

Capitol Area Quarter Horse Association

2026 Classic and Ranch Horse Show Rules

Purpose: To recognize achievements of members of the association.

Overview

Specific rules and details for each Division are listed below this overview by Division. It is the exhibitor's responsibility to read and understand the rules. We welcome your questions! Horses of all breeds (including unregistered horses) are eligible for CAQHA shows.

Classic Horse Show:

CAQHA will award Show High Point and Reserve High Point at each show in the following Divisions:

1. Small Fry (10 and Under Walk/Trot)
2. Walk / Trot ONLY 18 & Under
3. Walk/ Trot ONLY 19 & Over
4. 18 & Under
5. 19 & Over

Exhibitors must be a member of CAQHA to be eligible for Show High Point Awards. All Divisions are 'one exhibitor/one horse' divisions for Show High Points.

CAQHA adheres to rules, policies, judgments, and procedures upheld by the American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA), our parent organization. AQHA Class procedures apply to all applicable classes. Modifications may be made at the discretion of CAQHA.

Classic Show DIVISIONS

Small Fry – 10 and Under Walk/Trot:

Age of exhibitor is as of January 1, 2026. Exhibitor may NOT compete in any class that has a canter or lope.

Small Fry Show High Point: Show High Point and Reserve High Point Awards will be given for the highest number of points earned in all Small Fry classes at each show. Exhibitors must show in at least 4 performance classes to be eligible for the Show High Point Awards. Small Fry performance classes include Western Showmanship, Western Pleasure, Horsemanship, Trail, Hunter Under Saddle and Hunt Seat Equitation. Small Fry exhibitors may also show in Halter & Color classes (these classes are NOT required) however any points earned in a Youth Halter class and Color class will count toward the High Point Awards.

Small Fry exhibitors ARE eligible to compete in the 18 & Under Walk/Trot ONLY classes and Division. If a Small Fry exhibitor also competes in the 18 & Under Walk/Trot ONLY division, any points earned in their respective Youth Halter class and Color class will also count toward the 18 & Under Walk/Trot ONLY division award.

Walk/Trot ONLY 18 and Under:

Age of exhibitor is as of January 1, 2026. Exhibitor/horse combination may NOT compete in any class that has a canter or lope.

18 & Under Walk/Trot ONLY Show High Point: Show High Point and Reserve High Point Awards will be given for the highest number of points earned in all 18 & Under Walk/Trot ONLY classes at each show. Exhibitors must show in at least 4 performance classes to be eligible for the Show High Point Awards. 18 & Under Walk/Trot ONLY performance classes include Western Showmanship, Western Pleasure, Horsemanship, Trail, Hunter Under Saddle and Hunt Seat Equitation. 18 & Under Walk/Trot ONLY exhibitors may also show in Halter (this class is NOT required) however any points earned in the Youth Halter class and Color class will also count toward the 18 & Under Walk/Trot ONLY division award.

Walk/Trot ONLY 19 and Over:

Age of exhibitor is as of January 1, 2026. Exhibitor/horse combination may NOT compete in any class that has a canter or lope.

19 & Over Walk/Trot ONLY Show High Point: High Point and Reserve High Point Awards will be given for the highest number of points earned in all 19 & Over Walk/Trot ONLY classes at each show. Exhibitors must show in at least 4 performance classes to be eligible for the Show High Point Awards. 19 & Over Walk/Trot ONLY performance classes include Western Showmanship, Western Pleasure, Horsemanship, Trail, Hunter Under Saddle and Hunt Seat Equitation. 19 & Over Walk/Trot ONLY exhibitors may also show in Halter (this class is NOT required) however any points earned in the 19 & Over Halter class and Color class will count toward High Point Awards.

Youth 18 and Under

Age of exhibitor is as of January 1, 2026. 18 and Under classes contain lope and canter gaits.

Youth 18 & Under Show High Point: Show High Point and Reserve High Point Awards will be given for the highest number of points earned in all 18 & Under classes at each show. Exhibitors must show in at least 4 performance classes to be eligible for the Show High Point Awards. 18 & Under performance classes include Western Showmanship, Western Pleasure, Horsemanship, Trail, Hunter Under Saddle and Hunt Seat Equitation. 18 & Under exhibitors may also show in Halter (this class is NOT required) however any points earned in their respective Halter class and Color class will count toward High Point Awards.

19 and Over:

Age of exhibitor is as of January 1, 2026. 19 & Over classes contain lope and canter gaits.

19 & Over Show High Point: Show High Point and Reserve High Point Awards will be given for the highest number of points earned in all 19 & Over classes at each show. Exhibitors must show in at least 4 performance classes to be eligible for the Show High Point Awards. 19 & Over performance classes include Western Showmanship, Western Pleasure, Horsemanship, Trail, Hunter Under Saddle and Hunt Seat Equitation. 19 & Over exhibitors may also show in Halter (this class is NOT required) however any points earned in their respective Halter class and Color class will count toward High Point Awards.

Additional Classes Offered:

Junior Horse – Open to Exhibitors of All Ages:

Any horse 5 years of age or younger as of January 1, 2026. (Note: All horses become one year older on January 1st of each year, regardless of their actual foaling date. If you have any questions about this age rule, please ask us.)

Junior Horse Division will not offer Show High Point Awards.

Senior Horse – Open to Exhibitors of All Ages:

Any horse 6 years of age or older as of January 1, 2026. (Note: All horses become one year older on January 1st of each year, regardless of their actual foaling date. If you have any questions about this age rule, please ask us.)

Senior Horse Division will not offer Show High Point Awards.

In-Hand Trail – Open to Horses of All Ages:

Any horse showing in In-Hand Trail may not be ridden in any other class at the same show by any exhibitor.

Additional High Point Rules:

CAQHA Board Members and Officers are eligible for all high point awards.

Payment for membership must be received BEFORE the first class is shown; no exceptions. You may join at the show prior to your first class. There are no minimum point requirements. AQHA class procedures apply to all applicable classes. Modifications may be made at the discretion of CAQHA.

Ties: High Point ties broken by (a) greatest number of classes entered, (b) most first places, (c) flip of a coin.

Points earned in any class not designated in one of the divisions will not count. Classes not counting toward any High Point Awards are: Lead Line, Walk Only, Riders with Special Needs, Junior Horse and Senior Horse Classes.

Ranch Horse Show:

CAQHA will award Show High Point and Reserve High Point at each show in the following Divisions:

1. Walk / Trot ONLY 18 & Under
2. Walk/ Trot ONLY 19 & Over
3. 18 & Under
4. 19 & Over

Exhibitor must be a member of CAQHA to be eligible for Show Awards. All Divisions are 'one exhibitor/one horse' divisions for Show High Points.

- CAQHA adheres to rules, policies, judgments, and procedures upheld by the American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA), our parent organization. AQHA Class procedures apply to all applicable classes. Modifications may be made at the discretion of CAQHA.

Ranch Show DIVISIONS

Walk/Trot ONLY 18 and Under:

Age of exhibitor is as of January 1, 2026. Exhibitor/horse combination may NOT compete in any class that has a canter or lope.

18 & Under Walk/Trot ONLY Show High Point: Show High Point and Reserve High Point Awards will be given for the highest number of points earned in all 18 & Under Walk/Trot ONLY classes at each show. Exhibitors must show in at least 4 ranch classes to be eligible for the Show High Point Awards. 18 & Under Walk/Trot ONLY ranch classes include Ranch Conformation, Ranch Rail Pleasure, Ranch Riding, Ranch Trail, Stock Horse Showmanship, and Stock Horse Pleasure.

Walk/Trot ONLY 19 and Over:

Age of exhibitor is as of January 1, 2026. Exhibitor/horse combination may NOT compete in any class that has a canter or lope.

19 & Over Walk/Trot ONLY Show High Point: Show High Point and Reserve High Point Awards will be given for the highest number of points earned in all 19 & Over Walk/Trot ONLY classes at each show. Exhibitors must show in at least 4 ranch classes to be eligible for the Show High Point Awards. 19 & Over Walk/Trot ONLY ranch classes include Ranch Conformation, Ranch Rail Pleasure, Ranch Riding, Ranch Trail, Stock Horse Showmanship, and Stock Horse Pleasure.

18 and Under:

Age of exhibitor is as of January 1, 2026. 18 and Under classes contain lope and canter gaits.

Youth 18 & Under Show High Point: Show High Point and Reserve High Point Awards will be given for the highest number of points earned in all 18 & Under classes at each show. Exhibitors must show in at least 4 ranch classes to be eligible for the Show High Point Awards. 18 & Under ranch classes include Ranch Conformation, Ranch Rail Pleasure, Ranch Riding, Ranch Trail, Stock Horse Showmanship, and Stock Horse Pleasure.

19 and Over:

Age of exhibitor is as of January 1, 2026. 19 & Over classes contain lope and canter gaits.

19 & Over Show High Point: Show High Point and Reserve High Point Awards will be given for the highest number of points earned in all Ranch 19 & Over classes at each show. Exhibitors must show in at least 4 ranch classes to be eligible for the Show High Point Awards. 19 & Over ranch classes include Ranch Conformation, Ranch Rail Pleasure, Ranch Riding, Ranch Trail, Stock Horse Showmanship, and Stock Horse Pleasure.

Additional Classes Offered:

Junior Horse – Open to Exhibitors of All Ages:

Any horse 5 years of age or younger as of January 1, 2026. (Note: All horses become one year older on January 1st of each year, regardless of their actual foaling date. If you have any questions about this age rule, please ask us.)

Junior Horse Division will not offer Show High Point Awards.

Senior Horse – Open to Exhibitors of All Ages:

Any horse 6 years of age or older as of January 1, 2026. (Note: All horses become one year older on January 1st of each year, regardless of their actual foaling date. If you have any questions about this age rule, please ask us.)

Senior Horse Division will not offer Show High Point Awards.

Additional High Point Rules:

CAQHA Board Members and Officers are eligible for all high point awards.

Payment for membership must be received BEFORE the first class is shown; no exceptions. You may join at the show prior to your first class. There are no minimum point requirements. AQHA class procedures apply to all applicable classes. Modifications may be made at the discretion of CAQHA.

Ties: High Point ties broken by (a) greatest number of classes entered, (b) most first places, (c) flip of a coin.

Points earned in any class not designated in one of the divisions will not count. Classes not counting toward any High Point Awards are: Junior Horse and Senior Horse Classes.

Classic and Ranch Show Rules:

1. CAQHA adheres to rules, policies, judgments, and procedures upheld by the American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA), our parent organization. AQHA Class procedures apply to all applicable classes. Modifications may be made at the discretion of CAQHA.
2. No refunds for scratches unless made IN OFFICE prior to the start of class.
3. Must be a current member of CAQHA to be eligible for awards. All horses must show proof of current negative Coggins (current being within 12 months or less, from date of show).
4. Exhibitors may show multiple horses in one division (this includes both classic and ranch classes) however the maximum any exhibitor can win is one Show High Point Award and one Show Reserve High Point Award. The specifics of Show High Point Awards dispersal in the event of multiple high points are at the discretion of CAQHA Board Members.
5. Stallions may **NOT** be shown/exhibited by a youth in any classes. Stallions may **NOT** be shown in any of the youth classes. Anyone with a stallion who displays disruptive or potentially disruptive/unsafe behavior will be immediately excused from the show arena/premises by CAQHA management. Refund of unused entry fees is at the discretion of show management.
6. Upon the judge's discretion, management reserves the right to combine or cancel classes of fewer than 3 exhibitors.
7. Management reserves the right upon the judge's discretion to split or run heats with classes of over 16 entries.
8. Management reserves the right upon the judge's discretion to excuse a horse from competition if it is deemed lame or in poor health.
9. Management reserves the right to prevent an exhibitor from attending or participating in any of our shows if it is deemed that their presence may be a disruption to the show and/or its participants.
10. High Point and Reserve High Point Show are 'one exhibitor/one horse'.
11. Exhibitors may ride two-handed in a snaffle on horses of any age in all classes
12. Classic Show exhibitors who show in Western Pleasure classes may not enter Ranch Rail Pleasure classes. Ranch Show exhibitors who show in Ranch Rail Pleasure classes may not enter Classic Western Pleasure classes.
13. Bands / Braids in Manes: Exhibitors showing in both classic and ranch events may show with their horse's mane either loose, banded or braided in ranch classes. Bands / braids are not required in classic classes.
14. Artificial Tails: Artificial show tails are allowed in classic classes but not allowed in ranch classes.
15. Because CAQHA encourages crossover entries in ranch & classic divisions, horses may be clipped or unclipped: bridle path; ears; brows, muzzle and chin; fetlocks. Our judges will be

