



2026 ZONE 4 HANDY HUNTER CHALLENGE SPECIFICATIONS

The USHJA Zone 4 Hunter Committee has created this program to provide Handy Hunter Challenges which test skills riders, and their horses might use during an enjoyable day of foxhunting combining the elements of flat and over-fences classes. A handy hunter is a horse or pony that is quite easy to maneuver around a course in a ring or in the hunt field.

Different elements that might be seen in a handy hunter course include, but are not limited to, fences at the gallop, rollbacks, trot fences, a gate to open and/or close from the horse's back, etc. This class may not be appropriate for a green horse/pony or a novice rider.

The USHJA Zone 4 Committee shall fund \$1,000 for each of the Children's & Adult Amateur Handy Hunter Challenges and \$500 for the Children's Hunter Pony Handy Challenges. Participation in these classes accrues double points for the USHJA Zone Horse of the Year standings and double points for USEF National Horse of the Year standings.

I. CLASS SPECIFICATIONS

- A. All challenges will be held as a one round Handy Hunter class. Management may offer the Handy Hunter Challenge as an overlay to one of the classes in the respective section or as a standalone class.
- B. If held as a stand-alone class, the course must have A minimum of ten (10) fences set at appropriate heights and spreads.
- C. Fence Heights
 - 1. Children's & Adult to be set at 3'
 - 2. Small/Medium Children's Hunter Ponies to be set at 2'
 - 3. Large Children's Hunter Pony to be set at 2'6".
- D. In the 3' Children's & Adult Handy Hunter Challenge, management may choose to offer up to three (3) high option fences set three inches (3") higher with spreads not to exceed the fence height. If high options are offered, management must disclose this to exhibitors in the prize list. The course should be designed as an introduction to Handy courses, and it is encouraged that the course includes at least one (1) in-and-out, a bending line, rollback, and a trot fence.
- E. In the Children's Pony Handy Hunter Challenge, there will be no high options. The course should be designed as an introduction to Handy courses, and it is encouraged that the course includes a bending line, a roll back turn, and a trot fence.

II. ELIGIBILITY

- A. The rider and the owner (or recorded lessee) of the horse/pony must have USHJA Zone 4 as their home zone of record to participate and are eligible to compete under Zone 4 Specifications.
- B. The rider and owner must be Active/Competing members, in good standing, of both USHJA and USEF before the start of the challenges.
- C. Horses/Children's Hunter Ponies must be registered with USHJA and USEF to participate.

III. RESTRICTIONS

- A. Riders may only compete on one horse/pony per Handy Hunter Challenge but may ride in multiple Handy Hunter Challenges at the same competition.
 - 1. Riders may compete on one Children's Hunter Pony in each different height section offered.
- B. Horses and Children's Hunter Pony may only compete in one Handy Hunter Challenges per competition.
- C. Professionals are not eligible to compete in the Handy Hunter Challenges.

IV. JUDGING

- A. The Handy Hunter Challenges may be officiated by one (1) or two (2) USEF "R" Hunter licensed judge(s). The judge must be in good standing with USEF and USHJA.
- B. The Challenges at the Championships must be officiated by one (1) or two (2) USEF "R" licensed hunter judges. The two judges will be seated together and give one score.
- C. All judges must be Federation licensed and in good standing with the Federation and USHJA.
- D. 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.
- E. In addition to the base score, a Handy Bonus Score consisting of zero (0) to ten (10) bonus points to each horse-and-rider combination for handiness of round must be given. If high option fences are included in the course, an Option Bonus Score consisting of one additional point for every higher height option fence jumped will also be added. The two or three scores and the sum total must be announced separately.
- F. The judge or 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.
- G. All ties will be broken by the base score of the judge or judging panel before adding height and/or handy bonus points.

V. ENTRY FEE/PRIZE MONEY/AWARDS

- A. There is no entry or nomination fee to compete in the Handy Hunter Challenge.
- B. The prize money will be funded by the USHJA Zone 4 Committee. Upon receipt of the complete results, including the prize money payouts, USHJA will reimburse the host competition for the prize money paid in the Zone 4 Handy Hunter Challenges, (up to a maximum of \$500 per Children's Pony Hunter and \$1,000.00 per Children's & Adult Amateur Handy Hunter Challenge).
- C. The \$500 Children's Pony Hunter prize money will be distributed as follows: \$160, \$110, \$75, \$60, \$50, \$45.
- D. The \$1,000 Children's & Adult Amateur prize money will be distributed as follows: \$320, \$220, \$150, \$120, \$100, \$90.
- E. The USHJA Zone 4 Committee will provide a cooler for first place and ribbons for 1st-12th place funded from the Zone 4 Committee budget. The top three (3) riders (or their designated representative if they are not available) must be present for awards presentations to receive prize money and awards.

VI. POINTS

For each type of challenge USHJA Horse of the Year points will count toward the sections listed below. No "bonus" Championship points will be awarded.

\$500 ZONE 4 CHILDREN'S HUNTER PONY HANDY HUNTER CHALLENGE:

2705 – Children's Hunter - Pony Small & Medium

2706 – Children's Hunter-Pony Large

*\$500 Zone 4 Children's Pony Handy Hunter Challenge consists of Children's Hunter Pony S&M and Large

combined.

\$1,000 ZONE 4 CHILDREN'S & ADULT AMATEUR HANDY HUNTER CHALLENGE:

2703 – Children's Hunter-Horse 14 & Under

2704 – Children's Hunter-Horse 15-17

2801 - Adult Amateur Hunter 18-35 Years

2818 - Adult Amateur Hunter 36-54

2819 - Adult Amateur Hunter 55+ Years

*\$1,000 Zone 4 Children's & Adult Amateur Handy Hunter Challenge consists of all age groups from Children's Hunter Horse and Adult Amateur Hunter combined.

*Separate sections listed above by code number may not be held as individual handy hunter challenges, sections and section code numbers are only listed for the purposes of points.

VII. CONTACT INFORMATION

Please contact one of the following USHJA Zone 4 representatives, if questions arise pertaining to the USHJA Zone 4 Handy Hunter Challenges that cannot be answered by the Competition Steward or Management based on the class specifications provided.

USHJA Zones Liaison

zones@ushja.org (859) 225-6700

The USHJA Zone 4 Handy Hunter Challenges 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 4 Handy Hunter Challenges 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 4 Handy Hunter Challenges are not permitted without the prior written consent from the USHJA.

