

NCHA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 5-6, 2026
NCHA OFFICE – FORT WORTH, TX

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Cutting Horse Association was held Monday & Tuesday January 5-6, 2026, beginning at 8:00AM. All times are based on the central time zone.

All Executive Committee members were present: President Barnwell Ramsey, President-Elect Kathleen Moore, Vice President David Costello, Les Jack, Phil Benadum, Kirby Smith, Byron Green, Ora Diehl, Tommy Williams, Steve Smith, and Casey Green. NCHA Executive Director Jay Winborn, NCHA Treasurer Denise Williams, NCHA Director of Shows Shianne Megel, NCHA Manager of Committee Relations Cathy Marie Aleff and Dakota Pruitt from the NCHA Office were also in attendance at this meeting. NCHA Legal Counsel Jim Morris attended a portion of the meeting.

MONDAY – JANUARY 5, 2026

The Executive Committee meeting was called to order at 8:04AM and roll call was taken.

President Barnwell Ramsey welcomed the members of the Executive Committee and led the attendees in prayer welcoming the opportunity to serve and lead with wisdom, patience, and grace as the committee works together to shape a better future for this great association. Emphasis was made on the guidance of unity, collaboration, and respect on discussions as the Executive Committee makes decisions during these meetings.

President Barnwell Ramsey lead the Executive Committee in reciting the NCHA mission statement.

Mission Statement

The National Cutting Horse Association promotes and celebrates the cutting horse, whose origin on Western ranches allows us to support ranching and its Western heritage. By establishing rules for the conduct of cutting horse shows, NCHA strives to give cutters a level playing field and a progressive class structure which accommodates everyone from the beginner to the advanced competitor. NCHA draws on the diverse talents and background of its members and encourages their participation in helping it achieve these goals.

PRESIDENT REPORT – BARNWELL RAMSEY

President Barnwell Ramsey addressed the members of the Executive Committee with some quick updates for his report.

Ramsey started by giving a round of applause to Jay Winborn, Shianne Megel, and the entire show staff on the success of Futurity. He then went on to talk about all the inconveniences that happened during this year's Futurity and how smoothly those items were addressed.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT – JAY WINBORN

Executive Director Jay Winborn addressed the Executive Committee with updates from the office.

Futurity

Jay expressed his pleasure with how Futurity turned out. The finals provided a thrilling experience, and the horse sales were spectacular.

World Finals

Jay also noted that for next year, the marketing team is in the process of securing sponsorship for the 2026 World Finals.

Super Stakes

Everyone is looking forward to being back in the Coliseum. This year's Super Stakes will also host the Celebrity Cutting on the last Saturday of the show. The Celebrity Cutting line up will definitely spark interest this year as there are some well-known guests participating with some highly tiered celebrities attending.

VP SELECTION COMMITTEE – KATHLEEN MOORE

President-Elect Kathleen Moore provided an update on the VP selection committee process. Nominee submissions are still being accepted until January 15th, and the committee is looking to have their first call which is scheduled for January 20th.

DIRECTOR ELECTIONS – KATHLEEN MOORE

President-Elect Kathleen Moore provided an update on the upcoming Director elections. She stated that consent forms are due in the office by January 15th. She emphasized how important it is for anyone wanting and willing to be a director to submit their application before the deadline.

FINANCIAL REPORT – DENISE WILLIAMS

NCHA Treasurer Denise Williams shared some preliminary financials with the Executive Committee.

Denise noted that the Finance and Audit Committee has not met since Futurity due to the holidays, but they have their first call scheduled for Thursday of this week.

Denise stated that October and November financials were in-line with the budget and there were no favorable or unfavorable variances. Once the Finance and Audit Committee meet on Thursday, she expects the October and November financials to be ready and sent to the EC by Friday.

Futurity

Denise started by giving big thanks to Shianne, her team, and Kelley who were outstanding during Futurity. Noted that there were many obstacles that were presented, but nothing detrimental. She also shared that the payouts for this year's Futurity were a bit higher than expected due to an increase in penalty fees collected.

Western Bloodstock Sale

The Western Bloodstock sales were record-breaking with over \$44M in gross sales. That results in a commission of \$1.7M to the association.

SHOW DEPARTMENT UPDATES – SHIANNE MEGEL

Director of Shows Shianne Megel provided the Executive Committee with updates on various show department related items.

European Championship Dates

Shianne presented the Executive Committee with a proposed rule change regarding championship show approvals and the point year.

The NCHA Point year will end on Sunday prior to the start of the NCHA Futurity. **Any Championship Show held after this date requires Executive Committee Approval.** The new point year will continue to begin on December 28. This rule change allows the European Championship to take place at their originally scheduled time.

A **MOTION** was made by Casey Green and **SECONDED** by Kirby Smith to accept the proposed rule change allowing Championship Shows to be held after the NCHA point year has ended pending approval from the Executive Committee. **MOTION PASSED.**

Futurity

Shianne provided an update on medication testing done during the recent Futurity. She stated that all the medication testing came back clean and that there were no negative results.

World Finals

Discussions circulated with the EC regarding many world finalists citing complaints about the production of the World Finals and not feeling prestigious enough. The Executive Committee investigated the effects of keeping the World Finals at the Futurity vs moving it out of the Futurity **but no decisions are being made at this time.**

2026 Eastern Nationals

Shianne shared that there are 2,220 qualified riders and 2,177 qualified horses for the Eastern. Each qualified entry, if they choose to enter, will be able to also ride in any other classes they qualified in last year. There was also some budget concerns raised as there may be a need to rent additional equipment to prepare the facility for the show.

USPS Postmark Changes

The official USPS is changing the process of how they postmark mail. Shianne shared that the office is looking into ways to work around these changes regarding payment deadlines.

2026 Super Stakes

Shianne provided an update on some logistics for the upcoming Super Stakes. She shared with the Executive Committee that Will Rogers has scheduled another event during the Super Stakes that will eliminate some areas of the facility we have previously used. As a result, there will be some changes and tweaks to how the show will be produced. The ICC will take place in the Watt Arena again while John Justin Arena will be utilized as practice pens.

MEMBERSHIP DEPARTMENT UPDATES – JULIE DAVIS

Director of Membership Julie Davis provided an update on the end of year numbers regarding total membership. Overall membership count was down 900 compared to the previous year. Julie stated that the leading cause of this decline is the removal of the free memberships as there were 2,200 total free memberships given in 2024. Overall, the general membership seems to be thriving and seems happy with how things are progressing for the association. Julie stated that the grace period has been eliminated and that all memberships for 2026 are due now instead of March 1st.

STANDING COMMITTEE INTERESTS – KATHLEEN MOORE

President-Elect Kathleen Moore informed the Executive Committee that an email blast will go out from the office soliciting members with any interest in serving on a standing committee to respond to the convention@nchacutting.com email instructed with their preference and why they are interested in serving. A proposed list of standing committee appointments for 2026-2027 will be provided at the March EC Meeting for final approval. Please encourage any members in your region to respond as instructed if they have any interest.

LEGAL UPDATES – JIM MORRIS

NCHA Legal Counsel Jim Morris joined the meeting to provide legal guidance for the association.

Jim Morris brought the Executive Committee some proposed changes, with the help of Skip Jones and the Governance Committee, to the Standing Committee rules for more clarity. This proposed revision is to provide clarity on when a committee member's term initiates and ends. Jim also

proposed an additional section being added to the Standing Committee rules to provide clarity on the order and duties in which a non-voting member serves their term.

The Executive Committee brought up a continuity error in the proposed standing committee verbiage that stated each committee shall consist of no less than six (6) members, which conflicts with a later section of the rules that states each committee shall consist of a regional representative from each region of which there are eight regions.

A **MOTION** was made by Byron Green and **SECONDED** by Ora Diehl to change Standing Committee rule paragraph 19 to state "Each Standing Committee shall consist of not less than eight (8) nor more than fifteen (15) members" to clear the continuity error. **MOTION PASSED.**

A **MOTION** was made by Casey Green and **SECONDED** by Phil Benadum to accept the proposed changes to Standing Committee rule paragraph 20 and the additional change to paragraph 24 to be voted on and adopted at the upcoming Convention. **MOTION PASSED.**

REGIONAL REPORTS

President Barnwell Ramsey welcomed each of the members to provide an update on their region.

Region 1 – Les Jack provided an update for Region 1. He shared that his region's first show of the year is in 3 weeks, in Montana. Les stated that he is looking forward to that show to get an idea of how the recent class restructure will affect entries. He also brought up an issue regarding getting quality judges but noted that it's more of a governmental issue with compensation in trying to bring up American judges to Canada.

Region 2 – Phil Benadum updated the members about Region 2. Phil stated that Redwood Empire had a show this past weekend and that overall numbers were down 20%. Phil also brought up an issue that persists regarding cattle. He stated with the shortage of cattle coming from Mexico, it's still hard to find a decent quality and supply of cattle.

The Executive Committee issued a directive to the Approved LAE Show Producers and Weekend Show Committees to negotiate and propose a clause that would assist in show calendar conflicts. The EC would like to receive a report back by the March meeting.

Region 3 – Kirby Smith reported his region had their first show of the year in Carthage, MO. They had 135 entries on Friday followed by 136 entries on Saturday. They also had 22 entries in the \$4K Limit Rider. Kirby also brought up an issue that most regions have but he feels it the most in his and that's growing membership numbers.

The Executive Committee made plans to further this conversation about growing membership numbers later in the meeting with the Growth and Development Committee.

Region 4 – Byron Green provided an update for Region 4. Byron started out by saying how great the reception was for the European Meet & Greet that was hosted during Futurity. He shared that it helped the Europeans know that the association appreciates their involvement. Byron also brought up his region's Circuit Finals and said that overall, the show went well. All the local affiliates helped produce the circuit finals and each pitched in \$1K in added money. Overall participation was down but that was mostly due to the Southern Show going on at the same time.

Region 5 – Ora Diehl updated that Region 5 had their first show of the year. Main issue was it was competing with many other shows and as a result overall stall usage was down. Ora did state that the \$4K Limit Rider was very well received though.

Region 6 – Tommy Williams reported that Region 6 has not had many shows so far, but it does have the Southern going on currently. Tommy reported that they had a record number of Open riders for the first day of the show but that the numbers went down the following days.

Region 7 – Steve Smith shared that the Abilene show has made him hopeful of what is to come for the year. He shared that there were 138 3-year-olds at the show and that most of them stayed for the whole duration.

Region 8 – Casey Green reported that Region 8 is strong with cuttings. Region 8 started the year off with Whitesboro and shared that it was a good show.

INTERNATIONAL CIRCUIT PROGRAM UPDATES – ALLISON WALKER

International Circuit & Stallion/Foal Program Manager Allison Walker joined the Executive Committee meeting via zoom to provide an update on the International Circuit Program.

Allison shared that the number of invitations for this year's ICC closely resembles that of last year. She shared that last year, there were 1,054 invitations sent out and this year there will be 1,057. She also shared that the entry deadline for the ICC is slated for March 9th. Allison also discussed a possible border change that is being considered for the Red River and Alamo Circuit. She stated that she is gathering information and is going to meet during the Region 7 meeting during the Convention to discuss a possible change for the 2027-point year.

AMATEUR RECOMMENDATION – BROOKE MANION

Chairman of the Amateur Committee Brooke Manion joined the meeting via zoom to discuss the Amateur Committee recommendation regarding the Limited Amateur \$25,000 cap.

Brooke discussed that the Amateur Committee is recommending the Executive Committee change the Limited Amateur \$25,000 cap from Lifetime earnings to Limited Age Earnings only. This change would allow Amateurs that show at the weekend level and have had success be able to still show in the Limited Amateur LAE level as there is some concern that riding at the weekend level is different than riding in the Limited Age level.

After a roundtable discussion amongst the Executive Committee, a **MOTION** was made by Casey Green and **SECONDED** by Les Jack to accept the recommendation to change the Limited Amateur \$25,000 cap from Lifetime earnings to Limited Age earnings effective for the 2027-point year.
MOTION PASSED.

The Executive Committee issued an informational memo to the Limited Age Events Committee regarding this previously passed motion for all NCHA produced and approved shows.

JUDGES DEPARTMENT UPDATES – ANDY ADAMS

Director of Judges Andy Adams provided an update on the judge's department to the Executive Committee.

Andy provided an update on the on-going judge rating realignment program. He also stated that he is planning to schedule an all-day judge's seminar sometime later in the year with plans of doing one in the West, one in the East, and one local in Fort Worth.

Andy also shared that the Judges Department is working to transition to an online continuing education platform due to the logistics and availability of judges with the increased volume of aged events.

HALL OF FAME SELECTION COMMITTEE – BARNWELL RAMSEY

President Barnwell Ramsey provided an update on the Hall of Fame Selection Committee.

Barney shared that Kristen York, who was on this committee, has completed her five (5) years of service and termed out. His recommendation was to fill this vacancy with someone from the Executive Committee. After a roundtable discussion it was decided that Byron Green would fill this open position and serve on the selection committee for the next five (5) years.

President-Elect Kathleen Moore stated that she will soon schedule a call to discuss all the recent nominations received by the deadline of January 1st for inductee consideration for the Members HOF Class of 2026.

HALL OF FAME REQUIREMENTS – BARNWELL RAMSEY

President Barnwell Ramsey brought back to the Executive Committee the thoughts of changing the requirements for the Open Riders Hall of Fame and Horse Hall of Fame.

~~A **MOTION** was made by Casey Green and **SECONDED** by David Castello to change the requirements for Horse Hall of Fame to include Open money earned and NO incentives. **MOTION RESCINDED** to the following.~~

A **MOTION** was made by Casey Green and **SECONDED** by David Costello to re-engage the HOF Task Force Committee with a mid-February deadline to report back to the Executive Committee in time for the March EC Meeting, with a proposal on Horse and Open Riders HOF eligibility requirement change stating: any incentive money earned after December 27, 2026, will not count towards Horse HOF eligibility with LAE classes and their corresponding subclasses that are not Top Tier Open (when offered with multiple entry levels, i.e. Intermediate, Limited, Rollback) will not count towards Open Riders HOF eligibility starting with the 2027 point year. **MOTION PASSED.**

The meeting adjourned at 4:43PM and the EC Meeting will reconvene Tuesday, January 6, 2026, at 8:00AM central time.

TUESDAY – JANUARY 6, 2026

The Executive Committee meeting was called to order at 8:00AM and roll call was taken.

All Executive Committee members were present: President Barnwell Ramsey, President-Elect Kathleen Moore, Vice President David Costello, Les Jack, Phil Benadum, Kirby Smith, Byron Green, Ora Diehl, Tommy Williams, Steve Smith, and Casey Green. NCHA Executive Director Jay Winborn, NCHA Treasurer Denise Williams, NCHA Director of Shows Shianne Megel, NCHA Manager of Committee Relations Cathy Marie Aleff and Dakota Pruitt from the NCHA Office were also in attendance at this meeting.

GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT DIRECTIVE – SHELBY AGNEW

Growth & Development Chairman Shelby Agnew joined the meeting virtually to provide an update on the directive given to the Growth & Development Committee on forming a “welcoming committee”.

Shelby shared that there were 439 new members in 2025 and 207 of those new members received calls from their respective director acting on the “welcoming committee”. The goal is to have all new members receive calls from the “welcoming committee” as a continued effort to retain our membership numbers and provide a positive experience for new members as they join our cutting horse family.

The Executive Committee issued a directive to the Growth and Development Committee to develop a standard guideline for an affiliate to produce a flag cutting concept for implementation that would draw the interest of new members in the regions. The EC would like to receive a report back by the March meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Non-Pro Committee Recommendation

Non-Pro Committee Chairman David Booth joined the meeting virtually to discuss a recommendation brought forth by the Non-Pro Committee. The recommendation is to remove the \$250K cap for Non-Pro's showing in the Open Division. The Non-Pro Committee is in full support of this change and is asking for the Executive Committee to review and approve this change for the 2026-point year.

A **MOTION** was made by Casey Green and **SECONDED** by Phil Benadum to accept the Non-Pro Committee recommendation to remove the \$250,000 cap for Non-Pro's showing in the Open division effective immediately for the 2026-point year. **MOTION PASSED.**

NEW BUSINESS

Future EC Meeting

The next in-person EC Meeting will be held on March 10-11, 2026.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the committee, a **MOTION** was made by Ora Diehl and **SECONDED** by David Costello to adjourn the meeting at 9:31AM. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**