

UPHA National Show Horse Challenge Cup

Qualifying Classes

1. Who is Eligible to Ride?

- a. UPHA Junior membership is required prior to competing in a UPHA Challenge Cup class.
- b. Open to all saddle seat equitation riders 17 years of age and under, riding a National Show Horse mare or gelding.
- c. A win of a UPHA National Show Horse Challenge Cup qualifier eliminates the rider from further competition in that class for the remainder of the qualifying season. The rider may then elect to compete in any other UPHA Challenge Cup classes for which they are eligible in order to comply with the “separate qualification” rule if the rider intends to compete in more than one UPHA Challenge Cup National Finals.
- d. The UPHA National Show Horse Challenge Cup National Final winner is ineligible to compete in any future UPHA National Show Horse Challenge Cup qualifying classes or the UPHA National Show Horse Challenge Cup National Final.

2. How are classes judged?

- a. Riders compete at the walk, show trot and canter both directions of the ring and lined up.
- b. The top four (or more at the judge’s discretion) must complete the mandatory individual workout.
- c. Showmanship is paramount throughout the class.
- d. Judging is based 60% on rail work and 40% on the individual workout.
- e. No minimum number of entries is required to fill a class.

3. Mandatory Workout

- a. The mandatory workout for all qualifying classes is: “Trot a serpentine consisting of four half circles to the opposite end of the ring. Return down either rail at a show trot.”

- b. Judges are not permitted to alter the mandatory workout in any manner.
- c. It is recommended, at the discretion of the judge, to instruct the ringmaster to line riders up to create a clear area for the serpentine.

4. What Classes are Offered?

- 17 & under

National Championship

1. History

- The UPHA National Show Horse Challenge Cup was established in 1989, and the National Championship is held at the NSHR Finals, Springfield, IL.
- Currently, one class is held for riders 17 & under.

2. Location

- NSHR Finals in Springfield, IL, September 17-19, 2026.
- Information about the show and how to enter is available on their website:
<https://www.nshregistry.org/shows-events>

3. How Does a Rider Qualify to Compete?

- a. By placing first through fourth in a UPHA National Show Horse Challenge Cup qualifying class.
- b. By placing first through fourth in an open UPHA Challenge Cup qualifying class.
- c. By placing first through fourth in the Arabian Breeds qualifying classes mounted on a National Show Horse.
- d. National Show Horse riders have the option of competing in the open UPHA Challenge Cup National Final or the UPHA Junior Challenge Cup National Final at the American Royal, Kansas City, MO, and in the UPHA National Show Horse Challenge Cup National Final, however, they must have separate qualifications for both National Finals.
- e. Riders showing in breed-restricted UPHA Challenge Cup qualifying classes do not qualify for the Open Finals.

4. Qualifying Period

- a. The qualifying period for all UPHA Challenge Cup National Finals closes seven (7) days prior to the beginning of the competition at which the Championship will be held. At that time, the qualifying season for the following year will begin.

5. Conduct

- a. A judge must excuse from the ring any unruly horse or one whose actions threaten to endanger the rider, handler, other exhibitors, or their entries.
- b. The same horse must be used in both Phases of the UPHA Challenge Cup National Finals, unless the animal is sick or lame, in which case a veterinarian's certificate is required.
- c. If the UPHA Challenge Cup National Finals are divided because of its size, it is to be split by every other number.
- d. All riders must compete at the walk, show trot and canter both ways of the ring and line up. The divisions are to be dismissed on standby, with the individual workouts executed immediately following completion of the rail work. On completion of the individual workouts, the riders in that group shall be excused and the next division shall begin the rail work and individual workout phase and so on for each section of riders.
- e. The preliminary work is called Phase I, in which all contestants must work in a group (or in groups) of 20 or less on the rail and complete an individual workout.
- f. A minimum of twelve (12) riders and a maximum of fourteen (14) riders will be chosen for Phase II, which is the championship class. If there are less than twelve (12) riders judges are required to bring all riders back for the championship class. No predetermined number needs to be selected from each group.
- g. Phase I and Phase II must be judged as a continuous class and must be evaluated using a 1/3-1/3- 1/3 analysis. In Phase I, the rail work portion and the individual workout shall each constitute 1/3 of the overall judging, or 2/3 of the total class. Phase II (the Championship), in which only rail work is performed, shall constitute the remaining 1/3 of the total class. Therefore, the rail work portions constitute two thirds (2/3) of the entire class and the individual pattern constitutes one third (1/3) of the class.

- h. There will be no less than four (4) hours between the end of Phase I and the beginning of Phase II, and no more than two (2) consecutive days between the two Phases. When the riders return to the ring for Phase II, the announcer is to state that they have been previously judged on rail and figure work.
- i. No individual workouts will be requested in Phase II, however, at the judges' discretion, selected riders may be requested to do additional rail work as a group for the purpose of breaking a tie. They may not be asked to exchange horses or to ride without irons in this phase.
- j. A champion and reserve champion will be chosen, with the next eight (8) riders placed in numerical order. Two unannounced reserves should be tied. The "Top Ten" will be announced first, followed by the reserve champion and the champion.
- k. All riders must be retired to a holding area outside of the ring and then brought back in individually and numerically for the "Top Ten" awards and the presentation of the reserve champion and champion.

6. Workout

- a. The UPHA Saddle Seat Committee encourages judges to select individual patterns that highlight showmanship as opposed to intricacy.
- b. In the UPHA National Show Horse Challenge Cup National Final, the judge(s) may use any of the recognized tests 1-14 (refer to EQ120).
- c. Individual copies of the Judge's Phase I workout must be available to each rider in the competition office no less two (2) hours prior to the performance in which the class is run.
- d. The workout pattern in all championship classes shall not be posted online or on social media prior to being posted in the horse show office.
- e. Individual workout instructions must be written down by the judge and delivered to the announcer at the beginning of the class.
- f. Competitors must be allowed ample access to the competition arena in order to walk on foot the posted workout. A minimum of ½ hour is recommended.

7. Judging Specifications

- a. All UPHA National Show Horse Challenge Cup National Championship contestants must be current UPHA members and have qualified seven days before the show begins. In the Preliminary work, Phase 1, all riders must work

as a group (or in groups) on the rail at the walk, show trot, and canter, in both directions of the ring and line up. Riders will then be dismissed to a holding area and brought back one at a time for their individual workout. In Phase 2, the Championship, no individual workouts will be requested. However, at the judges' discretion, selected riders may be asked to do additional rail work as a group to break a tie. They may not be asked to exchange horses or to ride without irons in this phase. Showmanship is paramount throughout the class. Judging is based 60% on rail work and 40% on the individual workout.

8. Judges

- a. The judge(s) must be Saddle Seat Equitation Registered or Recorded in Saddle Seat Equitation with USEF.
- b. The UPHA National Show Horse Challenge Cup National Finals are required to have a least one Open Saddle Seat carded judge which may be recorded or registered on a three judge panel. A guest card will not fulfill this requirement.
- c. Judges for the UPHA Challenge Cup National Finals are recommended by the UPHA Equitation Committee, and a list will be furnished to the respective competition management annually. At all UPHA Challenge Cup National Finals, judges shall be selected from nominations by the UPHA Challenge Cup/Equitation Committee.