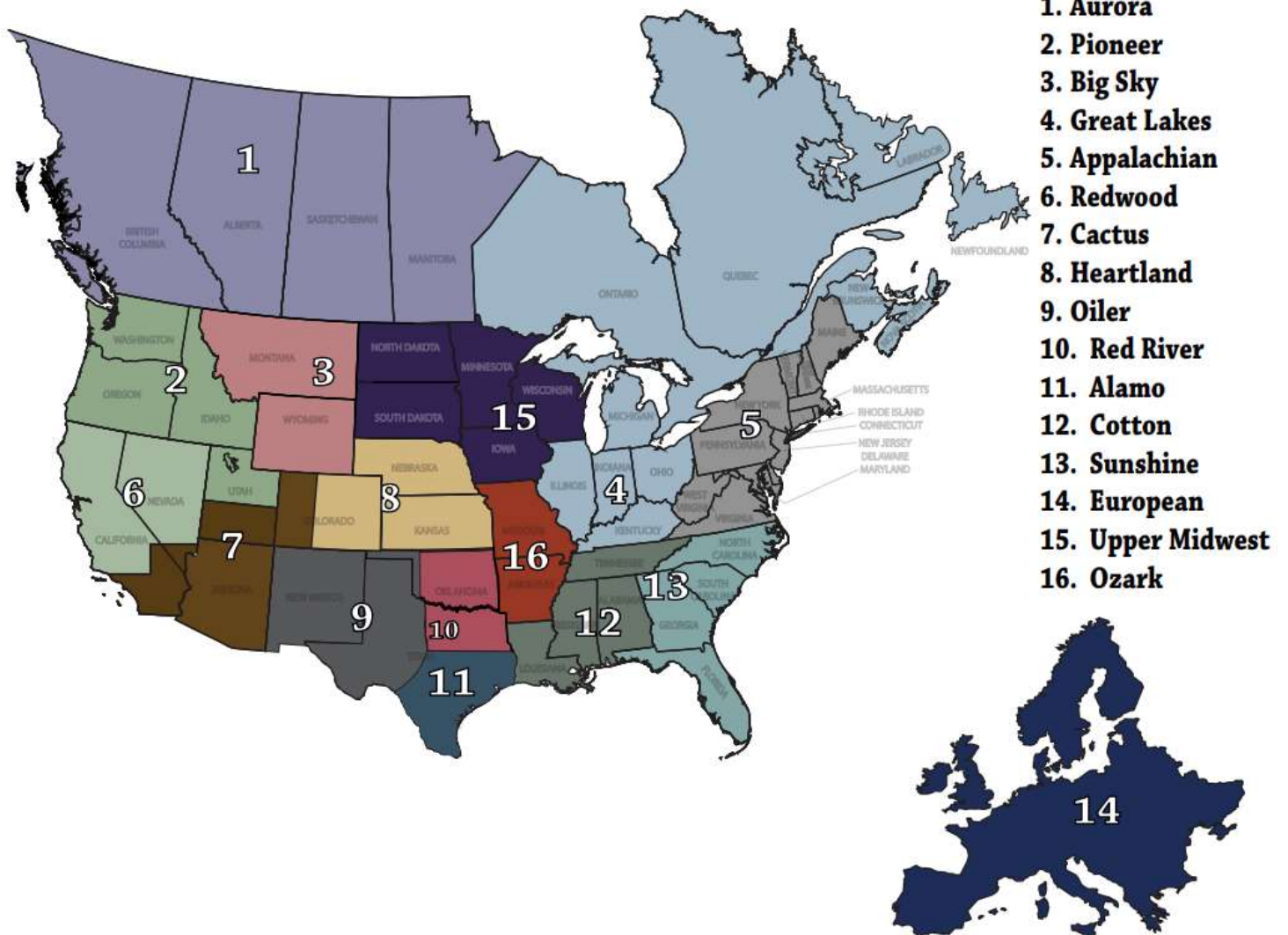




LOCAL CIRCUIT CHAMPIONSHIP POLICIES & PROCEDURES 2026 POINT YEAR

The local circuit championship is a finale show that celebrates the weekend cutter. Towards the end of the NCHA point year, each of NCHA's sixteen (16) circuits host a spectacular circuit championship show where cutters compete can earn double points, top-notch prizes and added money. Attending your local circuit championship show is an important component when qualifying for the International Circuit Championship show and calculating circuit year-end standings.





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1. Event Overview

- a. Local circuit championship shows must be held as late in the point year as possible and prior to the conclusion of the point year, November 15, 2026.
- b. The point year WILL continue for year-end standings until November 15, 2026. Horses and/or riders may continue to earn points following the conclusion of their respective local circuit championship, depending on the event date(s).
- c. Local circuit championships will be two (2) go rounds consisting of all 13 NCHA-approved classes with a non-working finals.
 - i. If a host wishes to hold a working finals instead of a non-working finals, the advancement format and details must be approved by the NCHA.

2. Host Selection Process

- a. The NCHA directors living inside each circuit may be responsible for selecting the host of their respective local circuit championships. NCHA will have the final approval of the selected host.
- b. Cancellation / Postponement - If the selected host must postpone or cancel their NCHA circuit championship event due to an extreme, unforeseen circumstance, the host must immediately notify the NCHA office.
 - i. In the event of cancellation, NCHA will, time permitting, give all in-circuit affiliates and/or show producers the opportunity to host the event prior to the end of the point year. Selection of a new host will be done in the same method as the original selection. Show department rules must be followed.
 1. Under no circumstances will the event be approved to conclude after November 15, 2026.
 - ii. In all instances, the NCHA office will have final approval of any change of event host and dates.



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3. Circuit Championship Qualification

a. Non-Youth classes: Qualifying cut-off dates are determined for each circuit based on the dates of the respective circuit championship show, no less than three weeks prior to the start of each circuit championship show. All points earned by riders / horses after the qualifying cut-off date to the end of the point year will count toward circuit year end standings and International Circuit Championship qualification – both will NOT change the list of local circuit championships qualified horses / riders.

1. The top 30 (plus ties) in non-youth classes are “local circuit championship qualified.”

b. Youth classes: local circuit championship is open to all youth members in their designated circuit regardless of current standings.

c. All classes: Horses and/or riders competing at the local circuit championship must participate in all go rounds to advance to the finals.

4. Host Rules

a. Show Structure

- i. All 13 NCHA-approved classes will receive single points in both go rounds based on the number of circuit championship qualified entries shown.
- ii. The full slate of the 13 NCHA-approved classes will receive double points in the non-working finals. The non-working finals will be the composite scores from the first and second gos. Points and placings will be determined by the number of qualified entries that have shown in both go rounds, excluding youth classes. A maximum of ten riders and/or horses will be brought forward into the non-working finals.
- iii. Both go round one and go round two must have a minimum of three qualified entries to make the class.
- iv. A local circuit championship show may NOT be held in conjunction with a Challenger show.



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- v. The selected host may offer one limited age event during the local circuit championship weekend. However, LAE classes must be held at the end of the day. Limited age show(s) may be held the day before the start of the local circuit championship show.
 - vi. If local circuit championship shows are held in conjunction with NCHA-approved weekend championship shows (a show within a show), entry into the NCHA-approved weekend show is not required. Qualifiers may enter their local circuit championship class/classes only.
- b. Circuit Points in Circuit Championship-designated show(s)**
- i. Non-Youth Classes
 1. Horses and/or riders competing in their automatically assigned or designated circuit will receive points outlined above.
 2. Out-of-circuit horses and/or riders will receive zero circuit points and will not be eligible for local circuit championship awards or payouts.
 3. See International Circuit Program rules for circuit point scale.
 - ii. Youth Classes
 1. No points will be awarded in the local circuit championships go round or finals.
 2. Youth compete for prizes and scholarships. Placings in the local circuit championships finals will not count towards NYCHA World Finals Standings.
 3. Youth riders will earn NYCHA points in NCHA-approved Weekend Championship shows if held in conjunction with the local circuit championships.
- c. Media / Marketing**
- i. Banners and/or artwork provided by NCHA must be displayed in the competition arena(s) and prominent areas when necessary.
 - ii. Social Media – Hosts and attendees are encouraged to tag NCHA as much as possible on social media platforms before, during and after the event.



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iii. All digital photos of each local circuit championship show must be submitted to the NCHA communications department following the event. Additional marketing materials may be needed by NCHA.

d. Awards / Added Money

i. Added Money - NCHA will provide \$8,000 to the selected host to be used as added money in the non-working finals.

1. Only local circuit championship qualified horses and/or riders are eligible for the NCHA added-money subsidy.
2. Added-Money Classes: Money can only be used in the local circuit championship finals. Money cannot be awarded in the local circuit championship go rounds.
3. Non-Added-Money Classes: No money may be added to the local circuit championship go rounds or finals.
4. Added money in the finals must be a minimum of \$500 and may not exceed \$1,000 for any one class.
5. Monies won in the non-working finals will count towards rider eligibility but will not count towards horse eligibility.
6. Monies won in the non-working finals will count towards rider lifetime earnings and horse lifetime earnings.

ii. Awards – NCHA will provide awards for the top three placings of the finals for each of the 13 NCHA-approved classes as follows:

1 st Place	Gist Championship Buckle
1 st Place	Embroidered Vest
2 nd Place	Gist Reserve Championship Buckle
2 nd Place	Embroidered Vest
3 rd Place	TBD



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- iii. Only local circuit championship qualified horses and/or riders are eligible for NCHA-provided awards.

e. Award Calculation

- i. All awards will be given based on composite score – not points. Out-of-circuit riders / horses are not eligible for awards.
 - 1. Exhibitors/Horses must walk to the herd and receive a minimum score of 60 in their respective class in both go rounds to receive awards. Zero scores do not count.
 - 2. In rider classes, exhibitors do not need to show the same horse in both go rounds to be eligible for awards. In horse classes, horses need not be exhibited by the same rider in both go rounds to be eligible for awards.
 - 3. For novice non-pro horse classes: \$25,000 Novice Non-Pro and \$5,000 Novice Non-Pro both horse and rider must have the same circuit designation.
- ii. Ties – if there are ties for the NCHA-sponsored awards, they must be broken during the event using pre-established methodology. A tie-breaking methodology must be submitted to the NCHA office, published in show information and communicated to all participants prior to the show. Event hosts must select from the following options:
 - 1. NCHA developed methodology
 - i. Total money won in the class for the event’s designated show(s).
 - ii. For events with two shows, the score from the first day.
 - iii. For events with two shows and more than one judge
 - i. A designated tie breaker judge’s combined score.
 - ii. Designated tie break judge’s score from the first day.
 - iv. If still tied, a coin toss between the tied riders. If there are 3 or more riders tied for the award, riders will flip in pairs based on



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alpha last name pairing with the flip winner advancing until there is a winner.

- i. *If the tie is for champion, the tie breaker winner receives the champion buckle, the next rider in the tie based on tie breaker rules receives the reserve champion buckle. If there are more than two riders tied for champion, additional tied riders will break a tie for the reserve champion buckle.
- ii. *If the tie is for reserve champion, the tie breaker winner receives the reserve champion buckle and the remaining rider(s) in the tie receive the third place award(s).