then the meet shall be rescheduled.

Two Teams Competing	
1st Place	**5.25 Pts**
2nd Place	**3.75 Pts**
3rd Place	**3 Pts**
4th Place	**2.25 Pts**
5th Place	**1.5 Pts**
6 Place	**.75 Pt**

7. Tie Breakers and Awards

a. Team ties

i. Team ties in regular season meets and the Finale will be broken with total team points in that day's Finale class. If both teams remain tied after tallying cumulative Finale class points the follow shall occur:
   1. For regular season meets both teams shall be awarded the same points. For example, if two teams tie for second following the tiebreak, both teams shall be awarded 5 points.
   2. For Finale a secondary tie shall be broken by the cumulative point total for a team's highest scoring rider in each division's jumping classes.

b. Year End Individual and Team Ties

i. Individual ties will be broken by using the jumping points earned during the regular season. If the individual riders remain tied following the tiebreak both shall receive the same end of the year award, with the subsequent placings remaining in the same order. For example, if two riders tie for champion then the subsequent placings will be third, fourth, etc.
ii. End of year team ties will be broken by the total Finale Class points earned during the season and in the Finale Meet.

c. Trophies & Ribbons

i. **High Point Team and Reserve High Point Team**. The NCEL teams which end the year as champion and reserve champion will receive a perpetual trophy. The teams may retain possession of the trophy until a designated date determined by NCEL Administration. A participating school may be responsible for costs associated with loss or damage of a perpetual trophy while in its possession.
ii. **High Point Division Rider**. The individual rider in each NCEL division who earns the most points during the season will receive a perpetual trophy. The rider or participating school may retain possession of the trophy until a designed date determined by NCEL Admin. Awardees and/or their associated participating school may be responsible for costs associated with damage or loss of a perpetual trophy while in their possession.
iii. **Finale Class Champion Rider.** The individual rider who receives champion during the finale class at the Finale meet will receive a perpetual trophy. The rider or participating school may retain possession of the trophy until a designed date determined by NCEL Administration. Awardees and/or their associated participating school may be responsible for costs associated with damage or loss of a perpetual trophy while in their possession.
iv. Team ribbons will be presented to the riders on NCEL teams according to their teams' final standings at the year-end awards banquet. A ribbon for each team's coach and for each team's barn will also be presented at this time.
v. A **Sportsmanship Award** and a Favorite Coach award will be presented at the banquet.
vi. The **Champion and Reserve Champion teams** at the Finale meet will be awarded ribbons, including ribbons for coach and barn.
vii. An award may be presented to the horse at the Finale meet which the judge chooses as the **Best Turned Out Horse**. *Braiding for the Finale meet is prohibited.*
viii. A **Stable Management Award** may be presented to the team chosen by the Finale judge as having the best organized and managed barn area on the weekend of the Finale.

8. Protests and Grievances

- **a.** All protests and grievances must be presented to the Coach of the school hosting the meet, or to a member of the board at a Finale Meet.
- **b.** The person receiving the complaint shall then privately discuss the protest or grievance with all participating coaches and attempt to reach a consensus decision.
- **c.** If no decision can be reached by the coaches, the officiating judge shall make the decision which shall be final and accepted by coaches and riders in a sportsmanlike manner.
- **d.** Appeals from any decision made pursuant to this section may be made in writing and shall then be considered and resolved by the board in a timely manner.
- **e.** A participating school may seek a waiver to a rule at least thirty days prior to the start of a season by submitting such a request to the board. The waiver must be submitted in writing to the board for timely consideration. Waivers may be considered once the season has begun on a case-by-case basis.