



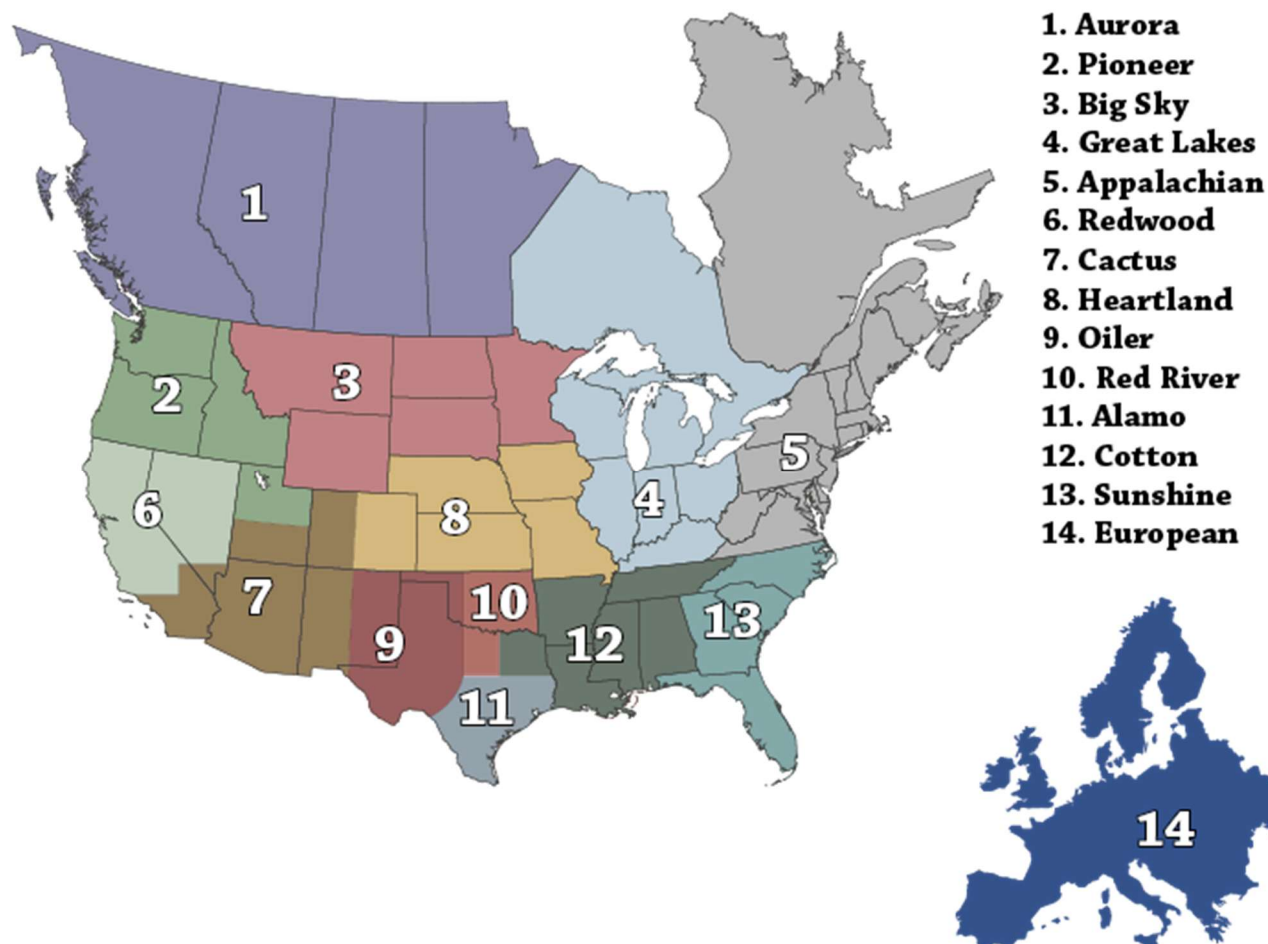
NATIONAL CIRCUIT PROGRAM RULES

2023 POINT YEAR

The National Circuit Program was conceived and implemented with the goal of promoting and growing the sport of cutting at a local level. It allows world-wide weekend cutters the opportunity to earn national recognition through local competition. The program divides the NCHA membership population into fourteen (14) geographic groups called "circuits."

Cutters earn points within one (1) circuit by competing in NCHA-approved weekend competitions. Both types of approved weekend shows, championship and challenger shows, award circuit points. Earned points are tracked by the NCHA office and used to determine circuit championships qualifiers, national circuit championships qualifiers and circuit award recipients.

The NCHA recognizes the uniqueness of each circuit and relies on its regional directors, affiliates and show producers to create events that best suit the needs of the NCHA members in their respective circuits.





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1. Circuit Assignment / Circuit Designation

- a. Each member is automatically **assigned** to the circuit that corresponds to the address on file at the NCHA office.
 - i. **Non-Pro/Amateur Riders** – Using the membership number, a member is automatically assigned to the circuit that corresponds to the rider's address on file at the NCHA office.
 - ii. **Open Riders** – Are eligible to compete in any circuit show.
 - iii. **Horses** – Using the horse's registration number, each horse is automatically assigned to the circuit that corresponds to the owner's address on file at the NCHA office.
- b. Circuit points are accumulated for the purpose of circuit standings and possible qualification for circuit championships only in the circuit of that **non-pro/amateur** rider or horse, **depending on the class**. Points may only be earned in one circuit at a time in accordance with the class declarations below.
 - i. For rider classes: Non-Pro, Unlimited Amateur, \$50,000 Amateur, \$35,000 Non-Pro, \$15,000 Amateur, \$2,000 Limit Rider and Youth classes the designation will follow the rider only – **NOT horse / rider combination**.
 - ii. For open horse classes: Open, \$25,000 Novice Horse and \$5,000 Novice Horse the designation will follow the horse only – **NOT horse / rider combination**.
 - iii. For novice non-pro horse classes: \$25,000 Novice Horse Non-Pro and \$5,000 Novice Horse Non-Pro both horse and rider must have the same circuit designation.
- c. Designating a Circuit
 - i. Riders and/or horse owners may designate a different circuit by **submitting written notification** to the NCHA office.
 - ii. Horse owners may designate different circuits for each of their horses for **competition in horse-based classes**.
 - iii. **Previously Earned Points:** If a rider and/or horse owner changes a designated circuit at any given time during the point year:
 1. Point totals are set to zero upon the change of designation to a different circuit.



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2. Any points accumulated in the previous circuit(s) are not transferable and will be lost.
3. Any shows completed prior to the designation change in the different circuit will not be retro-actively awarded.
- iv. **Horse Transfer / Sale:** When a horse changes ownership during the point year, the designated circuit for the horse will automatically be changed to home circuit of the new owner. Circuit assignment shall be based on the address of the new owner on file at the NCHA office when the office is notified of the sale/transfer. The new owner may change the circuit designation via the method outlined above.
- d. At the beginning of each point year, all circuit designations from the prior point year are reset. Riders and horses are placed back into their "assigned" home circuit.

2. Show Types

- a. Weekend / Championship Shows point and money earnings count towards:

World Standings (money) - YES

Senior World Tour (points per sr. program) - YES

Lifetime Earnings (money) - YES

Horse and Rider Eligibility (money) - YES

Circuit Standings (points per circuit program; see below) - YES

- b. Weekend / Challenger Shows point and money earnings count towards:

World Standings (money) - NO

Senior World Tour (points per sr. program) - YES

Lifetime Earnings (money) - YES

Horse and Rider Eligibility (money) - YES

Circuit Standings (points per circuit program; see below) – YES

3. Circuit Point Year

- a. **Circuit Year Start**

- i. **Non-Youth Classes:** The National Circuit Program point year aligns with the NCHA point year. The point year will begin on December 28. All Circuit designations are reset at the start of the new point year.
- ii. **Youth Classes:** The youth circuit point year will begin June 1. All Circuit designations are reset at the start of the new youth point year.



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b. Circuit Year End

- i. Non-Youth classes: The National Circuit Program point year aligns with the NCHA point year. The point year will end two Sundays before Thanksgiving each year for weekend shows.
- ii. Youth classes: The youth circuit point year will end May 31.

c. Circuit Championships Qualification

- i. Non-Youth classes: Qualifying cut-off dates are determined for each circuit based on the dates of the respective circuit championships, no less than three weeks prior to the start of each circuit championships show. All points earned by riders / horses after the qualifying cut-off date to the end of the point year will count toward circuit year end standings and National Circuit Championships qualification – but will NOT change the list of circuit championships qualified riders / horses.

1. The top 30 (plus ties) in non-youth classes are "Circuit Championships Qualified."

- ii. Youth: The circuit championships will be open to all current youth members in their designated circuit regardless of current standings.
- iii. All classes: Qualifiers competing at the circuit championships must participate in all go rounds of the circuit championships to advance to the working or non-working finals.

4. Circuit Point System

- a. Scores of zero receive no points.
- b. Youth classes: Youth classes inside the National Circuit Program follow the scholarship cutting point system.
- c. Non-Youth Classes: Points shall be awarded based on the actual number of horses shown in a class with a maximum of ten (10) points to first place (i.e., scratches are excluded. Example: Any class with more than 10 horses shown will award points to the first ten placements in the class on a declining scale of 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 point (except scores of zero will earn no points). A class with 7 horses shown will award points to all 7 placements on a declining scale of 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 point (except scores of zero will earn no points).



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HORSES IN CLASS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th
3	3	2	1								
4	4	3	2	1							
5	5	4	3	2	1						
6	6	5	4	3	2	1					
7	7	6	5	4	3	2	1				
8	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1			
9	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1		
10+	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0

- d. Ties: In the instance of a tie, each contestant in the tie will be awarded the points allocated for the highest placement within the tie. Thus, for example, if there is a tie for second and third in a class in which 10 horses are shown, the class winner receives 10 points, the two contestants tied for second and third each receive 9 points, the fourth-place contestant receives 7 points, and placements fifth through tenth with non-zero scores receive 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 point, respectively.
- e. Out Of Circuit Entries: If a contestant competes out of circuit, they shall receive no points. The "in-circuit" competitors in such a class receive points matching their placement in the class according to the above point scale regardless of where any "out-of-circuit" contestant places on that scale. Thus, for example, an "out-of-circuit" contestant in an 11-horse class places second in the class in a Big Sky Circuit show. All other contestants placing first and third through tenth are Big Sky Circuit designated. In-circuit contestants receive 10, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 point, respectively.

PLACE	CONTESTANTS	POINTS
1	Big Sky Circuit Competitor	10
2	<i>Out of Circuit Competitor</i>	-
3	Big Sky Circuit Competitor	8
4	Big Sky Circuit Competitor	7
5	Big Sky Circuit Competitor	6
6	Big Sky Circuit Competitor	5
7	Big Sky Circuit Competitor	4
8	Big Sky Circuit Competitor	3
9	Big Sky Circuit Competitor	2
10	Big Sky Circuit Competitor	1
11	Big Sky Circuit Competitor	0



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- f. Double Points:
 - i. NCHA Weekend
 - 1. A minimum of one but no more than two NCHA championship weekend shows consisting of the full-slate of NCHA-approved classes.
 - 2. Each NCHA Weekend show will receive double points, excluding youth classes.
 - ii. Circuit Championships
 - 1. A minimum of one go round but not more than two go rounds consisting of the full-slate of NCHA-approved classes will receive single points based on the number of circuit championships qualified entries shown.
 - 2. A working or non-working finals consisting of the full-slate of NCHA-approved classes will receive double points based on the number of circuit championship qualified entries in the working or non-working finals, excluding youth classes.
 - 3. All monies and prizes in the Circuit Championship classes shall be awarded based on the placings in the working or non-working finals (average of grounds). No go round monies shall be paid.
- g. National Circuit Championships
 - 1. The National Circuit Championships is a clean-slate show.
 - 2. No points will be awarded at the National Circuit Championships.
- h. Youth/Scholarship Points:
 - i. NCHA Weekend
 - 1. Scholarship points earned at NCHA Weekend will count towards the NYCHA World Finals standings.
 - 2. No double points will be awarded.
 - ii. Circuit Championships
 - 1. Youth riders will NOT earn NYCHA points in the go rounds and working or non-working finals at circuit championships – youth compete for prizes and scholarships (if sponsors are obtained). Placings in the working or non-working finals will not count towards NYCHA World Finals standings.
 - 2. Youth riders WILL earn NYCHA points in the approved Championship / Challenger show(s) held in conjunction with circuit championships.



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3. No double points will be awarded.

5. Awards / Titles

- a. Four sets of awards are presented within the National Circuit Program: NCHA Weekend, Circuit Championships, Circuit Year End and National Circuit Championships.
 - i. NCHA Weekend awards
 1. see NCHA Weekend information
 - ii. Circuit Championships awards
 1. see NCHA Circuit Championship information
 - iii. National Circuit Championships awards
 1. see National Circuit Championship information
 - iv. Circuit Year End awards
 1. Determined by points earned throughout the duration of the circuit program point year, December 28 to the second Sunday before Thanksgiving.

Top Five in each circuit's year end standings will be awarded the following:

PLACE	AWARD
1 st	TBD
2 nd	TBD
3 rd	TBD
4 th	TBD
5 th	TBD

6. Joint Circuit Approval

- a. Weekend Championship and/or Weekend Challenger shows may request joint circuit approval. If approved, contestants from circuits that are jointly approved will also earn circuit points.
- b. Joint circuit approval(s) of any show(s) will be at the sole discretion of the NCHA.
- c. See Joint Circuit Approval Application for criteria.

7. NCHA Weekend

- a. See NCHA Weekend information for more details.



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8. Circuit Championships

- a. Monies won in the circuit championships classes will be credited to horse and rider's lifetime earnings but will not count toward weekend eligibility or World Finals standings.
- b. Qualifiers must show in all go rounds offered to advance to the working or non-working finals and to be eligible for circuit championships awards and monies.
- c. See Circuit Championships information for more details.

9. National Circuit Championships

- a. The National Circuit Championships is a clean-slate show.
- b. The National Circuit Championships is one go round with the top 25% advancing to a working finals.
- c. All monies will be paid in the working finals. No go-round monies will be awarded.
- d. Monies won at the National Circuit Championships will be credited to horse and rider's lifetime earnings but will not count toward weekend eligibility or World Finals standings.
- e. An owner may enter an unlimited number of circuit-qualified horses. In rider classes, a rider may only enter once in each qualified class. In horse classes, a rider may enter a maximum of two horses, as stated in weekend show rules.
- f. In horse classes, the same rider must exhibit the horse throughout the entire competition.
- g. In rider classes, the rider must exhibit the same horse throughout the entire competition.
- h. Qualification for Non-Youth Classes
 - i. A rider / horse may only receive one qualification per class.
 1. The champions and reserve champions (plus ties) from each working or non-working finals, excluding youth classes, of each circuit championships will qualify to compete at the National Circuit Championships.
 2. The top ten (plus ties) in the circuit year end standings from each class, excluding youth classes, of each circuit will qualify to compete at the National Circuit Championships.



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3. If a circuit championships champion or reserve is also in the top ten circuit year end standings, qualification will extend to the 11th or 12th place in the circuit year end standings.

ii. Exclusions

1. If a rider and/or horse competed in the 2023 NCHA World Finals, they are not eligible to compete at the National Circuit Championships in the same class(es) in which they competed in the 2023 NCHA World Finals.
2. Non-Pro riders that competed in the 2023 World Finals in the Non-Pro class may not compete in the Non-Pro class at the National Circuit Championships.
3. Any horse that finished in the top 15 of the 2023 NCHA World Finals standings in the Open class is ineligible to compete in any class except the Jr. / Sr. Youth.
4. Any horse shown in the Open division of the 2023 NCHA World Finals is ineligible to compete in any class except J. / Sr. Youth.
5. Any horse shown in the Non-Pro class at the 2023 NCHA World Finals is ineligible to compete in any class except Jr. / Sr. Youth.

i. Qualification for Youth Classes

- i. The National Circuit Championships is open to all current youth members.