

NCHA Executive Committee sets the course for new events, bigger purses and greater recognition for NCHA members

The Executive Committee of the National Cutting Horse Association held a productive meeting September 8-9 in Fort Worth, where they considered recommendations made by NCHA's standing committees at (and since) the 2008 NCHA Convention.

Among the most far-reaching actions were:

- Endorsement of the Tour to the Finals series concept, which could inject up to \$400,000 in new added money into shows for weekend horses
- A new World Finals format which will put the sport's best older horses and Non-Pros in front of cutting's most knowledgeable and enthusiastic audience at the NCHA Futurity
- A 67% increase in added money at the Eastern and Western National Championships
- An increase in Novice Non-Pro earnings limits that will help owners show horses in the Novice classes for a longer period of time and realize a greater return on their investment
- A stand-alone Limited Non-Pro class at each of NCHA's Triple Crown events
- An affordable opportunity for joint membership households to obtain separate NCHA voting rights
- New awards and recognition for achievement
- There will be no change in the definition of an Amateur competitor for the 2009 point year. A task force chaired by Dennie Dunn, NCHA Past President, will consider suggestions for amending the definition and (after consulting with the respective standing committees) report at the November meeting of the Executive Committee. Final recommendations of the task force will be presented at the June 2009 NCHA Convention.

Highlights of the Executive Committee actions follow, and will be published in the October issue of *Cutting Horse Chatter*. Detailed minutes of the meeting will be published in the near future.

Definition of Amateur

There will be no change in the definition of an Amateur competitor for the 2009 point year. A task force chaired by Dennie Dunn, NCHA Past President, will consider suggestions for amending the definition and (after consulting with the respective standing committees) report at the November meeting of the Executive Committee. Final recommendations of the task force will be presented at the June 2009 NCHA Convention.

Stand-alone Limited Non-Pro class

The Limited Non Pro will become a stand-alone class at the Triple Crown events, beginning with the 2009 Super Stakes. Go-rounds for the Limited Non-Pro class only will be held in the Watt Arena, with the finals in Will Rogers Coliseum.

Amateur, Limited Non-Pro semi-finals

The Amateur and Limited Non-Pro events at the NCHA Futurity will have one go-round, with a maximum of 75 horses plus ties to the semi-finals, for a maximum of 5 sets. A maximum of 30 horses plus ties will go to the finals, with no more than two sets, regardless of the number of horses.

Horse of the Year

There will be awards given for both the Non-Pro Horse of the Year and Open Horse of the Year, beginning with the 2009 point year. A task force will make recommendations about including weekend show performances in the criteria for determining Horse of the Year.

Non-Pro Hall of Fame

Criteria for entering the Non-Pro Hall of Fame will be adjusted so that earnings in Limited Non-Pro and Open classes will also be considered. Non-Pros who would be newly eligible for induction under these guidelines will be honored at the 2009 NCHA Futurity.

Non-Pro Exception Rule

The current Non-Pro exception rule will be expanded to include a 10-year/\$25,000 exception in addition to the existing 5-year/\$10,000 exception.

Ages of horses in 5/6-year-old Open

Riders will be able to show up to four horses of any age combination in the Open divisions of the Super Stakes Classic and the Summer Spectacular Classic Challenge, beginning with the 2009 Super Stakes.

Calendar progression

To determine "Normal Calendar Year Movement," the limited age event schedule should be based on the projected start date for the NCHA Futurity. Normal calendar movement will consist of shows using the projected start date of the NCHA Futurity and counting back from that date to determine what their show dates should be each year. All major LAE show producers will be asked to provide a (min-

imum) five-year show calendar after checking with their facilities, with the normal calendar movement to be based on the NCHA Futurity projected start date, which will be provided to the Approved LAE Show Producers Committee Chairman.

Hall of Fame recognition

Recognition of new Riders, Non-Pro and Horse Hall of Fame inductees will be incorporated in the Pre-Finals Party at the NCHA Futurity. NCHA Members Hall of Fame inductees will be recognized with special presentations in the arena.

International outreach

An international committee will be formed to focus on the promotion of cutting outside of North America. A program and budget will be developed for reestablishing an international cutting event, possibly at the NCHA Eastern and/or Western National Championships. New outlets for international news will also be developed.

Youth programs

A mentoring program to help high school students with career choices, college selection and admission procedures will be established. NYCHA members will earn LEAP points for participating in AQHA's Junior Master Horseman program. An affiliate youth program will also be established and LEAP points available at the affiliate level will be increased.

Youth classes on Fridays

The provisional rule introduced in 2006 allowing approved youth classes on Fridays after 6 p.m. in Utah and Idaho will be made permanent, with the stipulation that any youth who shows in those states on a Friday will only be eligible to also earn NCHA youth points on Saturday (not Sunday).

Combined Junior and Senior classes

If a youth cutting approved as a Junior and Senior Youth cutting is combined at the time of the draw because there are less than (3) entries in either division and additional entries are taken at any time after the draw that increase the entries to at least (3) in each division, points will be received in each division but the working order will remain as drawn.

Youth trophy

A special official NYCHA trophy entitled the Shynia Randles Memorial Trophy for Youth classes will be designed by Jan Mapes, with production arrangements to be finalized.

Novice Non-Pro earnings limits

While earnings limits for the Novice Horse classes will remain at \$3,000 and \$10,000, the limits for the Novice Non-Pro classes will be raised to \$5,000 and \$15,000, respectively, beginning with the 2009 point year.

Mandatory payout adjustment

Beginning with the 2009 point year, the Mandatory Payout Schedule for all added money classes \$500-up will be:

Entries	Places Paid
3 - 4	1
5 - 8	2
9 - 12	3
13 - 16	4
17 - 21	5
22 - 26	6
27 - 31	7
32 - 37	8
38 - 43	9
44 - 50	10
51 & over	12

Classes with \$499 and less in added money will use the old payout schedule.

Computerized draws

The following text will be added to Standing Rule 11: Random computer draws may be used in classes exceeding 30 entries, provided the judge is present and working orders are printed immediately. Thirty and less, must be hand drawn by the judge.

New Non-Pro award

A new award will be established to honor the highest money-earning competitor in the Non-Pro class at weekend shows who has ridden a single horse throughout the point year, and who finishes in the Top 15 in the year-end standings.

Tour to the Finals

The concept of NCHA Tour to the Finals has been endorsed and sponsorship opportunities are being pursued for the series of eight shows featuring \$25,000-added Open and \$25,000-added Non-Pro classes. The inaugural Tour to the Finals series is projected to begin in 2009.

Word Finals format

The World Finals for the 2009 point year will consist of 15 competitors each in the Open and Non-Pro classes in four rounds plus a non-working finals to be held in the Watt Arena during the 2009 NCHA Futurity in Fort Worth. The Top 15 finishers in the other 10 classes will also be honored at the Futurity. The entry fee for the Open and Non-Pro World Finals classes will be \$2,600, in keeping with the structure used at the Houston World Finals in years past.

National Championships purses

The \$2.00 "World Finals Fee" collected at weekend shows will become a "National Championships Fee" and will be earmarked for the Eastern and Western National Championships beginning with the 2009 point year. Added money at these shows will jump 67% to \$20,000 per class, with payouts adjusted accordingly. The entry fee for the Eastern and Western National Championships will remain at \$500.

Judges' stands at weekend shows

The Show Management Handbook will be amended to recommend that judges' stands be at least six feet high, and that judges' sheets be posted and show secretaries should be stationed and outside hearing range of the judge. A time clock must be visible to all judges

Ineligible contestants

Beginning with the 2009 point year, when earnings are pulled from horses and riders because of ineligibility, class placings will be recalculated and show management will redistribute the earnings accordingly. If earnings are pulled, (on the second offense) they must be repaid to show management within 15 days of notification, or the ineligible competitor will be placed on suspension. The affiliate/show producer will receive a warning for the first show from which earnings are pulled. The affiliate/show producer will be responsible for making up any shortfalls at subsequent shows.

Convention locations

The 2009 NCHA Convention will be held in the Denver, Colorado area. Prior to that, ballots will be sent to all NCHA directors on their preference for future Conventions: whether they should be held in Fort Worth every year, on alternate years, or every third year. Results of the ballot will be considered at the 2009 Convention.

No shows during NCHA Convention

No shows will be approved during the NCHA Convention. In 2009, the Convention will be held June 19-21.

Open hand rule

There will be no change to the rules regarding the position and movement of the rider's hand, as published in the 2008 *NCHA Handbook of Rules and Regulations*.

Publicizing pre-entries

Shows that take pre-entries must publish this in the *Cutting Horse Chatter*. If they fail to do so, they must accept other entries.

Show secretary certification

The following changes will be in effect to certify secretaries:

- Must sit at 4 shows with a certified secretary who has been approved by the NCHA office
- Must work with at least 2 different secretaries, unless previously approved by the NCHA Director of Shows
- Must work while at these shows (announce, take entries, ability to finalize show results for reporting to NCHA and do manual payouts, etc.)
- Each secretary will be required to fill out a confidential evaluation sheet reporting on the applicant's knowledge of cutting, rules and show management.
- After completing the 4 shows, a test will be mailed to be completed and returned to the NCHA office within a set amount of time.
- Must score 80 or better on the test.

- A fee of \$25 per day will be paid to the training secretary.

Cloning task force

Current NCHA rules have no provision for restricting cloned horses from competition, and there is no reliable way to identify an animal as being a clone. Therefore, a cloned horse entering NCHA competition will be regarded as an unregistered horse, with a vet certificate attesting to age required, and DNA papers submitted if available.

Voting rights memberships

Beginning January 1, 2009, joint memberships will have the option of obtaining voting rights for both (husband and wife) members for a total cost of \$90, while also maintaining a single-vote joint membership for \$60. The number of NCHA directors will be determined by counting that membership as two individuals. However, such joint memberships will receive one copy of *Cutting Horse Chatter*.

Financial responsibility

Standing Rule 40, regarding financial responsibility, will be extended to include credit card charges denied by the card issuer. That suspension shall extend to the entity (horse or business) directly connected to the suspension unless the entity is transferred in a bona fide sale to an unrelated party.

Non-payment of Super Stakes stallion subscription fees

Beginning with the 2010 Super Stakes, a \$100 fee will be taken from the established stallions' payment and put in an insurance fund. This fund will be used to cover the subscription fee for stallions that are falsely advertised in the *Chatter* as being subscribed to the Super Stakes. Owners of stallions that have falsely advertised their subscription to the Super Stakes will be fined 1.5 times their nomination fee and will be suspended under Standing Rule 40. As soon as the fine is paid, the stallion owner will be removed from suspension. A suspended owner will not be eligible to receive any stallion awards which may be paid.

Ponying horses in the loping area

Ponying horses in the loping area will be prohibited at all NCHA-produced events, including the World Finals and Eastern and Western National Championships, effective immediately. This will be an amendment to Judges Rule 16.

