National Capitol Short Stirrup Equitation League (NCSSEL) 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 NCSSEL will compete with teams composed of up to 11 riders. At each meet, 6 of these will be designated as Primary or "Point riders" when visiting schools send in their entries, and up to 3 "Alternate riders", also designated as such on the entry form. Team rosters must be submitted to the NCSSEL administration prior to the start of the season at a date to be determined by NCSSEL administration. 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 does not have a full roster. 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 NCSSEL 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 NCSSEL 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 specifications.

iv. Each participating school competes in 4 regular meets during the season between 10/1 and 2/28, 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 NCSSEL previously, however such school must be able to demonstrate suitability and commitment to conduct an NCSSEL home meet the following year or partner with another participating school to host a home meet. The season ends in March with a Finale meet to which all barns may bring their own horses to compete.

v. Full payment of the season's league fees must be submitted to the league Treasurer prior to the start of the season. The deadline for those payments will be provided by league 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 league 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. 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 NCSSEL meet if the required liability forms or releases have not been complete.

viii. 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.

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

x. Any participating school may be suspended or expelled from active participation in NCSSEL for just cause as determined by the prevailing standards and rules of NCSSEL, 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 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 NCSSEL shall forfeit all league fees and administrative fees.

b. Rider Eligibility

i. Each team member is to be a junior rider who is not older than 18 years of age and has not graduated high school prior to October 1 of the current competition season. An NCSSEL rider may not have shown at any formal or rated show where fence heights exceed 2'6". A formal show is defined as any competition open to any rider and managed by a sponsoring organization. Informal events open only to riders from their home barn and designated as part of the regular schooling program are not considered formal shows.

ii. Once a rider who has ridden on an NCEL team, he/she is ineligible to ride on an NCSSEL team, even if they change barns.

iii. 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.

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

c. **Division Specifications**

i. Primary or **"Point" Riders** and **Alternate Riders**

A team may have up to 6 **Point riders** who will compete for team points at each meet and up to 3 **Alternate Riders** at each meet who will compete with other Alternates for year end points.
Point riders may enter 2 classes, at the coach's discretion; either 2 flat classes or 1 flat and 1 jumping class.
Alternate riders may ride in 2 classes; either 2 flat classes or 1 flat and 1 jumping class.

ii. Flat classes

A **Point rider** may ride in 1 walk/trot class or 1 walk/trot/canter class, (or both flat classes and no jumping class). In the event that more than 8 riders enter a flat class, the class will be split.
An **Alternate rider** may ride in 1 walk/trot or 1 walk/trot/canter class, (or both flat classes and no jumping class). In the event that more than 8 riders enter a flat class, the class will be split.

iii. Jumping classes

A Point rider may ride in either the 4 fence jumping class or the 6 fence jumping class which must include a halt and a trot fence. Fences will be set at 18". Any jumping class which has more than 12 entries will be split. Jump courses are intended to be cantered - 4/F includes 1 Trot Fence and a Halt, unless otherwise specified.
An Alternate rider may trot or canter in the 4-fence jumping class. Fences must be cross rails and may not exceed 18".

iv. Each rider will ride in 2 classes at the coach's discretion. A Point rider may also be selected for an additional finale class. Finale points shall not count toward an individual rider's year-end primary score total.

v. All points earned by riders in regular classes at a regular meet will accumulate toward that team's final score for the meet that day and towards individual point rider points. Points earned by riders in alternate classes will count towards individual alternate points but not towards team points. For the first show where a rider earning alternate points rides in regular classes as a point rider, such points may still count towards their alternate total. Any subsequent shows where such rider rides in regular classes as a point rider, those points shall only count in the point rider category and not towards their alternate total. A rider cannot ride in an alternate class and have those points count towards point rider points.

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, coaches'/judge's meeting time and stable policy on the use of outside saddles (see Rule 3B vi).

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. Providing suitable, safe tack for all school horses and notify visiting teams if they may bring their own saddles.

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 Coach's 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 NCSSEL 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 prior to the start of the meet. This meeting should be followed by a brief meeting with the judge.
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 (see NCEL website).
6. Prepare and supervise the draw. In NCSSEL coaches draw for the riders during the coaches' meeting. *BARNS MAY OPT FOR AN ONLINE DRAW WHEN ALL COACHES AGREE TO THIS USING THIS METHOD AT A PARTICULAR MEET*.
7. Prepare and post jump orders for all classes over fences
8. Post scores and judge's cards after each class.
9. Present ribbons.
10. Provide sufficient food/drinks for snacks/lunch that may be purchased by participating teams.
11. 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 NCSSEL is considered qualified.
ii. A host school may not use the same judge 2 years in a row for that host school's home NCSSEL meet/s and 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 seasons 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 two 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 coaches' meeting but no earlier than 30 minutes before the scheduled start of the meet
iii. At the scheduled coaches' meeting, approximately 30 minutes before the first scheduled class, coaches will draw the horses by lot for each rider in 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 consent to such change.
v. A draw will be held to choose the 2 riders from each team who will ride in the Finale class. A coach may choose to exclude a point rider from the coaches' 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. Horses will then be drawn for that class.
vi. Immediately following the coaches' meeting, all will meet with the judge, and when the judge is ready, the meet may begin.
vii. In the event a visiting team is not present in time for the draw, the host school may draw horses for that team.
viii. 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.
ix. 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.
x. 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.
xi. All meets shall be governed by the rules established by NCSSEL. If there is not an NCSSEL rule addressing an issue, then USEF 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 NCSSEL 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. 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, trot and canter both ways of the ring. *Riders may be asked to sit the trot in NCSSEL.* A team may have riders who ride in 2 flat classes and no jumping classes.
ii. To be judged on position, hands, seat, legs and control. A team may have riders who ride in 2 flat classes and do not jump.
iii. Equitation over fences: To be judged on position, hands, seat, legs and control. Riders may not participate in 2 jumping classes, unless one of those classes is the finale class.
iv. A rider who falls off during a class (with the exception of the warmup portion) will be eliminated from the class.

v. Jump courses should be built of traditional materials and include single fences and measured lines. Courses should be straight forward hunter-type courses; no combinations, roll backs, skinny fences or end fences. Lines of fewer than 3 strides are not permitted and oxers are not permitted.
vi. There will be 2 jump courses offered to primary riders, one 4 fence jump course and one 6 fence jump course. The 4 fence jump course shall include a halt and one trot fence. All other fences in the 4 fence course shall be cantered. A rider may opt to trot the 6 fence course, however the judge shall give greater scoring consideration to a rider who effectively canters the course. Simple changes of lead shall not be penalized. Riders may not ride in 2 jump classes.
vii. One 4 fence jumping class is offered to any Alternate rider that will be jumping. The course must be composed of cross rails no higher than 18" and should go in one direction around the outside of the ring. An Alternate rider may trot or canter in the 4-fence jumping class

d. **Finale Class**

i. Riders in the Finale Class to be judged at the walk, trot, and canter with stirrups both ways of the ring.
ii. Riders to be tested over 2 fences. 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 18" in the Finale Class.
iii. Riders will be asked to respond to one question selected by the judge from the NCSSEL Study Guide (which may be found on the NCEL website). 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. A rider who falls off during the Finale class will be eliminated from the class.
vi. Placing of the class is determined after weighting each rider's performance as follows: 33.3% for flat work, 33.3% jumping test, 33.3% response to question.
vii. Points earned by a rider in this class are applied only to that rider's overall team score and not to their individual score. In NCSSEL all points earned by riders in the Finale will be applied to their team's score. (See Rule 1.C.v.).

e. **Regular Meet Format**

i. A regular season meet will be a 3 or 4 team meet. 8 – 12 horses/ponies will be needed to do a meet. There are 8 classes in each meet, including 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 may determine the order of classes and must notify visitors of the order no later than 1 week prior to the meet.
ii. The classes are as follows:
    - Walk/Trot
    - Walk/Trot/Canter
    - Alternate Walk/Trot
    - Alternate Walk/Trot/Canter
    - Four Fence Course
    - Alternate Four Fence Course
    - Six Fence Course
    - Finale

f. **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.

g. **Sportsmanship Award**

i. Before a participating team departs a meet, all coaches must turn in their nomination form to the host school. The 3 riders nominated for this award should be riders from the other teams participating that day, and not from the team which is submitting the nominations.

4. VISITING TEAMS

a. Coaches

i. Coaches should email their team's entry 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.
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 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 NCSSEL 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.
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, up to 6 riders in point rider classes and up to 3 riders in the alternate classes
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 for the Finale Class and all other classes will be 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 at the opening meeting prior to the start of the new season.
ii. Six ribbons will be awarded in each class at both the Regular meets and Finale meet.

b. Points

i. Individual 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 an individual 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 Rider awards.
iii. After adding together each team's points from each class in a meet, the team with the most points in that calculation is the winner of the meet and their 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 including the Finale Class points will accumulate and be added to the year-end points 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
6th 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 jumping classes (excluding alternate four fence).

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.** The NCSSEL team which accumulates the most points during the season will receive a perpetual trophy. The team 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. Team ribbons will be presented to the riders on NCSSEL 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.

iii. A **Sportsmanship and Coach's** award will be presented at the banquet.

iv. The **Champion and Reserve** Champion teams at the Finale meet will be awarded ribbons, including ribbons for coach and barn.

v. 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.***

vi. 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 complaint, 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.