



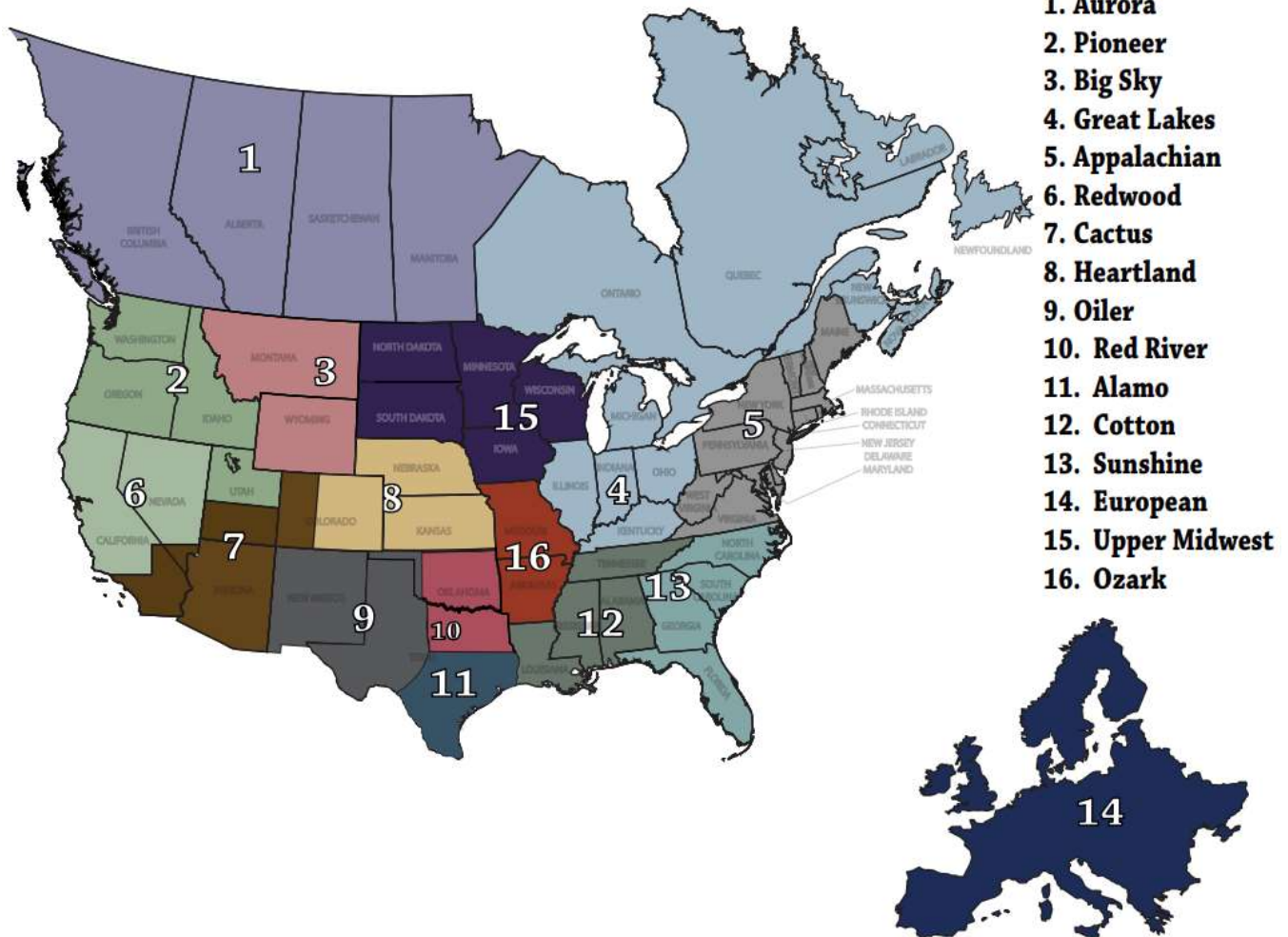
# INTERNATIONAL CIRCUIT PROGRAM RULES

## 2026 POINT YEAR

The International Circuit Program was conceived and implemented with the goal of promoting and growing the sport of cutting at a local level. It allows worldwide weekend cutters the opportunity to earn national recognition through local competition. The program divides the NCHA membership population into sixteen (16) geographic groups called "circuits."

Cutters earn points within one (1) circuit by competing in NCHA-approved weekend competitions. Both types of approved weekend shows, championship and challenger, award circuit points. Earned points are tracked by the NCHA office and used to determine local circuit championships qualifiers, international circuit championships qualifiers and circuit award recipients.

The NCHA recognizes the uniqueness of each circuit and relies on its regional directors, affiliates and show producers to create events that best suit the needs of the NCHA members in their respective circuits.





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### 1. Circuit Assignment / Circuit Designation

- a. Each member is automatically assigned to the circuit that corresponds to the address on file at the NCHA office.
  - i. Non-Pro/Amateur Riders – Using the membership number, a member is automatically assigned to the circuit that corresponds to the rider’s address on file at the NCHA office.
  - ii. Open Riders – Are eligible to compete in any circuit show.

Horses – Using the horse’s registration number, each horse is automatically assigned to the circuit that corresponds to the owner’s address on file at the NCHA office.
- b. Circuit points are accumulated for the purpose of circuit standings and possible qualification for circuit championships only in the circuit of that non-pro/amateur rider or horse, depending on the class. Points may only be earned in one circuit at a time in accordance with the class declarations below.
  - i. For rider classes: Non-Pro, Unlimited Amateur, \$75,000 Amateur, \$50,000 Non-Pro, \$25,000 Amateur, \$4,000 Limit Rider and Youth classes the designation will follow the rider only – NOT horse / rider combination.
  - ii. For open horse classes: Open, \$25,000 Novice Horse and \$5,000 Novice Horse the designation will follow the horse only – NOT horse / rider combination.
  - iii. For novice non-pro horse classes: \$25,000 Novice Horse Non-Pro and \$5,000 Novice Horse Non-Pro both horse and rider must have the same circuit designation.
- c. Designating a Circuit
  - i. Riders and/or horse owners may designate a different circuit by submitting written notification to the NCHA office.
  - ii. Horse owners may designate different circuits for each of their horses for competition in horse-based classes.
  - iii. Previously Earned Points: If a rider and/or horse owner submits a written notice changing a designated circuit at any given time during the point year:
    1. Point totals are set to zero upon the change of designation to a different circuit.
    2. Any points accumulated in the previous circuit(s) are not transferable and will be lost.



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3. Any shows completed prior to the designation change in the different circuit will not be retroactively awarded.

#### iv. Horse Transfer / Sale

1. When a horse changes ownership during the point year, the designated circuit for the horse will automatically be changed to the home circuit of the new owner. Circuit assignment shall be based on the address of the new owner on file at the NCHA office when the office is notified of the sale/transfer.
2. When a horse changes ownership during the point year and the new owner's home address is the same circuit as the horse's current circuit, the horse will not lose the earned circuit points.
3. When a horse changes ownership during the point year and the new owner's address is in a different circuit than the horse's current circuit, the horse can retain points earned in the current circuit IF the new owner notifies the NCHA office AFTER the sale AND BEFORE the horse is shown under the new owner that the new owner would like to keep the horse in its current circuit. If the NCHA office does not receive **written** notification from the new owner of their desire to keep the horse's current circuit BEFORE it is shown, the horse's circuit will automatically be changed to the home circuit of the new owner and all points earned by the horse in the previous will be lost.

d. At the beginning of each point year, all circuit designations from the prior point year are reset. Riders and horses are placed back into their "assigned" home circuit.

#### 2. Show Types

- a. NCHA-approved Championship shows point and money earnings count towards:

World Standings (money) - YES

Senior World Tour (points per sr. program) - YES

Lifetime Earnings (money) - YES

Horse and Rider Eligibility (money) - YES

Circuit Standings (points per circuit program; see below) - YES



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- b. NCHA-approved Challenger shows point and money earnings count towards:
  - World Standings (money) - NO
  - Senior World Tour (points per Sr. program) - YES
  - Lifetime Earnings (money) - YES
  - Horse and Rider Eligibility (money) - YES
  - Circuit Standings (points per circuit program; see below) – YES

### 3. Circuit Map

- a. Every three years, the NCHA office is authorized to conduct a comprehensive review of the circuit map boundaries and participation within the individual circuits. This review encompasses all aspects related to the configuration and effectiveness of the existing circuit boundaries. Any proposed revisions to the circuit boundaries or inquiries into changing them will be considered and reviewed as part of the three-year redistricting cycle. This cycle is the designated period during which alterations to the circuit map may be proposed, discussed, and ultimately decided upon. The most recent update to the circuit map was implemented for the 2024-point year.

### 4. Circuit Point Year

#### a. Circuit Year Start

- i. Non-Youth Classes: The circuit program point year aligns with the NCHA point year. The point year will begin on December 28, 2025. All Circuit designations are reset at the start of the new point year.
- ii. Youth Classes: The youth circuit point year will begin June 1, 2025. All Circuit designations are reset at the start of the new youth point year.

#### b. Circuit Year End

- i. Non-Youth classes: The circuit program point year aligns with the NCHA point year. The point year will end **November 8, 2026**.
- ii. Youth classes: The youth circuit point year will end **May 31, 2026**.

### 5. Circuit Point System

- a. Scores of zero receive no points.
- b. Youth classes: Youth classes inside the International Circuit Program follow the Youth NCHA-approved Championship show cutting point system.



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- c. NCHA-Approved Championship Show Points
  - i. Non-Youth Classes: Points shall be awarded based on the actual number of horses shown in a class with a maximum of twenty (20) points to first place (i.e., scratches are excluded. Example: Any class with more than 10 horses shown will award points to the first ten placements in the class on a declining scale of 20, 18, 16, 14, 12, 10, 8, 6, 4, 2 points (except scores of zero will earn no points). A class with 7 horses shown will award points to all 7 placements on a declining scale of 14, 12, 10, 8, 6, 4, 2 points (except scores of zero will earn no points).

HORSES IN CLASS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th
3	6	4	2								
4	8	6	4	2							
5	10	8	6	4	2						
6	12	10	8	6	4	2					
7	14	12	10	8	6	4	2				
8	16	14	12	10	8	6	4	2			
9	18	16	14	12	10	8	6	4	2		
10+	20	18	16	14	12	10	8	6	4	2	0



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d. NCHA-Approved Challenger Show Points

Non-Youth Classes: Points shall be awarded based on the actual number of horses shown in a class with a maximum of ten (10) points to first place (i.e., scratches are excluded. Example: Any class with more than 10 horses shown will award points to the first ten placements in the class on a declining scale of 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 point (except scores of zero will earn no points). A class with 7 horses shown will award points to all 7 placements on a declining scale of 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 point (except scores of zero will earn no points).

HORSES IN CLASS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th
3	3	2	1								
4	4	3	2	1							
5	5	4	3	2	1						
6	6	5	4	3	2	1					
7	7	6	5	4	3	2	1				
8	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1			
9	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1		
10+	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0

e. Ties: In the instance of a tie, each contestant in the tie will be awarded the points allocated for the highest placement within the tie.

- i. Thus, for example, in an NCHA-approved Championship show, if there is a tie for second and third in a class in which 10 horses are shown, the class winner receives 20 points, the two contestants tied for second and third each receive 18 points, the fourth-place contestant receives 14 points, and placements fifth through tenth with non-zero scores receive 12, 10, 8, 6, 4, 2 points, respectively.
- ii. NCHA-approved Challenger show example: if there is a tie for second and third in a class in which 10 horses are shown, the class winner receives 10 points, the two contestants tied for second and third each receive 9 points, the fourth-place contestant receives 7 points, and placements fifth through tenth with non-zero scores receive 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 points, respectively.



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- f. Out Of Circuit Entries: If a contestant competes out of circuit, they shall receive no points. The “in-circuit” competitors in such a class receive points matching their placement in the class according to the above point scale regardless of where any “out-of-circuit” contestant places on that scale.
- i. Thus, for example, in an NCHA-approved Championship show, an “out-of-circuit” contestant in an 11-horse class places second in the class in a Big Sky Circuit show. All other contestants placing first and third through tenth are Big Sky Circuit designated. In-circuit contestants receive 20, 16, 14, 12, 10, 8, 6, 4, 2 points, respectively.

PLACE	CONTESTANTS	POINTS
1	Big Sky Circuit Competitor	20
2	<i>Out of Circuit Competitor</i>	-
3	Big Sky Circuit Competitor	16
4	Big Sky Circuit Competitor	14
5	Big Sky Circuit Competitor	12
6	Big Sky Circuit Competitor	10
7	Big Sky Circuit Competitor	8
8	Big Sky Circuit Competitor	6
9	Big Sky Circuit Competitor	4
10	Big Sky Circuit Competitor	2
11	Big Sky Circuit Competitor	0

- i. In an NCHA-approved Challenger show, an “out-of-circuit” contestant in an 11-horse class places second in the class in a Big Sky Circuit show. All other contestants placing first and third through tenth are Big Sky Circuit designated. In-circuit contestants receive 10, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 points, respectively.

### 6. Double Points:

- a. Double points are awarded at select circuit shows. See NCHA Days and NCHA Local Circuit Championship information for details.



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### 7. Awards / Titles

- a. Four sets of awards are presented within the International Circuit Program: NCHA Days, Local Circuit Championships, Circuit Year End and International Circuit Championship.
  - i. NCHA Days awards
    - 1. see NCHA Days information.
  - ii. Local Circuit Championships awards
    - 1. see NCHA Local Circuit Championship information.
  - iii. Circuit Year End awards
    - 1. Determined by points earned throughout the duration of the circuit program point year, December 28, 2025, to November 8, 2026.
    - 2. Ties:
  - iv. International Circuit Championship awards
    - 1. see International Circuit Championship information.

Top Five in each circuit's year-end standings, plus ties, will be awarded the following:

PLACE	AWARD
1 <sup>st</sup>	Mapes Trophy
1 <sup>st</sup>	Gist Custom Buckle
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Gist Custom Buckle
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Gist Custom Buckle
4 <sup>th</sup>	Gist Custom Buckle
5 <sup>th</sup>	Gist Custom Buckle