2025 Rule Proposals to be moved forward to membership and voted on by NBOD in July 2024.

2025 PROPOSED RULE CHANGES – November 18, 2023 – Changes are in RED

#1a: COMBINE DIVISION WEIGHT CLASSES INTO ADULT CLASS
(A TEMPORARY ONE-YEAR ACTION)

4.B.1. Heavyweight and Lightweight classes are combined into an Adult class on a temporary basis for the 2025 ride year and will revert to 2022 rules unless extended by the National Board of Directors.

Rationale: Continue current year-to-year approval process. In the 2023 ride season, merging the Heavyweight and Lightweight classes into a single ADULT class yielded the desired results. There were many fewer tiny classes (<3 competitors) and while there were some large classes (>10 competitors), the number wasn’t large and was still much less than experienced in NATRC historically. Heavyweights may be at a disadvantage competing with lightweights, but without the merge many classes essentially would have no real competition. By making the change temporary, it is slightly easier to reverse this change if ridership improves.

#1b: COMBINE DIVISION WEIGHT CLASSES INTO ADULT CLASS
(MAKE PERMANENT)

4.B.1. Heavyweight and Lightweight classes are combined into an Adult class.

Rationale: Combining weight classes allows competitors to know this is what to expect going forward for some time. In the 2023 ride season, merging the Heavyweight and Lightweight classes into a single ADULT class yielded the desired results. There were many fewer tiny classes (<3 competitors) and while there were some large classes (>10 competitors), the number wasn’t large and was still much less than experienced in NATRC historically. Heavyweights may be at a disadvantage competing with lightweights, but without the merger many classes essentially would have no real competition.

#2: VETERINARY JUDGING

SECTION 6 - JUDGING

A. Procedures: The judges may act together and discuss individual entrants throughout the course of the ride.
   2. Start of Competition
      a. For the purposes of scoring maneuvering trail/behavior, soundness and horsemanship, the horse and rider shall be considered in competition from the moment that the horse is presented to the judges for preliminary examination.
   5. Final Examination: There must be a final examination (including condition, soundness, and maneuvering trail/behavior) of all horses by the veterinary and horsemanship judges after the completion of the final day’s ride.

B. Veterinary Judging: Judges shall not discriminate against any animal due to conformation or type as long as the animal performs satisfactorily. Horses are to be evaluated on the following three criteria: condition, soundness and maneuvering trail/behavior. Leisure Division does not have to adhere to these scoring categories.
   3. Maneuvering Trail/Behavior 15%: The evaluation of maneuvering trail/behavior shall include, but not be limited to, the following: disposition, response to rider, kicking, head tossing, prancing, standing for examination and mounting, buddying up, trail wise, etc.
   D. Leisure Division. Horses will be evaluated on maneuvering trail/behavior. Riders will be evaluated on equitation and partnership with the horse. Safety may be scored.

Rationale: Riders have expressed concerns for many years about the heavy scoring in the trail ability/manners section of the horse scorecard. Our veterinarians should focus on what they are expertly and professionally trained to do and that is to judge metabolic conditioning, soundness and behavior. A task force made recommendations for a pilot program which was accepted by the National Board in 2022 to change the name to “Maneuvering Trail / Behavior” and to revise the scoring criteria. The pilot project has been successful. The name of the bottom section of the horse scorecard now needs to be changed in the Rule Book. The scorecard itself will be consistent with the Rule Book.

APPENDIX B (Included here for reference only)
#3: MAKE RIDE SWEEPSTAKES AWARD A COMBINATION AWARD AND AWARD POINTS TO HORSE
SECTION 9 - AWARDS
A. Ride Awards
   4. The horse and rider team with the highest combined (horse and horsemanship) score from the Open, Competitive Pleasure and Novice Divisions shall be the recipients of the Open, Competitive Pleasure and Novice Sweepstakes Awards.

C. Point Distribution
   4. The Open, Competitive Pleasure and Novice Sweepstakes winners will receive the highest points possible for their horses’ placings based on the number of starters in the largest class of their respective division.
   5. The Sweepstakes winner will receive points to the horse, in addition to other points won for horse, as follows: 3 points for a Type AA ride, 2 points for a Type A, 1 point for a Type B.

Rationale: Making Sweepstakes a combination award of both horse and horsemanship allows the best team to take high honors. Allowing all extra points to go to the horse follows NATRC tradition. This also enables more points to go to the horse for a National Championship which is a horse award.

Example: There is a full class (6) of ADULT competitors and three (3) competitors in the JUNIOR class in a Type-A ride. A JUNIOR who took 1st in horse and 3rd in horsemanship has the highest combined score and wins Sweepstakes. Without the Sweepstakes award, the JUNIOR horse would earn 10 points and horsemanship would earn 6 points. Sweepstakes awards the JUNIOR more points in two ways:
   1. The ADULT class was larger, and the JUNIOR beat all the ADULT horses. As the top ADULT horse earned 16 points, so did the JUNIOR horse. The JUNIOR horsemanship points are left unchanged at 6.
   2. Because this is a Type-A ride, the JUNIOR’s horse score is increased by an additional 2 points; that is, the final JUNIOR points are 18 (16+2) for horse (1st place) and 6 for horsemanship.

#4: NATRC’S HIGHEST AWARD

SECTION 9 - AWARDS
B. Annual Awards
   1. National Awards
      a. NATIONAL “JIM MENEFEE” AWARD (Combined Horse & Horsemanship): This award will be presented annually to the overall high point horse and rider team in the Open Division.
      b. PRESIDENT’S CUP: This award will be presented annually to the overall high point horse in the Open Division.

Rationale: This changes which award gets top honors and who speaks at national convention. This makes the primary focus of the top award to emphasize the partnership achieved by the horse and rider team. Our highest award would reflect the team that has demonstrated a fit, sound, well behaved equine, which with its rider, can successfully perform all the expected trail tasks better than any other team. The top horse would still receive an important award, but our top award will identify our top horse and top rider team. Historically the winner of the President’s Cup is usually, but not always, the winner of the Jim Menefee Memorial Award high combo). This change has our top honor recognizing the best of everything we do in our sport.

#5: STABLING

SECTION 5 – THE RIDE
B. Stabling
   4. Stabling option not allowed during competition as primary containment.
      a. Hobbling of any kind
      b. Portable panels that are not securely anchored to a trailer or a tree
      c. Electric fencing
      d. Staking out in any manner
      e. Stallions in portable panels
   5. Stallions: Stallions must be double tied…

Rationale: NATRC strives to offer the safest means of care to our horses and this rule requires some clarification.