

THE WORLD'S MOST EXCITING EQUINE SPORT

New Members Guide



NATIONAL
CUTTING
HORSE
ASSOCIATION



NCHAcutting.com

The World's Most Exciting Equine Sport

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Mission Statement

The National Cutting Horse Association promotes and celebrates the cutting horse, whose origin on Western ranches allows us to support ranching and its Western heritage.

By establishing rules for the conduct of cutting horse shows, NCHA strives to give cutters a level playing field and a progressive class structure which accommodates everyone from the beginner to the advanced competitor.

NCHA draws on the diverse talents and background of its members and encourages their participation in helping it achieve these goals.

Phil Rapp and Don't Look Twice

NCHAcutting.com

Your #1 source for information on cutting

- How to Get Started
- NCHA Event Calendar
- Cutting Tips
- Videos of Past Champions
- Purchase NCHA Merchandise, DVD's and Books
- Much more

Visit NCHAcutting.com to find information, videos and FAQ's.

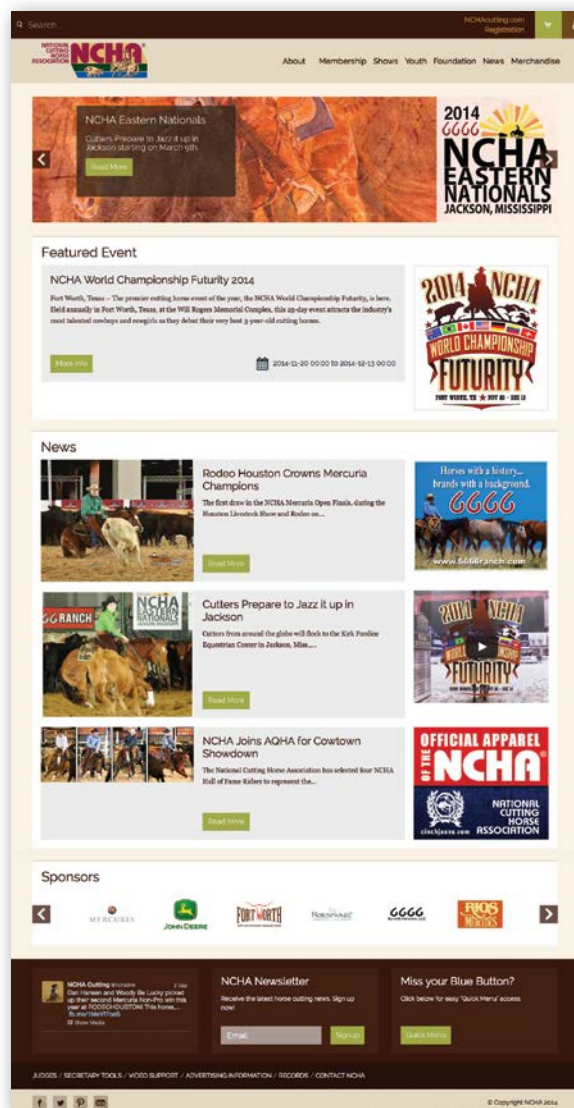
As a service to its members, NCHA provides a digital Professional Trainer's Directory, free of charge, which provides the contact information of professional trainers across the world. Interested riders can contact a professional trainer in their area and meet with them or ask them questions on how to get started.

Attend a cutting in your area.

A calendar is available at NCHAcutting.com.

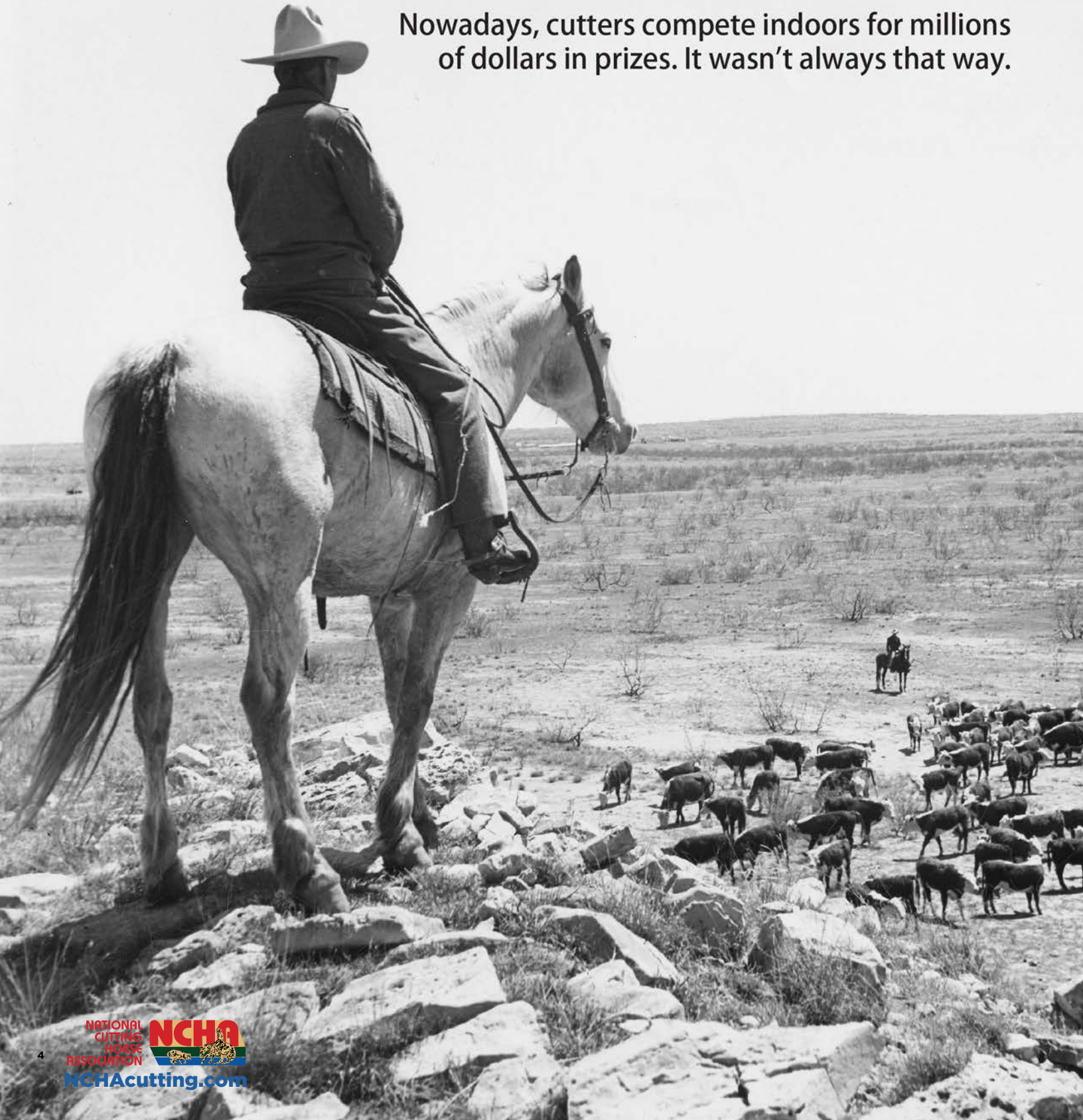
Attend an NCHA Cutting Academy.

Listen to a professional judge as he discusses what judges are looking for in a run as well as how you can improve your showmanship. For an additional fee, riders can bring their horses and work cattle while receiving tips from a professional trainer NCHA brings from out of the area. Find the clinic schedule at NCHAcutting.com.



In the beginning, there was the horse...

Nowadays, cutters compete indoors for millions of dollars in prizes. It wasn't always that way.



Anineteenth century cowboy transplanted to the present day would probably be perplexed by the modern world's high-tech marvels. But he'd still feel right at home at a cutting horse show.

When American cowboys of the 1800s began using their best horses to separate individual cows from a herd, it was part of the daily job. They would never have imagined cutting as one of the world's most popular equine sports. But each year, thousands of cutting events—from Austin to Australia—attract riders aged eight to eighty.

Cutting's heritage runs strong and deep, like the centuries-old mesquites that flourish on the Texas plains. From Chisholm Trail to present day, cutting horses have been indispensable tools in the cattle trade.

During the era of the open range, cattle from one outfit often drifted and mingled with those of other outfits. Twice a year, in the spring and the fall, neighboring ranchers would join in a roundup to sort out their brands.

Every outfit traveled with a remuda of horses. Within the remuda each cowboy had a string of horses, some of them more suitable for one job than another. For instance, a cowhand needed a steady mount to patrol the herd during the night, but in the morning he could ride last year's bronc to the far reaches of

the roundup circle.

The cutting horse was an elite member of the remuda. A typical cutting horse might have started out in a cowboy's string, but his sensitivity to cattle brought him to the attention of the roundup boss. He was the horse that pricked his ears toward a cow and followed her with his eyes. He instinctively knew not to crowd her, yet was wary of her every

way, but cutting horses were fast becoming obsolete. Today, the National Cutting Horse Association has given the cutting horse new life in one of the world's most exciting equine events.

The first advertised cutting contest was held at the 1898 Cowboy Reunion in Haskell, Texas. Fifteen thousand people, lured by ads in the Dallas News and the Kansas City Star,



move. He made the difficult job of separating cattle easier and quicker. He even made it fun.

"It was worth the trip to brush country just to sit above Ol' Gotch and feel his shoulders roll, watch his ears work and his head drop low when he looked an old steer in the eye," said cowboy humorist Will Rogers after a visit to a South Texas ranch during the 1920s.

As big cattle outfits gave way to small farms and ranches in the twentieth century, pickup trucks and squeeze chutes took the place of cow horses. A few large ranches still rounded up cattle the old-fashioned

attended. Since the nearest railroad was fifty miles away, they came on horseback, or by wagon and hack.

The cutting contest offered a prize of \$150, a substantial sum in those days, and 11 riders entered. Old Hub—whose fans swore that he could work blindfolded and without a bridle—was brought out of retirement by Sam Graves for this one event.

Graves primed the 22-year-old horse with oat mash and prairie hay, then he tied Old Hub to the back of a hack and led him all the way to Haskell—a two-day journey. It was a trip into the history books, and Graves



Among the horses in this picture from a cutting horse event in 1948 are such greats as Snooks, Poco Bueno, Skeeter, Old Paint and Benny Binion's gelding that was NCHA's first World Champion. Riders include early NCHA Presidents Ray Smyth, Gay Copeland, and H. Calhoun; and legendary riders Milt Bennett, Guy Harrell, Pine Johnson, Phil Williams and George Glascock. Photos by Frank Reeves, courtesy of the Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

set aside half of his winnings to ensure Old Hub had the best of care for the rest of his days.

The first record of cutting as an arena spectator event came at the Southwestern Exposition and Fat Stock Show in Fort Worth, Texas, when a cutting horse exhibition was added to the annual rodeo in 1919. It became a competitive event the following year.

By 1946, there were so many cutting horse contests being held, under so many different sets of conditions and rules, that a group of 13 cutting horse owners met at the Southwestern Exposition and Fat Stock Show and decided to form an association to establish standard rules and procedures for holding such competition.

One of the founders, Ray Smyth, said, "When the meeting broke up, we had formed what we thought would be more or less a local cutting horse association. Someone remarked that with luck, we might even get as many as 50 members by another year."

Later, at a meeting in Mineral Wells, Texas, the association was incorporated, and Pat Dalton suggested the name 'National Cutting Horse Association,'

\$36,346,158.92 – Total purses for NCHA approved and produced shows in 2014

All-time Money Earners

Rank	Horse	Earnings	Rank	Horse	Earnings
1	Poco Quixote Rio	\$1,091,734	15	Chiquita Pistol	\$545,001
2	Red White And Boon	\$882,498	16	Smooth Asa Zee	\$526,044
3	Sister Cd	\$833,214	17	Cash Quixote Rio	\$520,583
4	Dual Rey Me	\$812,942	18	Redneck Yachtclub	\$518,268
5	Dont Look Twice	\$804,954	19	San Tule Uno	\$516,163
6	Woody Be Lucky	\$680,946	20	Third Cutting	\$511,749
7	Meradas Little Sue	\$670,098	21	Im Countin Checks	\$509,642
8	Gun Smokes Wimpy	\$661,431	22	Jazzote	\$504,286
9	Little Badger Dulce	\$657,276	23	Spots Hot	\$502,682
10	Docs Okie Quixote	\$599,109	24	High Brow CD	\$502,202
11	Quintan Blue	\$594,637	25	Miss Silver Pistol	\$500,876
12	Smart Little Lena	\$577,652	26	Boon San Kitty	\$498,188
13	Metallic Cat	\$574,494	27	Faith In My Cat	\$496,024
14	Rey Lynx	\$559,422	28	Little Pepto Gal	\$490,951
			29	Ball O'flash	\$476,558
			30	Smooth As A Cat	\$474,325

because it looked as though it had the potential to grow into something big.

The first show was held in Dublin, Texas, in the fall of 1946.

Smyth recalled that secretary-treasurer Volney Hildreth guarded the association's resources "with a big stick. If we wanted anything that cost money, Volney would tell us to get enough new members to pay for it."

When NCHA was formed, most cutting horses were ranch geldings like Old Paint, a brown and white horse of unknown parentage that Smyth bought for \$40 at Weatherford trade days. Old Paint became one of cutting's first champions.

But some of the big ranches had been breed-

ing their own horses for years. The world famous King Ranch had a remuda of copper-colored horses descended from the Old Sorrel. Yellow Jacket horses, with golden coats and black manes and tails, filled the Burnett's Triangle Ranch pastures; while the Pitchfork outfit was known for cast-iron cow ponies sired by Grey Badger.

By 1963, the association recorded the results of 727 events, of which 504 were recognized as NCHA championship events. In those days, cutters vied for a piece of \$404,183 in prize money. That included \$23,225 paid out at that year's NCHA Futurity.

Fast forward to today, and the contestants at the NCHA Futurity will be div-

ying up more than \$3.5 million—over a hundred times the offering of that first year. Total purses at NCHA-approved shows now exceed \$36 million annually.

Yet for many, cutting's greatest rewards are intangible. The bond between people and horses that makes the sport so special, also links it to the sweat and dust of the Old West, and sets it apart from all other events.

"The people who brought cutting from the open range to the arena, and turned the skills of the horse and cowboy into the contest, were real sports," said Buster Welch, a legendary cutting champion. "That fine sportsmanship is still alive and well in cutting today." ■

NCHA Membership

NCHA offers three different membership options so members are able to compete against peers of the same skill level. All riders and horse owners must be current NCHA members to show in NCHA events. (See Rulebook for complete details)

Amateur

Amateurs must have lifetime earnings of \$100,000 or less. In addition, an Amateur must not:

- a. have been paid to train or assist in training a horse or rider in any equine discipline
- b. have been married to, lived with, resided on the premises of or been employed astride by a professional horse trainer in any equine discipline.

Non-Pro

A Non-Pro may not receive remuneration for training horses astride in any equine discipline or remuneration to show, train or assist in training a cutting horse or cutting horse rider.

Professional

Any rider who has been paid remuneration to show, train or assist in training a horse or rider in any equine discipline

Plan on Showing?

Before you show in an Amateur or Non-Pro class, you need to purchase your Amateur/Non-Pro card. To purchase your Amateur or Non-Pro card, please call the NCHA Office at 817-244-6188.





National Youth Cutting Horse Association

The National Cutting Horse Association was formed with its main goals being to promote cutting competitions, standardize contest rules and preserve the cutting horses' Western heritage. The National Youth Cutting Horse Association (NYCHA), was formed in 1993 to offer youth members the opportunity to develop their horsemanship skills, practice sportsmanship and discipline, develop leadership skills and learn responsibility in caring for their horses and themselves. The NYCHA strives to offer programs and opportunities to fit the needs and abilities of all horses and riders.



Youth Membership

Membership in the NYCHA is open to all youth who are 18 years of age or younger.

There are two age divisions, Senior Youth (14-18) and Junior Youth (ages 13 and under).

■ Youth Cutting and Special Events

NYCHA World Finals, Summer Scholarship Cutting and Convention

Each summer, the NYCHA holds its World Finals, Annual Youth Convention and Scholarship Cutting in Fort Worth, Texas. During the event, youth members compete for more than \$65,000 in scholarships, conduct business meetings, elect officers, participate in family fun night and attend educational workshops. The annual youth awards banquet is held in conjunction with the convention and cutting competition to recognize members' achievements throughout the year.

■ Awards and Scholarships

LEAP

The Levels of Excellence Award Program (LEAP) was created to recognize youth for their participation in NYCHA activities. Points are earned through participation in NYCHA activities such as attending workshops, community service, writing a newspaper article, helping with fundraisers or participating in cutting events. LEAP points become crucial when it comes to scholarship applications and other awards.

Scholarship Programs

More than \$250,000 in college scholarships are awarded each year through a variety of scholarship programs and youth scholarship cuttings. The scholarships are awarded based on involvement in NYCHA activities, academic achievements, financial need and community involvement.

■ Leadership and Education

Leadership Opportunities

The NYCHA National Officers and Board of Directors conduct the business of the NYCHA. They are responsible for implementing NYCHA programs at the local level, promoting the sport of cutting and informing youth members about activities and fundraisers. ■

Shows



In addition to the 1,900-plus NCHA-approved shows held annually around the world, NCHA produces six shows each year. Three are major limited-age events held in Fort Worth, two are National Championships for weekend cutters and one is the World Finals for weekend cutters.



1. Weekend Shows:

Weekend shows are a great place for beginners all the way up to professional trainers. Shows feature a progressive class structure offering some or all of NCHA's 12 approved classes so everyone has the opportunity to compete against others at a similar level of achievement. At the end of the point year, any rider who paid an entry fee and rode to the herd is eligible to enter the Eastern National Championships or the Western National Championships, both of which have thousands of dollars in added money. Also, at the end of the point year, the Top 15 in 10 of NCHA's approved

classes may compete in the Mercuria Energy World Finals held in conjunction with the NCHA World Championship Futurity in Fort Worth, TX.

a. World Series Shows:

The Mercuria NCHA World Series of Cutting offers an international calendar of weekend shows for horses of any age competing for \$50,000 in added money. The Open and Non-Pro divisions each offer \$25,000-added purses. The fast-paced, crowd-pleasing format has expanded the audience for cutting across America, Canada and Europe. The finals feature rousing music, live commentary and spectacular competition.

b. Youth Shows:

National Youth Cutting Horse Association (NYCHA) members can compete in Junior (age 13 and under) or Senior (age 14-18) classes at weekend shows. NYCHA members have the opportunity to win thousands of dollars of college scholarships each year based on involvement in NYCHA shows, academic achievement and community involvement. Each summer during the Summer Spectacular Cutting in Fort Worth, TX, the NYCHA holds its Youth World Finals, National Convention, and annual Scholarship Cutting that awards approximately \$50,000 in college scholarships.





2. Limited-Age Shows:
 Fort Worth is home to three annual NCHA limited-age events, also known as the Triple Crown of Cutting. Each show has limited-age classes offering millions of dollars to the payout. The first jewel is the **NCHA World Championship**

Futurity held in December. The Futurity is for 3-year-old cutting horses that have never been shown before in competition. Next, the second jewel in the Triple Crown, is the **NCHA Super Stakes** held in April for horses ages 4 to 6. The third and final jewel for the Triple Crown

is the **NCHA Summer Cutting Spectacular** held in July. Again, the derby portion of the event is offered for 4-year-olds and any horse winning the World Championship Futurity, the Super Stakes, and the Summer Spectacular is crowned as the Triple Crown winner.





7. Senior Youth – Riders who are NYCHA Youth Members age 14-18 (Youth point year June 1 – May 31).

HORSE CLASSES: Classes in which restrictions are based solely on the horse. Any rider can compete in these classes. The term “Novice” refers to the horse.

8. \$5,000 Novice – Open to all horses of any age that have \$5,000 or less of eligibility earnings at the beginning of the point year (excluding limited age events).

9. \$15,000 Novice – Open to all horses of any age that have \$15,000 or less of eligibility earnings at the beginning of the point year (excluding limited age events).

HORSE/RIDER CLASSES: Classes in which there are restrictions on both the horse and the rider. The term “Novice” refers to the horse and the term “Non-Pro” refers to the rider.

10. \$5,000 Novice/Non-Pro – Open to horses with eligibility earnings of \$5,000 or less at the beginning of the point year (excluding limited-age events) and the rider has a Non-Pro card. The horse must be owned by the rider or rider’s immediate family.

11. \$15,000 Novice/Non-Pro - Open to horses with eligibility earnings of \$15,000 or less at the beginning of the point year (excluding limited-age events) and the rider has a Non-Pro card. The horse must be owned by the rider or rider’s immediate family.

12. Open – Any horse can be ridden by any rider. There are no restrictions on the horse or rider. ■

Different Types of Show Classes

Twelve standard classes are offered at NCHA events. Classes can be based on the qualifications of the rider, the qualifications of the horse or the qualifications of both horse and rider.

RIDER CLASSES: Classes are based on the rider and his/her accomplishments.

1. \$50,000 Amateur – Riders holding an Amateur card with less than \$100,000 of eligibility earnings (\$50,000 Weekend/\$50,000 Limited Age) at the beginning of the point year. The horse must be owned by the rider or rider’s immediate family.

2. \$15,000 Amateur – Riders holding an Amateur card with less than \$15,000 of eligibility earnings at the beginning of the point year. The horse must be owned by the

rider or rider’s immediate family.

3. \$2,000 Limit Rider/Any Horse – The class of choice for members who are new to cutting. This class is open to all riders with lifetime earnings in cutting competitions of \$2,000 or less at the beginning of the point year.

4. Non-Pro – Riders holding a Non-Pro card and Amateur status are also allowed to enter this class. There is no limit on the amount of money which the horse or rider have won.

5. \$35,000 Non-Pro - Riders holding a Non-Pro card with less than \$35,000 of eligibility earnings at the beginning of the point year.

6. Junior Youth – Riders who are NYCHA Youth Members age 13 or younger (Youth point year June 1 – May 31).

Judges



Cutting judges are similar to other sports' referees in that they evaluate the run at live speed, enforce the competition rules and determine the contestant's score. A judge's score can range from 60 to 80 points and a show can use one judge up to and as many as five judges. When a panel of five judges is used, the lowest and highest scores are discarded and the three

middle scores are totaled.

Like most referees today, NCHA judges can use video to watch replays at NCHA-approved shows. A competition can be video reviewed immediately following each "set" of cattle to determine if a mistake was made in the application of a major penalty. After the judges review the run, the score may then be adjusted to reflect a final score. ■

Scores and Winning

Since cutting is a judged event, there are certain characteristics in a run that determine a horse's score. Reflecting a mirror image of the cow and its movement is the ultimate goal of the horse. Reining or visibly cueing your horse or allowing the cow to get back to the herd before "quitting" the cow also results in the deduction of points. Matching the cow's movement and body position and keeping it in the center of the arena all help to add points to the score. Every rider starts out with a score of 70 from each judge and as the run progresses, each judge adds or deducts points as necessary. Once the run is over, each judge tallies up points to get the competitor's score with the highest score being declared the winner. ■



* New Members Guide *

The World's Most Exciting Equine Sport

NCHA \$2,000 Achievement Buckle



Once a rider wins \$2,000 in lifetime NCHA weekend earnings, he/she is awarded a trophy Gist buckle, compliments of NCHA. Whether a person is a weekend warrior or World Champion, NCHA wants to congratulate them on their achievement. Every professional trainer started out as a beginner and worked their way up. Whether a person's goal is to become a World Champion or cutting is just their hobby, the first jewel in their crown is the NCHA \$2,000 Achievement Buckle. ■

How Do I Get Started?

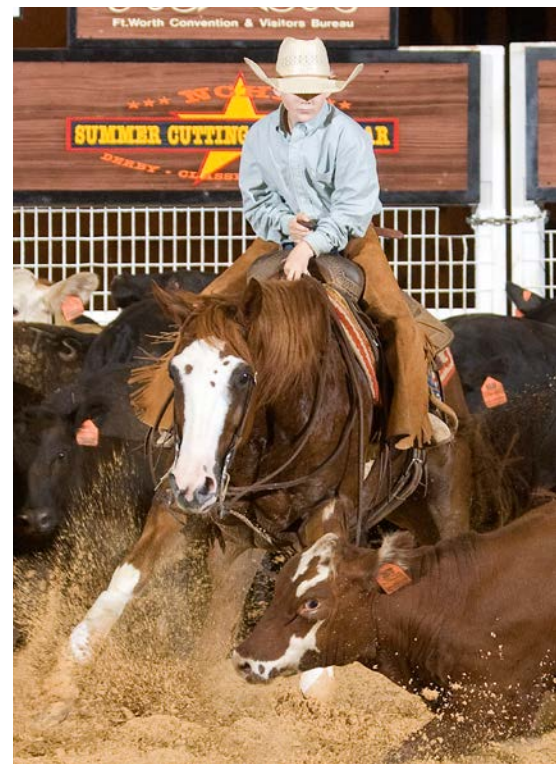
There are many ways to get further involved in the exciting sport of cutting.

Finding a Trainer

The best way to get more familiar with the sport is to spend some time with a local trainer who is an invaluable source of information. The NCHA provides a free digital trainers directory at NCHACutting.com that displays all of the local trainers in your area. These professionals can offer lessons, help you find a horse that fits your skill level, help you enter shows and teach you every facet of the sport. They can be like your own personal coach.

Visit NCHACutting.com

NCHACutting.com is the official website of the National Cutting Horse Association. Whether you want to view the most up-to-date rule book, watch video tips and runs from past champions, or look at the schedule of upcoming shows, NCHACutting.com is your resource for the most current information. ■



The National Cutting Horse Association



FAQs

How long does my NCHA membership last?

NCHA memberships can be purchased for one year (\$60). One year of membership begins on January 1 and is valid through December 31 of the same year, whether it is purchased on January 1 or halfway through the year. Membership does not include your Amateur/Non Pro card.

Do I have to ride my own horse to show in NCHA competition?

There are several NCHA classes in which the horse's rider does not have to be the owner of the horse (Open, \$5,000 Novice, \$15,000 Novice, \$2,000 Limit Rider, Junior Youth and Senior Youth) excludes Amateur/Non Pro riders. Holders of Non-Pro/Amateur cards may compete in the \$2,000 Limit Rider on any horse, regardless of ownership, without jeopardizing their Non-Professional status. In all Amateur and Non-Pro classes, the horse must be owned by the rider or rider's immediate family.

The \$2,000 Limit Rider class is a great way for any member who is new to cutting to gain experience before stepping up against more experienced riders.

How do I find out where the weekend shows are being held?

There are two easy ways. The first place to find out about weekend events is on the NCHA web site. You can search the comprehensive listings by state, city or month.

In the Cutting Horse Chatter, which members receive every month, turn to the "Coming Events" section. The first page of that section lists show locations and their dates in each state. Details for each event are listed in chronological order in the remainder of the section. Directions, class fees, stall information, judges and secretaries are all listed for each cutting.

Why does NCHA use five judges for the major limited-age events?

Nearly 20 years ago, NCHA instituted the Adjusted Monitor System in order to make judging fair for each contestant. The system is used at all major limited-age events with five judges and may be used at three-judge shows.

According to the system, the high and low scores are tossed out in a five-judge show, leaving three scores to be tallied. A monitor is

assigned to make rulings on major penalty discrepancies and to evaluate the judges' performance during each go-round.

How do I obtain an Amateur or Non-Pro card?

Before entering any Amateur or Non-Pro class at an NCHA show, you must complete an Amateur/Non-Pro application, in addition to your membership, and submit it along with a \$20 fee, for approval to the NCHA office. Your approval status will be indicated on your membership card.

The normal approval turnaround time for receiving your card once received at NCHA is two weeks. However, if you need immediate approval because you are planning to show right away, call the Membership Department and they will make every effort to get your application approved sooner. Normal business hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Central Time, Monday through Friday.

If you are planning to show in either an Amateur or Non-Pro class, your NCHA membership card should have "Non-Pro/Amateur" printed on the card. If it does not, contact the Membership Department. ■

THIS IS CUTTING . . .



AND COWBOY STARTS HERE.



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Gary Reynolds
MEDIA GROUP Photo