



RULE BOOK

2026

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CONTENTS

- A. GENERAL RULES
- B. WELFARE
- C. SHOWING GUIDELINES
- D. SHOWING GUIDELINES (HORSE and PONIES)
- E. SHOWING GUIDELINES (TURNOUT and TACK)
- F. SHOWING MARKS SYSTEM
- G. SHOWING CLASSES
- H. THE VHS SHOWING SERIES (*AREA, REGIONAL, DIRECT and SUPREME*)
- I. NATIONAL VETERAN CHAMPIONSHIPS
- J. THE VHS HOYS SERIES
- K. ONLINE COMMUNITY GUIDELINES
- L. DRESSAGE
- M. PERFORMANCE AWARDS
- N. COMPLAINTS / DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE
- O. NEW JUDGE APPLICATIONS
- P. JUDGES RULES AND GUIDELINES
- Q. SAFEGUARDING
- R. CODE OF CONDUCT

All competitors, officials and judges must abide by Veteran Horse Society rules at all times.

All rule amendments for 2026 are shown underlined in italics

The Veteran Horse Society Supreme Finals 2026

6th September 2026

The National Veteran Championships 2026

4th – 6th September 2026

Arena UK, Allington Lane, Allington
Grantham, Lincolnshire. NG32 2EF

A. GENERAL RULES

1. Horses and ponies shown in-hand or ridden must be 15 years old or over.
2. All horses and ponies must be in a sound and healthy condition. Any veteran showing signs of distress or lameness will be asked to leave the ring. The judge's decision of lameness of a horse/pony is non disputable.
3. The Society does not accept any liability for any accident, injury, loss, damage or illness to any riders, handlers, spectators, horses, ponies or to any property whatsoever or howsoever caused.
4. All showing cards will be signed by the VHS Secretary and shall remain the property and copyright of the Veteran Horse Society.
5. Equine passports must always accompany the horse/pony when travelling and competing and must be produced on request.
6. All membership will run annually from 1st January to 31st December.
7. Showing cards run for the showing season and are valid until the final day of the National Veteran Championships in that season. Replacement showing cards can be issued at a charge of £7.50, proof of qualification will be required.
8. All membership/registration fees are non-refundable.
9. Please be aware that dope testing may take place at any show affiliated to VHS. The rules and policies of the show will take precedence over VHS rules.
10. All competitors in VHS affiliated classes must have valid public liability insurance (minimum cover £2m), covering the veteran that they are competing. Personal insurance cover is also strongly recommended.
11. Whips may only be used to back up leg aids/handler aids and never as discipline or punishment of the horse. Excessive use of whips/showing canes or misuse of any equipment will result in immediate exclusion from the show ring. Membership will be revoked with immediate effect and no refund will be made.
12. Remedial shoeing, pads and/or hoof boots are permitted and will not be penalised, providing the horse/pony is sound.
13. A show may only amend scheduled classes and/or judge(s) with prior approval from VHS Head Office and must provide public notification of the changes by website, social media and/or notices at the event. Unapproved changes will invalidate any qualifications provided at this show.

GDPR TERMS & CONDITIONS

14. Entries to VHS affiliated classes are to be made directly with each show. By entering a VHS affiliated class, competitors consent to results including their name and their veteran's name being listed on the VHS website.
15. Online entries to the National Veteran Championships are made using a third party which is GDPR compliant, these terms and conditions are available on their website.
16. The VHS will hold your personal information within our systems for an indefinite period as a unique membership number is used for the rider/handler, not the horse. Paperwork will only be held for 2 years if membership is not renewed or additional information added.

B. WELFARE

1. Competitors are discouraged from travelling or competing any veteran that has undergone any major illness or surgery within the past 6 months. Should they wish to travel and compete, written consent from the treating veterinary surgeon must be given stating that the veteran is fit to do so.
2. The judge will ask the competitor to leave the ring should the welfare of the veteran, handler/rider or any other competitor or official be compromised.
3. In extreme weather, the judge may stop the class at any point. It advised that in extremely hot

conditions, the veteran may be offered natural cover in the ring if this is available and competitors may remove their jackets, provided riders have long shirt sleeves and handlers have shirt sleeves covering shoulders as a minimum. In heat of 30 degrees or more it is expected that the judge may cancel the class for the welfare of the veterans. This however, is by decision of the judge on the day. In severe wet or cold conditions protective rugs maybe worn in the line-up. Grooms will be permitted to enter the ring to place the rugs over the horse/pony, and must be appropriately attired.

4. If any horse is deemed to have welfare issues, judges must consider suspending the class if imminent harm is feared. If the judge is of the opinion that there is a welfare issue with an exhibit, be it in relation to size/weight of either equine, rider/handler or any combination; or another welfare issue, the judge will mark their score sheet accordingly and may disqualify the competitor. There is no appeal against dismissal from the ring for welfare reasons.
5. The VHS considers equine welfare to be a priority of the utmost importance in all circumstances. Competitors must be mindful of distance travelled, frequency of shows, number of classes entered, weather conditions and ground conditions etc. when competing their veterans.
6. Travelling and competing puts considerable strain on veteran horses and ponies. The VHS strongly discourages any veteran being travelled for longer than 5 hours in one journey. Regular rest breaks, ideally overnight, should be provided for long distance travel, together with plentiful access to food and water. Regular checks on veteran welfare is paramount throughout any journey.
7. The VHS considers a duty of care to ensure all veterans receive adequate recovery time in between competitions. Members must ensure that veterans under their care adhere to this rule as follows:
 - **Diamond veterans** (aged 25 and over) may compete at no more than one show/event (including non-VHS shows) within any 11 day period, giving a rest period of 10 full days.
 - **Veterans and Pre-veterans** (aged 15 to 24) may compete at no more than one show/event (including non-VHS shows) within any 7 day period, giving a rest period of 6 full days.
 - In addition, veterans of any age may compete at no more than 3 shows per calendar month.

Competition activity will be actively monitored throughout the year.

Any single breach of this rule will count as a Rule B7 offence and will be disciplined as outlined below.

Accumulations of Rule B7 offences will be counted for the full VHS showing season (from the day after the National Veteran Championship Show to the end of the subsequent National Veteran Championship Show). For veterans newly registered with the VHS, counting will begin from the date of application for a showing card in their first year, then for the full VHS showing seasons for all subsequent years – regardless of when future showing cards are applied for.

Disciplinary action for Rule B7 offences can be applied retrospectively during a season should an earlier Rule B7 offence subsequently come to light. Multiple disciplinary actions may be applied together should multiple Rule B7 offences come to light at the same time.

It is the responsibility of the member to ensure they adhere to these rules at all times.

For the 2026 season, any Rule B7 offences prior to 31.12.2025 will not be counted due to the update of this rule for 2026.

Disciplinary action for Rule B7 offences within a VHS showing season will be applied as follows:

- 1st offence – verbal warning (by telephone)
- 2nd offence – formal written warning (by email)
- 3rd offence – all VHS showing card(s) for that veteran will be revoked with immediate effect, forfeiting all qualifications for that veteran (with any/all rider/handlers). No further showing card for that veteran may be applied for in the current VHS showing season.
- 4th+ offence – further action will be taken as deemed appropriate by the VHS Committee which may include the revocation of VHS membership and/or membership application suspensions for future years and/or refusal of future entries to VHS shows.

8. Competitors wishing to compete a veteran aged 30 years or over must obtain a letter from a vet,

dated within the last 12 months and stating that the horse is fit and able to travel and compete. This should be submitted to VHS head office together with the relevant membership application/renewal.

9. It is very strongly encouraged that all riders ensure that they (including full tack and riding attire) are not equal to more than 20% of the horse/pony's body weight, based on a fit and healthy horse/pony which is not over or underweight. Following more recent research on the effect that carrying weight has on older equines, for diamond veterans (aged 25 or over) the revised recommended ratio is 17.5%. A rider should not be so tall that their feet, when relaxed and without stirrups, hang significantly below the horse/pony's elbow. If the judge is of the opinion that the rider is too tall and/or too heavy for the horse/pony, the judge will reflect this in their marks on the score sheet and may result in a zero mark being awarded. It is at the judge's discretion whether they ask the rider to dismount and/or leave the class. Any decision by the judge on the matter is absolutely non-disputable on the day.
10. On rare occasions a horse may injure itself traveling, being worked in or competing, or blood may be noticed from the mouth or nostrils or other parts of the horse's body. In these circumstances the competitor should not compete or should cease competing immediately and get their horse checked as soon as possible once blood has been noticed. The horse should be treated and where necessary the person responsible for the horse should seek veterinary advice and attention to ensure the animal can travel home or continue to compete in further classes on the day. Any horse competing when blood is/becomes visible will be disqualified and must leave the ring immediately, or as soon as it is safe to do so.

C. SHOWING GUIDELINES.

1. All competitors aged 16 years and under will require a person with parental responsibility's signature on their membership application/renewal.
2. Lead rein riders (3-7 years of age). No child under 3 years old may compete. Lead rein riders are not to have attained their 8th birthday before the first of January in the current showing year.
3. Lead rein exhibits must be shown in a snaffle bridle. The lead rein must be attached to the noseband at all times during the class. Riders of lead rein ponies are not permitted to carry whips, with the exception of side-saddle exhibits, where SSA rules apply.
4. Lead rein handlers must be competent and must have attained their 16th birthday before the first of January in the current showing year.
5. Lead rein ponies not to exceed 122cm. First ridden ponies not to exceed 128cm.
6. Riders/handlers 16 years and under may compete in VHS affiliated classes but **must** be competent enough to ride/handle their veteran without assistance.
7. All competitors in ridden classes must be capable of walk, trot and canter (with the exception of lead rein combinations who are not required to canter). First ridden combinations (to have attained their 7th but not their 10th birthday before the first of January in the current showing year) do not have to take part in the group canter.
8. The person with parental responsibility for any child on a first ridden pony not wishing to take part in the group canter must inform the steward accordingly before the class begins.
9. Riders/handlers of stallions must have attained their 16th birthday before the first of January in the current showing year. They must be of an appropriate size and competency to handle the stallion.
10. All Stallions must display a stallion bridle badge. VHS Stallion badges can be purchased via the VHS website.
11. Mares in foal or with foals at foot are not permitted to compete.
12. Competitors (to include lead rein handlers) must be amateurs - horses/ponies must be produced and shown by a competitor who has not been involved with professionally producing for the show ring within the past 3 years. Horses/ponies must not have been stabled on a professional showing producer's yard within the past 12 months, this includes DIY or part livery. The VHS expects all competitors to respect this amateur status in the spirit intended. The VHS definition of a professional showing producer: A person who produces (including preparation and schooling), rides or handles

equines for the show ring for financial gain. A person who earns finances from a general equine career does not apply i.e. riding school, livery, instructor, groom etc.

13. Riders/handlers may not exhibit under any judge who has had financial interest in that equine, or any other equine belonging to the rider/handler. This includes producing, riding, schooling, instructing, livery, selling, buying, breeding etc.
14. Riders/handlers may not knowingly exhibit a horse/pony which has been bred, produced or shown by the judge.
15. Late entries will not be allowed into the ring once the initial order to trot has been given.
16. Competitors may not leave or return to the show ring without the judge's/steward's permission. Where a competitor has been granted permission to leave the ring, it is the responsibility of the competitor to ensure they return before final judging. Failure to do so will result in disqualification.
17. Any fall of horse and/or rider/handler will result in disqualification.
18. The judge may disqualify any horse/pony from the class that is not sufficiently under control or is deemed a danger to other competitors or officials.
19. Should a horse/pony mis-behave during presentation of a final awards, this may result in demotion or disqualification at the judge's discretion.
20. Mobile phones are not permitted in the show ring.
21. Judges must refrain from physical contact with any horse or rider during judging.
22. The judge's decision is final. Confrontation with a judge official or another competitor, in or outside the ring, is strictly forbidden and will result in disciplinary action and may lead to membership being permanently revoked. This also includes all social media forums and chat rooms.
23. Should a competitor be physically unable to trot the horse/pony up in hand, a runner may be allowed to enter the ring at the judge's discretion to do this on behalf of the competitor. The runner must be turned out correctly and be fully compliant with VHS rules, including amateur status. For Regional Final, Direct Qualifier or Supreme Final classes, the runner must be a fully paid-up member of the VHS. A relevant medical note showing the competitor is not fit to run must be shown to the judge or steward before the start of the class where use of a runner is to be requested.
24. Any conduct bringing the VHS into disrepute is strictly forbidden. This includes confrontation with any show official, competitor or member of the public by either a competitor or associated individual. Any reports of such conduct will be investigated and will result in disciplinary action and may lead to membership being permanently revoked/refused and voiding any qualifications.
25. No rider may complete in any VHS class with any type of broken limb.
26. Horses/ponies may only be warmed up or ridden at a show by a rider who is entered to compete on that horse/pony on that day.

D. SHOWING GUIDELINES (HORSES and PONIES)

1. Horses/ponies that have suffered injuries in the past resulting in scarring or blemishes will not be penalised within the marking system, providing the horse/pony has completely recovered and is showing no signs of discomfort.
2. Discreet enhancement of natural features is permissible but it is recommended that use of makeup and body oils is kept to a minimum. Overuse may be penalised in the marking system. White scars, blemishes, freeze marking or branding will not be marked down.
3. The judge will not ride. An individual show is expected, this may or may not be set by the judge. Stripping of ridden horses/ponies is not expected at an Area Qualifier.
4. Gallop/extended canter is not allowed in any VHS classes. Any intentional gallop/extended canter will lead to disqualification.
5. Each competitor will be asked a brief history of the veteran by the judge, where ring time allows.
6. The VHS advise that sensory hairs located around the mouth, nose, eyes and inner ears are an

important sensory organ for the horse and should not be removed for cosmetic purposes, as in line with the Showing Council.

7. Use of a whip or any other object to either excite or cause fear to any horse or pony is strictly forbidden at all times. This includes the use of any such object to make noise for this purpose e.g. tapping of a whip on a wall or against boots. This rule applies at all times, both inside and outside the show ring, when attending a show to compete in VHS classes. It applies to all breeds and types of veterans, regardless of what may be acceptable at individual breed society shows.

E. SHOWING GUIDELINES (TURNOUT and TACK)

All riders/handlers

1. Riders/handlers must wear suitable smart attire.
2. All UK breed exhibits may turnout in attire according to breed and type.
3. Foreign breed turnout and tack is acceptable in VHS Qualifiers and at the National Veteran Championships. A hat disclaimer maybe required by the show.
4. Golden ticket qualification - should a competitor gain a Golden ticket qualification to the VHS Supreme Final, they may compete in the attire and tack they qualified in, with the exception of no spurs allowed. For full entry rules see National Veteran Championship Schedule.
5. Long hair to be neatly fastened and contained within a hair net. Juniors may wear long plaits but loose ponytails are not allowed.

Handlers

6. Jacket and/or waistcoat to be of plain colour or tweed.
7. Long sleeve or short sleeved shirt of a discreet colour with tie or stock.
8. Gloves must be worn.
9. Jodhpurs or smart trousers. Blue denim jeans are not permitted.
10. Suitable, smart, safe footwear.
11. No visible jewellery or piercings to be worn as these pose a potential risk of injury. Marks will be deducted if worn and may result in a zero condition & turnout mark being awarded.
12. Suitable hats to be worn. No baseball caps.
13. Showing canes/whips exceeding 76cm will not be permitted This includes all Welsh breeds.

Riders

14. Spurs or spur bands may not be worn under any circumstances, including side saddle and foreign breed exhibits. This includes riding in before VHS classes.
15. Jacket to be of plain colour or tweed.
16. Shirt of a discreet colour with tie or stock. In the event of extreme heat where the judge permits riders to remove jackets, shirts must have long sleeves.
17. Gloves must be worn.
18. Jodhpurs to be plain, beige or canary yellow in colour.
19. Jodhpur boots or long riding boots.
20. No visible jewellery or piercings to be worn as these pose a potential risk of injury. Marks will be deducted if worn and may result in a zero condition & turnout mark being awarded.
21. It is **mandatory** for all competitors to wear correctly secured riding hats to the current Showing Council hat policy standards (viewable at www.theshowingcouncil.co.uk), with the exception of side-saddle or foreign breed exhibits where relevant governing association rules apply. However, the hosting show's hat rules will take precedence and may require side-saddle and foreign breed exhibits to sign a hat disclaimer, or may insist that safety hats are worn. It is the competitor's responsibility to check with the hosting show.
22. Showing canes/whips exceeding 76cm will not be permitted (with the exception of side-saddle

exhibits where SSA rules apply).

Grooms

23. Jacket and/or waistcoat to be of plain colour or tweed.
24. Jodhpurs or smart trousers. Shorts or blue denim jeans are not permitted.
25. Suitable, smart, safe footwear.
26. No visible jewellery or piercings to be worn as these pose a potential risk of injury. Marks will be deducted if worn and may result in a zero condition & turnout mark being awarded.
27. Suitable hats to be worn. No baseball caps.
28. Marks will be deducted (max 10 marks) for poorly turned-out grooms and they may be asked to leave the ring.

Horse/Pony

29. Tack must be in good, clean condition and correctly fitted.
30. Stallions must be bitted. Correctly fitted stallion harnesses are acceptable but not compulsory.
31. No item of tack can be removed or exchanged whilst a class is in progress without the judge's permission.
32. Plain, discreet protective boots may only be used in very exceptional circumstances. Written veterinary advice to do so must have been given along with written approval from head office.
33. Front boots may be used for the jumping phase of Working Hunter and Style and Performance classes (National Veteran Championships).
34. Bits – only snaffles, pelhams and weymouth/bradoon (double bridle) bits are permitted. These are to be single jointed, double jointed, straight bar or may be ported. Tongue plates, and bits with multiple rotating parts are not permitted. Waterford bits, chain bits and swales bits are not permitted. Gag bits may not be used in flat classes. Bits must be used in the manufactured condition without any additional adaptation to any part. A lip strap must be present if a curb chain is used. Bit-less bridles are permitted. Children under the age of 12 years are not permitted to use a double bridle or double reins but split reins or pelham roundings are permitted.
35. Should any form of tack not be recognised as commonly used attire, written permission should be gained from head office and this should be submitted to the judge/steward on entering the ring. This may only be acceptable if it is for the welfare of the veteran.
36. It is preferable that the age of the horse/pony is displayed in Area Qualifiers and must be displayed in HOYS Qualifiers, Direct Qualifiers, Regional Finals & Supreme Finals. The age of the horse/pony should be clearly displayed on the offside of the bridle where possible. Where this is not possible, age badges are permitted to be worn by the handler, but must be clearly visible to the judge. VHS age badges are supplied with showing cards in the first instance and are also available from head office (for members and non-members). Leather age badges can also be purchased via the VHS website. Marks will be deducted if an age badge is not displayed in a HOYS Qualifier, Direct Qualifier, Regional Final or Supreme Final.
37. Nose nets and/or UV masks/glasses required for welfare reasons are permitted.
38. False plaits and false tails are permitted providing they do not compromise the welfare of the veteran. Glue-in false plaits or glue-in false tails are not permitted.
39. Grackle, flash and drop nosebands are only acceptable in jumping classes e.g. working veteran classes.
40. Balance reins are not permitted.
41. Only tack permissible in the show ring may be used when warming up at a show. e.g. draw reins, side reins, spurs etc may not be used.

F. SHOWING MARKS SYSTEM

1. Conformation is not scored within the VHS marking system.

2. Both in-hand and ridden classes will be marked as follows:
 - a. Performance, manners *and suitability* 50 marks
 - b. Condition for age, suppleness and turnout 50 marks
3. In the event of a tie, the 'b' mark will take precedence, *with the exception of the HOYS Final and National Veteran Championships Supreme Finals where the 'a' mark will take precedence*. Should a tie still remain, the affected competitors will then be placed at the judge's discretion.
4. Marks are only awarded for walk, trot and canter. *Any intentional gallop/extended canter will lead to disqualification*. Any other movements will not be penalised but will not be marked.
5. Over-weight or under-weight horses will be marked down (see section B).
6. Riders that, in the opinion of the judge, are too tall or too big for their horse/pony will be marked down and this may result in a zero mark being awarded, or they may be asked to dismount and/or leave the ring (see section B).

G. SHOWING CLASSES

Foundation classes - In-Hand

- CLASS 1 **DIAMOND VETERAN IN-HAND** (25 years and over). Open to horses and ponies of any breed and height.
- CLASS 2 **VETERAN IN-HAND** (20–24 years). Open to horses and ponies of any breed and height.
- CLASS 3 **PRE-VETERAN IN-HAND** (15–19 years). Open to horses and ponies of any breed and height.

Foundation classes - Ridden

- CLASS 4 **DIAMOND VETERAN RIDDEN** (25 years and over). Open to horses and ponies of any breed and height.
- CLASS 5 **VETERAN RIDDEN** (20–24 years). Open to horses and ponies of any breed and height.
- CLASS 6 **PRE-VETERAN RIDDEN** (15–19 years). Open to horses and ponies of any breed and height.

Foundation classes - Combined age (Area Qualifiers only)

- CLASS A **COMBINED AGE CLASS IN-HAND** (15 years and over).
To be run as one class but judged as separate age categories: Diamond Veteran (25 years and over), Veteran (20–24 years) and Pre-Veteran (15–19 years). Open to horses and ponies of any breed and height.
- CLASS B **COMBINED AGE CLASS RIDDEN** (15 years and over).
To be run as one class but judged as separate age categories: Diamond Veteran (25 years and over), Veteran (20–24 years) and Pre-Veteran (15–19 years). Open to horses and ponies of any breed and height.

H. THE VHS SHOWING SERIES

H. (i) Area Qualifiers (Round 1)

Area Qualifiers (Round 1) are held throughout the UK, usually at local level shows. Foundation classes. Members and non-members may compete.

VHS Rosettes optional: 1st to 3rd place (members and non-members)

Regional Final qualification (red cards to non-members): 1st to 4th place (members and non-members)

1. Foundation Classes – Regional Final qualification will be awarded from 1st to 4th place in each age category (classes 1 - 6). This includes combined classes (A and B) where all competitors will be placed in the final class order but the judge will award 4 qualifications in each age category.

2. Should any competitor have already qualified, then qualification should be passed down the line to a maximum to 6th place.
3. Qualifying members carrying their valid membership and showing cards will have the Regional Final section of their showing card signed by the judge in the ring. This allows entry to any Regional Final(s) (Round 2). It is the responsibility of the competitor to hand their showing card to the judge for signature in the final line up. No cards may be signed after the competitor has left the ring.
4. **Non-members** placed in a qualifying spot will be given a **red** non-members qualification card. This must be completed and submitted to head office, together with a membership and showing card application and fee, within 21 days of qualification. It is advisable to retain a photocopy of any card sent by post. A signed showing card will then be sent out with the membership pack, allowing entry to Regional Final(s) (round 2).

Early Area Qualifiers

*After the National Veteran Championships, Area Qualifiers shows are held during the remainder of the year, offering early qualification for Regional Finals the following year. Horses/ponies should compete in the relevant age category class according to their **current** age.*

e.g. a 19 year old horse/pony competing in an early Area Qualifier is currently a Pre-Veteran and should therefore compete in the Pre-Veteran class. Should they gain their Regional Final qualification, they will be a Veteran (aged 20) when they attend the Regional Final the following year and would therefore enter the Veteran (20-24) class at the Regional Final.

H (ii) Regional Final (Round 2)

Regional Finals are open to qualified members only. Foundation classes. It is not mandatory for shows to hold championships, although they may choose to do so.

VHS Rosettes optional: 1st to 6th place (each class)

Supreme Final qualification: 1st to 2nd place (each class)

M&M Supreme Final qualification: Highest placed registered M&M shown in its natural state (each class) to be awarded at the judge's discretion. Must be a registered breed and hold a valid M&M breed society passport.

1. To compete in a Regional Final you must be a fully paid up member of VHS with valid showing card containing a valid Regional Final qualification signature.
2. Competitors will be asked to show this card to the steward on entering the ring and will **not** be allowed to enter without it.
3. No substitution of horse/pony or rider/handler will be allowed.
4. Competitors may attend up to 4 Regional Finals in any one year, providing they are within an acceptable travelling distance. If a competitor is seen to be 'chasing' Regional Finals, this may lead to their membership being revoked (see section B).
5. Supreme Final qualification – 1st and 2nd placed competitors in each class will each qualify for the Supreme Final and will have the Supreme Final section of their showing card signed by the judge in the ring. For classes with fewer than 5 entries forward, Supreme Final qualifications will be awarded at the judge's discretion and are not guaranteed. Entries to the Supreme Final **must be made within 21 days of the qualifying show date**. Late entries will not be accepted. If a competitor has already qualified or does not wish to attend, they must refuse the qualification and pass it down the line **on the day**, to a maximum of 6th place.
6. M&M Supreme Final qualification is to be awarded at the judge's discretion – The highest placed registered M&M, shown in its natural state, in each class will qualify for the M&M Supreme Final at the National Veteran Championships and will have the M&M Supreme Final section of their showing card signed by the judge in the ring. It is possible for an M&M to qualify for both the Supreme Final and the M&M Supreme Final. **Entries to the M&M Supreme Final must be made within 21 days of the qualifying show date**. Late entries will not be accepted. If the competitor has already qualified or does not wish to attend, they must refuse the qualification and pass it down the line **on the day**.
7. Horses/ponies will be stripped.

H. (iii) Direct Qualifiers (Round 1 and 2 combined)

Direct Qualifiers are a direct route to the Supreme Final. Foundation classes only. Members and non-members may compete at these, non-members require day membership. It is not mandatory for shows to hold championships, although they may choose to do so.

VHS Rosettes optional: 1st to 6th place (each class, members and day-members)

Supreme Final qualification: 1st & 2nd place (each class, members and day-members)

M&M Supreme Final qualification: Highest placed registered M&M shown in its natural state (each class, members and day-members) to be awarded at the judge's discretion. Must be a registered breed and hold a valid M&M breed society passport.

Regional Final qualification: 3rd & 4th place (each class, members and day-members)

1. Non-members wishing to take part in a Direct Qualifier must purchase day membership from VHS head office, a minimum of 2 weeks in advance of the show, at a cost of £25. They will then be provided with an age badge and a day membership card which they will need to carry in the ring. Day membership will apply to that show and that day only. Any day-member qualification signatures will be recorded on the day membership card by the judge. This card must be submitted to head office **within 21 days of the show**, together with a full membership and showing card application and fee. It is advisable to retain a photocopy of any card sent by post. A signed showing card will then be sent out with the membership pack in order for the qualifications to become valid for use.
2. Current full VHS members are not required to obtain a day membership to enter these classes but must hold a valid showing card.
3. Competitors will be asked to show their showing card or day membership card to the steward on entering the ring and will **not** be allowed to enter without it.
4. Horses/ponies will be stripped
5. Supreme Final qualification – 1st and 2nd placed competitors in each class will each qualify for the Supreme Final and will have the Supreme Final section of their showing card signed by the judge in the ring. For classes with fewer than 5 entries forward, Supreme Final qualifications will be awarded at the judge's discretion and are not guaranteed. Entries to the Supreme Final **must be made within 21 days of the qualifying show date** (day-members will need to become full members to do so). Late entries will not be accepted. If a competitor has already qualified or does not wish to attend, they must refuse the qualification and pass it down the line **on the day**, to a maximum of 6th place.
6. M&M Supreme Final qualification is to be awarded at the judge's discretion – The highest placed registered M&M, shown in its natural state, in each class will qualify for the M&M Supreme Final at the National Veteran Championships (day-members will need to become full members to enter). Qualifying competitors will have the M&M Supreme Final section of their showing card signed by the judge in the ring. It is possible for an M&M to qualify for both the Supreme Final and the M&M Supreme Final. Entries to the M&M Supreme Final **must be made within 21 days of the qualifying show date**. Late entries will not be accepted. If the competitor has already qualified or does not wish to attend, they must refuse the qualification and pass it down the line **on the day**.
7. Regional Final qualification – Regional Final qualification will be awarded to 3rd and 4th place in each class (or will be handed down accordingly if Supreme Final Qualification has already been handed down in this class to 3rd and/or 4th). Qualifying competitors will have the Regional Final section of their showing card signed by the judge in the ring. This allows entry to any Regional Final(s) (Round 2). Should any competitor have already qualified, then qualification should be passed down the line to a maximum to 6th place.

H. (iv) Golden Ticket Qualifiers

Golden Ticket qualifiers (in hand and/or ridden) are offered to specially selected breed and specialist Championship Shows or at the discretion of the VHS. All affiliated Golden Ticket qualifying shows will be listed on the VHS website. A specific number of 'surprise' Golden Ticket will be awarded at the discretion of the VHS to a select number of shows throughout the season. These will not be publicised beforehand.

1. Supreme Final qualification – as advertised in the qualifying schedule, champion; or champion and reserve champion will each qualify for the VHS Supreme Final and be awarded a golden ticket

qualification card. This card must be completed and submitted to head office, together with a membership and showing card application and fee, within 21 days of qualification. It is advisable to retain a photocopy of any card sent by post. A signed showing card will then be sent out with the membership pack, allowing entry to the Supreme Final. Should the qualification be awarded to a VHS member, the golden ticket qualification card will still be given and should be returned to head office as above. The only exception to this is where the judge awarding the golden ticket qualification is a VHS panel judge and as such they may sign the relevant Supreme Final box on the member's showing card instead.

2. Entry into to the relevant age category of the Supreme Final (in hand or ridden, as qualified), **must be made within 21 days of the qualifying show date** (non-members will need to become full members to do so). Late entries will not be accepted. If a competitor has already qualified or does not wish to attend, they must refuse the qualification and pass it down the line **on the day** to no lower than 2nd reserve champion.
3. For turnout and tack rules at the Supreme Final, see rule E4.
4. Should a VHS Golden Ticket qualification be awarded to a professional, the placing will stand but the VHS qualification must be passed down to the highest placed amateur. This may happen retrospectively.
5. Competitors must ensure they comply with all VHS rules before entering the Supreme Final, this includes amateur status, see rule C12.
6. Mares in foal or mares with foals at foot are not eligible for VHS golden ticket qualifications.

H. (v) The VHS Supreme Final

Arena UK, Grantham on Sunday 6th September 2026

1. Entries to Supreme Finals must be made within 21 days of qualifying show date.
2. Entries must be for the same combination of horse/pony & handler/rider as per the qualifying rounds.
3. No substitution of horse/pony will be allowed under any circumstances.
4. Substitution of handler/rider may be considered in exceptional medical circumstances only. Medical certificates must be submitted for approval by the VHS committee no later than 7 days prior to the class.
5. For full rules and class formats, please see the National Veteran Championships Schedule, available on the VHS website.
6. Any competitor qualifying for the Supreme Final for a second time in the current showing year, with the same horse/pony, must hand the qualification down on the day.
7. In the event of a tie in the Supreme Final classes at the National Veteran Championships, the 'a' mark for Performance, manners and *suitability* takes precedence. Should a tie still remain, the affected competitors will then be placed at the judge's discretion.

I. NATIONAL VETERAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

National Veteran Championships hosting the VHS Veteran Horse of the Year 2026.

4th – 6th September 2026 at Arena UK, Grantham, Lincolnshire.

This is a unique weekend of competition dedicated purely to veteran horses and ponies. It is open both to members and non-members and aims to provide a wide variety of classes which cater for all. We pride ourselves on creating a friendly and encouraging atmosphere for all to compete and have fun with their veterans.

Full rules for the National Veteran Championships can be found in the schedule.

Schedule and entry details will be published on the VHS website www.veteran-horse-society.co.uk.

J. THE VHS HOYS SERIES

To enter and compete in Horse of the Year Show Qualifiers, membership and registration is required as follows:

- Registration with Grandstand Media (free of charge) for each of:
 - Horse/pony
 - Owner
 - Rider
 - Handler (for lead rein exhibits).
- VHS Registration (horse/pony).
- VHS Full membership (rider).
- VHS Showing card and HOYS card (rider and horse/pony combination).

Qualifying Shows can be found at www.hoys.co.uk.

Qualifying classes will be divided into the following sections:

DIAMOND VETERAN RIDDEN (25 years and over). Open to horses and ponies of any breed and height.

VETERAN RIDDEN (20–24 years). Open to horses and ponies of any breed and height.

PRE-VETERAN RIDDEN (15–19 years). Open to horses and ponies of any breed and height.

The Final at The Horse of the Year Show will be held as one ridden class (combined ages).

Please refer to www.hoys.co.uk for Horse of the Year Show rules.

K. ONLINE COMMUNITY GUIDELINES

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other social networking sites are popular with both members and non-members for communicating and sharing information and pictures. The VHS encourages the use of forums such as these in a positive, inclusive and respectful manner.

Inappropriate and offensive comments of any nature will not be tolerated under any circumstances - this includes inappropriate or disrespectful remarks about the society, judges, members and non-members and this includes comments about placings or horses.

Any person associated with the VHS, judge competitor or otherwise, found to be making any such remarks in a VHS owned or associated group will be removed from the group without warning.

Any member found to be making such remarks in any forum will be subject to the VHS disciplinary procedure which could result in membership, association and qualifications being revoked.

The VHS is a family orientated organisation and as such, full respect should be shown at all times.

L. DRESSAGE

Associated Championships (Veteran Horse)

Full information available directly from British Dressage

1. The Veteran Horse Associated Championships are run in partnership with British Dressage (BD). They form part of the British Dressage Veteran Horse and Rider Championships and will be run in accordance with BD rules.
2. The qualifying year runs from 1st January 2026 to 31st August 2026.
3. Veteran Horse Dressage is open to all horses/ponies 15 years and over and will be in split into two age categories: 15-19 years and 20+ years.
4. The levels included in the Veteran Horse Dressage Championships are as follows:-

Intro
Prelim
Novice

Elementary
Medium
Advanced Medium

PSG

5. More information can be found on the website www.britishdressage.co.uk.
6. For VHS related dressage queries, please email info@veteran-horse-society.co.uk.

M. PERFORMANCE AWARDS

The purpose of the Performance Awards Scheme is to encourage and reward the capability and versatility of the veteran horse and pony by offering a wide range of classes and activities in the equestrian world. Cards will be issued up to 31st July of each year. Cards are to be submitted no later than 1st October. Award presentations will take place at the National VHS Ball.

1. This competition is open to all horses and ponies 15 years old and over.
2. Riders/handlers must be a fully paid-up member of the VHS. Horses/ponies must also be registered with the VHS.
3. *The 2026 Performance Awards competition will run from 1st November 2025 – 1st October 2026.*
4. Those applying after the start date can only gain points from the date their membership fee has been received.
5. Performance points cards are specific to the horse/pony and rider/handler combination and are non-transferable.
6. Entry is open to all VHS members, the fee is to be included with membership or renewal and a purple performance card will be included in your membership pack.
7. All entrants must register in one of the following groups:
 - Pre-Veteran (15–19 years)
 - Veteran (20–24 years)
 - Diamond Veteran (25 years and over)
8. Competitors must fill in their cards and keep total of their score.
9. Results cards must be signed by the judge/secretary/a show official.
10. Completed performance cards must be returned to head office by post, no later than 1st October. No late entries will be accepted.
11. It is advisable to keep a photocopy of your results card before posting. Recorded delivery is recommended for your postage of the performance cards. Please send a SAE if you require acknowledgement of receipt. The VHS cannot be held responsible for any performance cards lost in the post.
12. Scores will be checked and results will be calculated.
13. The organiser's decision is final and binding at all times.
14. Finalists in each age group will be awarded a rosette and the winner of each age group will receive an award and certificate at the end of year at the VHS Awards & Ball.
15. If a card is lost or damaged a new card will need to be applied for and it is the competitor's responsibility to contact each show secretary to verify and sign each qualification previously obtained.
16. Points from a maximum of 1 performance points card will be counted per horse/pony in any one year. Any points gained on further cards will not be counted.
17. The VHS discourages attending more than one show per week with any veteran (see Section B).
18. No points may be gained from Championships (i.e. Champion or Reserve Champion).
19. *In the event of a breach of rule B7, any performance points gained from that show will be null and void.*
20. Score System: Eligible events

Veteran Ridden	Dressage	Show Jumping	E-Showing
Veteran In-Hand	Side Saddle	Working Hunter	E-Dressage
Ridden Showing	Horse/Pony club	Hunter Trials	Driving
In Hand Showing	Combined Training	Eventing	Le Trec/Pleasure Rides

Place	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th
Points	6 points	5 points	4points	3 points	2 points	1 point

N. COMPLAINTS / DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

1. The VHS has powers to discipline officers, judges, officials, volunteers, members and/or any competitor in the event of a failure to observe any rules or regulations made by the VHS; for failing to act in the best interests of the Society, or for acting in such a manner that brings the VHS into disrepute.
2. Complaints relating to the above should be raised, where possible, with the hosting show in the first instance, so they may endeavour to resolve the matter immediately. Should this not be possible, an official complaint may be lodged with the VHS for further investigation.
3. To lodge an official complaint with the VHS, full details of the incident must be submitted in writing, either by post to VHS Head Office, or by email to info@veteran-horse-society.co.uk, to arrive within 7 days of the incident. This must be accompanied by a payment of £100.00.
4. Official complaints may be made by members or non-members but may not be made anonymously.
5. Any complaint or correspondence received without the appropriate fee, or outside of the required timeframe will not be classed as an official complaint and will be dismissed without investigation or response.
6. Malicious complaints made solely with the intent to discredit another individual will not be tolerated. Should this be found to have occurred, the complainant will be subject to disciplinary action themselves.
7. Upon receipt of an official complaint the VHS core committee will appoint a panel to investigate the matter. The panel will consist of a minimum of three non-conflicted individuals selected from the VHS core committee, other VHS committee members and/or other independent VHS officials.
8. The panel will seek to investigate fully and resolve the matter, including any disciplinary action required, within 28 days or as soon as reasonably possible given the circumstances.
9. The complainant will be informed of the decision as soon as possible thereafter.
10. If the complaint is upheld, the payment of £100.00 submitted with the complaint will be returned to the complainant.
11. The decision and action agreed by the appointed panel forms the official VHS response regarding the complaint and is final and binding. No appeal or further correspondence will be entered into once a final decision has been given.

O. NEW JUDGES APPLICATIONS

The VHS welcomes and encourages all new judge applications. From those with an extensive level of showing knowledge and experience, to those who have a passion and interest in veteran horses.

To apply to join the VHS Judges Panel, please send a completed application by email or post to the VHS Judges Co-ordinator to the address stated on the application form.

The minimum age requirement for full VHS panel judge status is 21 years. Applications are accepted from potential judges from 18 years of age to become a trainee VHS panel judge whereby they can begin supervised judging with a view to applying for full panel judge status on the year of their 21st birthday.

More information and application forms can be found on our website www.veteran-horse-society.co.uk.

P. JUDGES RULES & GUIDELINES

1. All judges (including probationary judges) must be fully paid-up members of the VHS Judges Panel. Judges' membership runs annually from the 1st January to 31st December. Renewals are due 1st December of each year, with applicable fee. Late renewals will incur a late payment fee and any judge not renewed for a period of 2 years or more will be required to attend a judge's assessment.
2. All judges will receive an updated judges pack at the beginning of the year containing the following:
 - Rulebook
 - VHS score sheet (as an example)
 - VHS Judge's badge, if purchased.
3. Judges must acquaint themselves with all aspects of the VHS rulebook and keep their copy of it with them for reference during the show.
4. It is the judge's responsibility to ensure that all VHS rules are adhered to.
5. The VHS reserves the right to downgrade/remove from the panel any judge found to not be abiding by VHS rules or to be found guilty of misconduct. This also includes making inappropriate comments on social media sites.
6. Judges are required to wear suitable smart attire whilst carrying out their VHS responsibilities.
7. Judges are requested to arrive at the show at least 30 minutes prior to the class starting, to acquaint themselves with the steward and ensure the steward is familiar with VHS rules and qualification cards.
8. If you accept a judging appointment, please do your best to keep it. If you do have to cancel for whatever reason, please make sure that when you contact the show you are able to give them the name, address and telephone number of an alternative judge who is willing to take your place, you must also inform head office.
9. Judges must not knowingly judge any veteran that has been bred, produced or shown by them or that they have had a financial interest in – see rules C13 and C14.
10. B panel judges are eligible to judge Area Qualifiers and open classes at the VHS Championships. A panel judges are eligible to judge at any level.
11. Assessments and upgrades for the 2026 Judges Panel will take place on Saturday 2nd May. Application and upgrade forms are available on the VHS website. Any judge wishing to upgrade must have been on the B panel for at least two years and judged a minimum of six shows.
12. Any potential judge that is required to probation will be provided with a list of A panel judges. The probationer must contact judges to do their probationing with. It is also the responsibility of the probationer to contact the show secretary for permission to accompany the listed judge on the day. Probations must be completed within a maximum of 2 years.
13. Judges may not judge more than three Direct Qualifiers / Regional Finals in any one year, without prior permission from the VHS Director.
14. Judges invited to judge the Supreme Finals may only judge at Area level for that year.
15. Judges may accept a maximum of 3 shows for the same organisation (e.g. a particular Riding Club) in any one year. Of these, each appointment must be at least 2 months apart.
16. HOYS Qualifiers – Judges may only accept one HOYS qualifier appointment per season.
17. For all information and rules regarding the judging of HOYS qualifiers, please refer directly to Grandstand Media/HOYS – www.hoys.co.uk.
18. Judges may not judge or compete in VHS classes at a show for which they hold a position of show secretary or similar.
19. Judges must have attended a minimum of one VHS judges conference within the past three years in order to remain on the panel.
20. Judges must be mindful of comments made to competitors. Judges misconduct will not be accepted in any circumstance and may lead to disciplinary action and/or removal from the panel.
21. Judges expenses – The maximum amount recommended to be charged for expenses is 40p per

mile. Judges may, at their discretion, charge less. Judges are not permitted to charge a fee for judging but are entitled to have expenses reimbursed with prior arrangement with the show secretary. Probationary judges should not claim expenses. Expenses chargeable for attendance at any VHS event will be capped.

WELFARE

22. It is paramount that the welfare of the veteran is given full consideration at all times. (See Section B)

MARKING SYSTEM

23. Judges are required to ask a **brief** history of each veteran, where time allows and take this into account when marking.

24. Conformation is **not** scored within the VHS marking system.

25. Both in-hand and ridden classes will be marked as follows:

- | | |
|--|----------|
| a. Performance, manners <i>and suitability</i> | 50 marks |
| b. Condition for age, suppleness and turnout | 50 marks |

In the event of a tie, the 'b' mark will take precedence, with the exception of the HOYS Final and National Veteran Championships Supreme Finals where the 'a' mark will take precedence. Should a tie still remain, the affected competitors will then be placed at the judge's discretion

26. Marks are only awarded for walk, trot and canter. Any intentional gallop/extended canter will lead to disqualification. Any other movements will not be penalised but will not be marked.
27. No half marks allowed.
28. Any marks noted incorrectly/inadvertently by the steward may be adjusted and must be signed/initialled by the judge.
29. Over-weight or under-weight horses to be marked down (see Section B).
30. If any horse is deemed to have welfare issues, judges must consider suspending the class if imminent harm is feared. If the judge is of the opinion that there is a welfare issue with an exhibit, be it in relation to size/weight of either equine, rider/handler or any combination; or another welfare issue, the judge will mark their score sheet accordingly and may disqualify the competitor. There is no appeal against dismissal from the ring for welfare reasons.
31. If the judge is of the opinion that the rider is too tall and/or too heavy for the horse/pony, the judge will reflect this in their marks on the score sheet and may result in a zero mark being awarded. It is at the judge's discretion whether they ask the rider to dismount and/or leave the class.
32. Scars, blemishes, freeze marking or branding will not be penalised (see also rule D1 & D2).
33. Makeup and oils - Discreet enhancement of natural features is permissible. Overuse may be penalised in the marking system (see also rule D2).
34. Marks will be deducted for poorly turned-out grooms (max 10 marks), see section E for turnout guidelines.
35. Score sheets must be completed correctly, clearly, dated and signed by the judge for all classes at all shows. Where possible please also ensure you use the comments column of the score sheet. These must then handed back to the show secretary for return to VHS head office.
36. It is the judge's responsibility to ensure all appropriate rosettes and qualifications are awarded (see section H for details). Please remember to ask competitors if they have already qualified and hand qualification down the line as appropriate. Judges must be mindful that any incorrectly completed qualification cards may result in the qualification being null and void.
37. Area Qualifiers – red qualification cards must have class type and position circled on the card and be signed and dated by the judge. Competitor details may be filled out by the competitor after the class. Judges must be mindful that any incorrectly completed qualification cards may result in the qualification being null and void.

38. Regional Finals and Direct Qualifiers – showing cards must be signed **in the ring** for qualification to be valid. No card in the ring means no qualification. Please ensure you remember to ask your steward to check competitors have their showing cards on them when they enter the ring to avoid problems in the final line up.
39. In the event of a late showing card application or a lost showing card, a temporary interim showing card may be issued by VHS head office in the form of a personalised email. This email will include horse, rider and show details together with a space for any qualification signatures. These emails are strictly non-transferrable. The competitor must have a printed copy of the email in the ring for the judge to sign. Electronic copies are not acceptable.
40. Fully paid-up members of the VHS Judges Panel are covered whilst officiating at VHS shows/classes by the Group Accident Insurance Policy for Judges and Officials arranged by the VHS via The Showing Council.
41. The VHS recommends that all VHS Judges, Stewards, staff and volunteers working with children should undertake the BEF approved safeguarding training (or recognised equivalent) course within the last 3 years. Refresher training should be completed every three years via either the BEF approved online training portal or a further face to face course.

Q. SAFEGUARDING

The Veteran Horse Society (VHS) Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

The Veteran Horse Society (VHS) fully accepts its legal and moral obligation under The Children Acts (1989) and (2004), to provide a duty of care to protect all children and safeguard their welfare, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, parental or marital status, pregnancy, religion or belief, creed, sexual orientation and gender reassignment.

A child/young person is defined as a person under the age of 18 (the Children Act 1989).

The VHS fully adopts the BEF Safeguarding Policy (Children and Young People and Adults), the full policies can be downloaded from the BEF website www.bef.co.uk.

The aims of The VHS Safeguarding Policy are:

- To ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation to provide children and young people with appropriate safety and protection, allowing them to participate in a fun, safe environment and in an atmosphere of fair play
- To take all reasonable, practical steps to protect children from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and respect their rights, wishes and feelings
- To ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and are provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people
- To ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern. All concerns or allegations of poor practise or abuse are taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- To ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored
- To maintain high standards of behaviours and good practise through compliance with the VHS codes of conduct produced for instructors, coaches, parents/guardians, junior members and volunteers. The policy and procedures are mandatory for everyone involved with the VHS. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay. The policy will be reviewed every three years, or in the following circumstances:
 - Changes in legislation and/or government guidance.
 - As required by the Local Safeguarding Children Board, UK Sport and the BEF.
 - As a result of any other significant change or event.

The VHS will appoint Lead Safeguarding Officers to represent the VHS on Safeguarding.

The VHS recommends that all Judges, Stewards, staff and volunteers working with children should undertake the BEF approved safeguarding training (or recognised equivalent) course within the last 3 years. Refresher training should be completed every three years via either the BEF approved online training portal or a further face to face course.

R. CODE OF CONDUCT

The clauses given below indicate the general standard of conduct to which members of The Veteran Horse Society (VHS) must adhere to. Members must:-

- Conduct themselves to uphold the reputation of the VHS.
- Abide by the VHS Online Community Guidelines.
- Conduct their affairs in such a manner which does not damage the good reputation of fellow members and/or VHS Officials and/or VHS Representatives and/or the VHS.
- Not use the VHS name to book, order, publicise, advertise, officiate or for any general trading activities; and under no circumstances purport to represent the Society in any respect, without first obtaining an explicit agreement from the Committee.
- Cooperate fully with any investigation into any alleged breach of this Code or the rules and regulations.
- Members must not act in a manner which is prejudicial to the integrity, proper conduct, or good reputation of the VHS events or the VHS itself. Members should always have this in mind, including when using social media.

Members must familiarise themselves with the requirements and obligations imposed by these VHS rules which are binding on them. They should bring these rules to the attention of any non-members who may be participating in VHS activities with them such as connections, helpers and grooms and do their best to ensure compliance as appropriate. Members are responsible for the actions of any non-members employed or otherwise assisting or acting on their behalf.

The VHS will not tolerate any discriminatory behaviour or language. This will include issues of race, faith, culture, gender, sexuality, age, disability or appearance.

The VHS requires everyone involved to behave in a civilised and courteous way towards each other and to uphold the integrity and reputation of the VHS.

VHS Officials, including committee members, judges, stewards and volunteers are required to act in a fair and sporting manner and accordance with the code of conduct and these rules. Members and their associates are expected to behave in the same way.

VHS Officials are volunteers and are appointed to assist the Society. Competitors must cooperate with them and comply with any reasonable direction given by an official.

Incivility or rudeness by any person is a breach of the rules and code of conduct.

Failure to comply with these rules and the underlying code of conduct may give rise to disciplinary action.

It is not possible to anticipate every eventuality in these rules. They are intended to form an interlocking code for the conduct of the VHS. Each rule must be read by reference to the rules as a whole and in the general context of this code of conduct.

If any horse is disqualified from its class because of infringement of any rule, entry fees qualifications and awards may be forfeited. Class placings will also be adjusted accordingly.