

2026 CUTTING HORSE COMPETITION RULES

<NCHA Rules and Regulations shall apply.>

1. The Cutting Horse Competition will consist of ONE GO ROUND and a FINAL.
2. The number of places advancing to the Finals and places paid will be based on the NCHA weekend mandatory payout scale.
3. Available purse is paid 100% in the Final. All money will be paid in the Finals in Canadian Funds.
4. There will be 3 head of cattle per cut in the Go Round and the Finals.
5. The performance Go Round and Finals will incorporate live commentary and music during the competition.
6. The horse, rider, and owner must be declared at the time of entry, as per NCHA Standing Rules 2 and 3. NCHA Non-Professional Rules apply.
7. Open riders may ride two horses. Non-Pro riders are limited to one horse.
8. NCHA Adjusted Monitor System (3 judges) will be followed.
9. The draw will be on June 27, 2026. The draw order will be available online.
10. The Calgary Stampede dress code (long sleeve shirt with full collar and cowboy hat) will be enforced for anyone in any part of the show arena and loping area.
11. All disputes will be dealt with by the Western Performance Horse Committee and the Committee's decision on all matters shall be final.
12. All prize money will be paid in Canadian Funds. Non-residents of Canada will be subjected to a 15% withholding tax on all prize monies awarded as required by Revenue Canada.
13. If an entry is cancelled, all fees will be forfeited. The only exceptions permitted are:
 - a. In the case of a disabling injury to the horse, the contestant must furnish a certificate from a qualified veterinarian declaring the horse disabled and unable to compete.

Such certificate must be in the hands of the Show Management prior to the start of the competition.

- b. In the case of a disabling injury to the rider, or serious sickness or death in his/her family, Show Management must be advised prior to the start of the competition.

14. Health Requirements – Importation of Animals from the United States (General) – For complete information see Health Requirements. American Port of Entry – Sweetgrass, Montana (406) 335-2142 - www.cbp.gov. Canadian Port of Entry – Coutts, Alberta (403) 344-3808 – www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca.

As per NCHA rules:

Each horse is allotted two and one half (2 ½) minutes to work during a run. The working time starts when the rider crosses the official time line.

As soon as the horse, owner and rider's name are called to the herd by the announcer (the "Rider Announcement"), the announcer will start the 1-2 ½ minute clock to let the rider know how much time the rider has to cross the official time line and begin the rider's run. If the rider has helped the contestant immediately preceding the rider's run or has drawn back to back in the working order, the rider will have 2 ½ minutes from the Rider Announcement to cross the official time line and start their run. If the rider has not helped the contestant immediately preceding the rider's run or has not drawn back to back in the working order, the rider will have 1 minute from the time of the Rider Announcement to cross the official time line and start their run. This is referred to as the 1-2 ½ Minute Clock.

If the rider fails to cross the official time line in the time allotted under the 1-2 ½ Minute Clock, a buzzer will sound and one additional minute will be added to the 1-2 ½ Minute Clock.

The buzzer is the only warning that the rider will receive relating to the 1-2 ½ Minute Clock. If the rider receives any additional buzzers relating to the 1-2 ½ Minute Clock at any time during that show, it will result in a \$500 fine per occurrence (i.e., second buzzer is a \$500 fine, third buzzer is an additional \$500 fine, etc.). All fines assessed under this rule must be paid prior to the rider's exhibiting a horse in any future NCHA-produced event.

All NCHA produced events will use the 1-2 ½ Minute Clock as described above. It will be optional for all other NCHA-sanctioned events to use the 1-2 ½ Minute Clock as described above.

[Agriculture & Western Event Animal Care Code of Practice 2026](#)

[2026 IAFE Code of Show Ring Ethics](#)

[2026 General Rules](#)

[2026 Health Regulations](#)