

Unified Freestyle Drill Team

Class Description and Procedures

We are excited to offer a new class that provides a chance for our athletes to experience unified competition. In Unified Sports, each Special Olympics athlete is paired with an athlete without intellectual disabilities called a “partner”.

The state show 2008 will be a trial for this class with a possibility of it becoming a permanent class.

If you are interested participating, please read all information carefully and look for updates with new information. There are special requirements that must be met prior to the day of the show.

General Information:

- 1) The class will be held in the Advanced (Red) arena. 120ft x 105ft wide.
- 2) Tack: All rules follow same guidelines as in the equitation/horsemanship classes. Any style tack may be used in combination within a class.
- 3) Athletes AND unified partners must follow the attire and approved safety equipment rules as in the equitation/horsemanship classes.
- 4) Costumes, IF worn, (not a requirement), must not be a hindrance to the safety of either the athlete or the horse. Costumes must not impede the sight or movement of horse or rider. PLEASE practice at home and at the show grounds to allow the horse and rider to become accustomed to them prior to competition.
In addition, please be attentive at the show grounds and realize that other horses have not been desensitized to your costumes. It is your responsibility to utilize costumes while assuring the safety of others.
- 5) A caller may be used in all divisions, but is bound by the same rules dressage/western riding.
- 6) See special procedures for music submittal.
- 7) See special rules for division requirements.
- 8) The performance must be between 2:30 and 3 minutes in length.
- 9) For this year, at least, we will allow coaches to be “partners” although the NO COACHING rule will apply. Ride with them, have fun, but no coaching!

Judging Criteria:

There will be multiple judges for this event. There will be one “rules” judge and up to 3 “performance” judges. Each will assign a score from 1-25, based on the criteria below, to allow a total score from 1-100 for each performance.

1. Rules score: Each drill must include the following somewhere in the performance
 - a) Athletes and their partners will be asked to demonstrate all gaits required by their division, with the exception of the canter/lope. The canter/lope may only be performed in the Unified Division III explained further in the rules below.
 - b) A straight line
 - c) A circle
 - d) A halt
 - e) A transverse of the arena, either by diagonal or serpentine
 - f) Athletes and partners must go both ways of the arena

Score will be from 1-25

2. Performance scores: based on the following:

- a) Originality: Use of music and/or costumes, Creativity (max 5 pts)
- b) Precision and horsemanship: overall success of all riders to perform drill with accuracy. Including timing, spacing, positioning (max 10 points)
- c) Suitability of performance (how well the routine matches the athletes skill and incorporates the unified partnership) (max 10 pts)

Score will be from 1-25

Team Composition:

- Teams may include between 2 and 6 riders.
- Within each team, there must be a unified rider partnered with each athlete. Failure to comply will be a forfeit.
- Teams may be comprised of athletes from different divisions (see below for breakdown).
- Assistance levels are bound by the same rules as equitation/horsemanship for each athlete within his/her own division.
- Gait requirements have been amended (see below for breakdown)
- Each athlete will wear an identifying armband, or equivalent, to identify his/her unified division.

Divisions Requirements:

Unified Division I:

Athletes eligible: Beginner I
 Beginner IA
 Beginner II
 Intermediate I

Assistance levels: (sidewalkers and leaders) must match each athlete's regular division.

Gaits performed: Beg I and IA - Walk only
 Beginner II & Inter I - Walk and may jog/trot (not required)
 Partners of athletes may only perform the same gaits as the athlete.

Unified Division II:

Athletes eligible: Intermediate II
 Intermediate III
 Intermediate IV
 Advanced I
 Advanced II

Assistance levels: Horse leaders assistance must match each athlete's regular division.

Gaits performed: Walk and jog/trot only

Unified Division III:

Athletes eligible: Advanced I
 Advanced II

Assistance levels: No assistance allowed, although the agency MUST provide spotters.

Gaits performed: Walk and jog/trot and may lope (lope not required)

SEE EXAMPLES BELOW:

A) a 4 man team may consist of:

1 Beg I rider and partner and

1 Inter I rider and partner

The Beg I athlete must have a horse handler w/lead attached and 1-2 sidewalkers

The Beg I athlete and his/her unified partner may only walk for his/her part in the drill

The Inter I athlete must have a horse handler at the horses head, unattached at the walk and attached at the trot and may have sidewalkers.

The Inter I athlete and his/her partner must show at a walk and a jog/trot for his/her part in the drill.

B) a 6 man team may consist of:

- 1 Intermediate II rider and partner
- 1 Intermediate IV rider and partner
- 1 Advanced II rider and partner

The Inter II athlete will show independently at the walk but must have a horse handler in the arena (with a lead line) to attend the head, unattached, at the trot.

The Inter II athlete and his/her unified partner must show the walk and jog/trot.

The Inter IV athlete will show independently at the walk and jog/trot but must have a horse handler in the arena (with a lead line) to act as a spotter only.

The Inter IV athlete and his/her unified partner must show the walk and jog/trot.

The Advanced I athlete will show independently at the walk and trot but must have a horse handler in the arena (with a lead line) to act as a spotter only.

The Inter Advanced I athlete and his/her unified partner must show the walk and jog/trot and may not lope in this division.

C) a 2 man team may consist of:

- 1 Advanced II athlete and partner

The Advanced II athlete will show independently at all 3 gaits (lope not required) but must have a spotter from his/her agency in the arena.

The Advanced II athlete and his/her unified partner must show at the walk and jog/trot and may show at the lope.



COACHES:

*****When designing your drill, please keep in mind when and where your horse handlers must attend the athlete. Consider writing that into the drill. You may even have a halt written in to facilitate the horse handler to approach without having to “chase” the athlete.

Music Requirements:

An audio copy of your selected music and written copy of any lyrics that are used must be submitted to SOGA staff for approval prior to the event. Please ensure that you have received written approval for your selection prior to the show. Dates for submittal will be determined.

An INFORMED member of your agency must meet with SOGA staff 2 hours prior to the beginning of the class to discuss synchronization for your performance. You will need to provide a copy of the music in the form of a CD, CUED to the beginning of your routine.