



2026 USHJA ZONE 9 HANDY HUNTER CHALLENGE

The USHJA Zone 9 Committee has created this program to provide the membership with an opportunity to experience the excitement of Hunter Derbies and Hunter Classics. The USHJA Zone 9 Handy Hunter Challenge judging will place emphasis on a horse that is maneuverable, obedient, and looks like they would be a pleasant ride in the show ring or hunt field. Most of all, while they may carry pace and show brilliance, they should look like they are a suitable mount for the non-professional rider. Additional judging specifications are provided in Section IV below. Different elements that may be part of a handy course include, but are not limited to, fences ridden at a hand gallop, a roll back and a trot fence. The class may not be appropriate for a green horse or novice rider.

The USHJA Zone 9 Committee will reimburse up to \$500 in prize money for each Handy Hunter Challenge, which will be held at a limited number of competitions within the Zone. USHJA will reimburse competition managers only upon receiving complete results and prize money payouts. Participation in these classes accrues double points for the USHJA Zone Horse of the Year standings.

I. CLASS SPECIFICATIONS – 3’ CHILDREN’S/ADULT AMATEUR HANDY HUNTER CHALLENGE

1. All Challenges will be held as a standalone one round Handy Hunter class.
2. A minimum of ten (10) fences shall be set at 3’ in height with spreads not to exceed the fence height.
3. **A trot circle must be included at the end of the course for soundness.**
4. Formal attire is requested but not required.
5. The class must be run in accordance with HU112.6 and include at least one (1) in and out, a bending line and a trot fence. The use of natural obstacles is encouraged, but not mandatory.
6. A minimum of 6 entries is required for the class to run and of those, a minimum of 3 rounds must be scored for double points towards USHJA Zone Horse of the Year standings.

II. ELIGIBILITY

1. Open to junior and amateur riders (certification required) whose home Zone of record is Zone 9, and who are Active/Competing members of USHJA and USEF before the start of the Handy Hunter Challenge.
2. Horses must be registered with USHJA and USEF to participate.

III. RESTRICTIONS

1. Riders may compete more than one horse per Handy Hunter Challenge as long as more than one (1) rider is entered in the Challenge class.
2. Adult Amateur riders entered in the Handy Hunter Challenge may not cross enter into any other class held at the same competition where the height of fences exceeds 3’9”
3. Children's riders entered in the Handy Hunter Challenge may not cross enter any class where fences exceed 3’9”
4. Professionals are not eligible to compete in the Handy Hunter Challenge.
5. Horses ridden in the Handy Hunter Challenge may compete with a different rider in other classes that they are eligible for at the same competition (per the USHJA Zone 9 Specifications).

IV. JUDGING

1. The Handy Hunter Challenge may be officiated by one (1) or two (2) USEF “R” Hunter licensed judge(s). The judge(s) must be in good standing with the USEF and USHJA.
2. The Handy Hunter Challenges shall be judged and numerically scored on quality, movement, jumping style, handiness, manners, and way of going. Pace and brilliance are to be rewarded, but judges should remember these horses should also exhibit suitability for the level of their rider.
3. Each horse-and-rider combination will receive a numerical base score. In addition, a Handy Bonus Score consisting of zero (0) to ten (10) points for the handiness of the round. The two scores and the total score must be announced separately.
4. The judging panel may not award the same base score to any two competitors in the class unless a competitor’s score is below the cut-off score.
5. All ties will be broken by the base score of the judging panel, before adding handy bonus points.
6. **See GR 1304 for Judging restrictions**
7. **In all sport or education related matters, where there are either discrepancies or deficiencies in the specifications, procedures or any unforeseen circumstances related to a USHJA property, the President and Executive Director will consult with the Task Force/Committee Chair (if applicable), the Officers of the USHJA and USHJA legal counsel (if applicable) before making any final decisions.**

V. ENTRY FEES/ PRIZE MONEY/AWARDS

1. The prize money minimum shall be \$500. If the host competition wishes to add to the prize money, it may increase the prize money at their expense. USHJA is not responsible for reimbursing a host competition for additional prize money.
2. The Prize Money shall be distributed 30% for 1st, 22% for 2nd, 15% for 3rd, 10 % for 4th, 7% for 5th, 6% for 6th, 5% for 7th and 5% for 8th.
3. The USHJA Zone 9 Committee will provide ribbons for the Challenges. The requirements of the final awards ceremony and victory gallop are at the discretion of host show management.
4. Upon receipt of the complete results, including the prize money payouts, USHJA will reimburse the host competition for prize money actually paid in the Zone 9 Handy Hunter Challenge, up to a maximum of \$500.00.

VI. CONTACT INFORMATION

Please contact one of the following, if questions arise pertaining to the USHJA Zone 9 Handy Hunter Challenge that cannot be answered by the Competition Steward or Management based on the class specifications provided. USHJA Zone Liaison Email: zones@ushja.org Phone: (859) 225-6713

Any deviations from the class specifications are not permitted without the express written permission from USHJA prior to the printing of the prize list.

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The USHJA Zone 9 Handy Hunter Challenge and the related format and specifications are the sole properties of the USHJA and may only be held, conducted, or used upon the terms and conditions specified by the USHJA. USHJA reserves the right to change language in documents related to the conduct of the USHJA Zone 9 Handy Hunter Challenge as necessary for the purposes of consistency and clarity.

Additionally, USHJA reserves the right to alter specifications for this program on an annual basis. Any deviations from the rules for the Zone 9 Handy Hunter Challenge are not permitted without the prior written consent from the USHJA.



