



2026 USHJA ZONE 7 HANDY HUNTER CHALLENGE

The USHJA Zone 7 Committee has created this program to provide our membership with an opportunity to experience the excitement of Hunter Derbies and Hunter Classics. The USHJA Zone 7 Handy Hunter Challenge judging will place emphasis on a horse or pony 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.

Show management may offer either the 2'9" or 3' Handy Hunter Challenge or both sections at a competition. The USHJA Zone 7 Committee will reimburse up to \$500 in prize money for the Handy Hunter Challenges, 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. Participants in this class will accrue double points for the USHJA Zone Horse of the Year standings and USEF National Horse of the Year.

I. CLASS SPECIFICATIONS – 2'9" CHILDREN'S/ADULT AMATEUR

- A. All Challenges will be held as a one round Handy Hunter class.
- B. A minimum of ten (10) fences shall be set at 2'9" in height with spreads not to exceed the fence height.
- C. There will be three (3) high option fences set at 3'0" in height with spreads not to exceed the fence height.
- D. Formal attire is requested but not required.
- E. 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.

II. ELIGIBILITY

- A. Open to junior and amateur riders (certification required) whose home Zone of record is Zone 7, and who are Active/Competing members of USHJA and USEF before the start of the Handy Hunter Challenge.
- B. Horses must be registered with USHJA and USEF in order to participate.

III. RESTRICTIONS

- A. Riders may compete more than one horse or pony per Handy Hunter Challenge as long as more than one (1) rider is entered in the Challenge class.
- B. 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 3'1" (.95m) except for a National Hunter Derby.
- C. Professionals are not eligible to compete in the Handy Hunter Challenge.
- D. Horses ridden in the Handy Hunter Challenge may compete with a different rider in other classes that exceed 3'0" in height at the same competition.

IV. CLASS SPECIFICATIONS – 3' CHILDREN'S/ADULT AMATEUR

- A. All Challenges will be held as a one round Handy Hunter class.
- B. A minimum of ten (10) fences shall be set at 3' in height with spreads not to exceed the fence height.
- C. There will be three (3) high option fences set at 3'3" in height with spreads not to exceed the fence height.
- D. Formal attire is requested, but not required.
- E. The class must be run in accordance with HU123.6 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.

V. ELIGIBILITY

- A. Open to junior and amateur riders (certification required) whose home Zone of record is Zone 7, and who are Active members of USEF and USHJA before the start of the Handy Hunter Challenge.
- B. Horses must be registered with USHJA and USEF in order to participate.

VI. RESTRICTIONS

- A. Riders may compete more than one horse or pony per Handy Hunter Challenge as long as more than one (1) rider is entered in the Challenge class.
- B. 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 3'3" (1 m) except for a National Hunter Derby.
- C. Professionals are not eligible to compete in the Handy Hunter Challenge.
- D. Horses ridden in the Handy Hunter Challenge may compete with a different rider in other classes that exceed 3'3" in height at the same competition.

VII. JUDGING (FOR EACH SECTION)

- A. The Handy Hunter Challenge may be officiated by one (1) or two (2) USEF "R" Hunter licensed judge(s). The judge must be in good standing with the USEF and USHJA.
- B. 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.
- C. Each horse-and-rider combination will receive a numerical base score. In addition, they will receive one point for every high option jumped without a knock down; and a Handy Bonus Score consisting of zero (0) to ten (10) points for the handiness of the round. The three scores and the total score must be announced separately.
- D. 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.
- E. All ties will be broken by the base score of the judging panel, before adding height and/or handy bonus points.

VIII. ENTRY FEES/ PRIZE MONEY/AWARDS (FOR EACH SECTION)

- A. There is no entry fee to compete in the Handy Hunter Challenge.
- B. The Zone 7 Committee will provide each host competition approved by USHJA to conduct the challenges, \$200 in addition to the \$500 prize money as recompense for holding the challenges.
- C. The minimum prize money for each section 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.
- D. 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.
- E. The USHJA Zone 7 Committee will not provide ribbons or prizes for the Handy Hunter Challenges. The requirements of the final awards ceremony and victory gallop are at the discretion of host show

management.

- F. Upon receipt of the complete results, including the prize money payouts, USHJA will reimburse the host competition for the amount of prize money actually paid in each section of the Zone 7 Handy Hunter Challenge, up to a maximum of \$500.00 and the \$200.00 host allocation.
- G. If there are fewer than three entries in either section, sections may be combined. In the event sections are combined, the prize money for the single section will be \$800.00 plus the \$200 host allocation.

IX. CONTACT INFORMATION

Please contact the following, if questions arise pertaining to the USHJA Zone 7 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) 225-6700

The USHJA Zone 7 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 7 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 7 Handy Hunter Challenge are not permitted without the prior written consent from the USHJA.

