2027 WOOD RIVER EXTREME SKI JORING ASSOCIATION RULES

These rules are intended to protect the safety of all competitors, both human and equine, and to ensure fair competition at Wood River Extreme Ski Joring Association races. All members, directors, volunteers, and competitors of the Wood River Extreme Ski Joring Association are required to follow these rules.

Divisions and Competition Criteria

OPEN CLASS (Pro): This division is for the highest-skilled competitors and the fastest horses. A team consists of a horse, rider, and skier/snowboarder.

SPORT CLASS (Amateur): This division is for intermediate-level competitors riding horses that may not be fast enough to compete in the Open Class. A team consists of a horse, rider, and skier/snowboarder.

NOVICE/LOCALS CLASS (Beginners): This division is for competitors who are new to the sport or are at the beginner level, riding horses that may not be fast enough to compete in the Open or Sport classes. A team consists of a horse, rider, and skier/snowboarder.

WOMEN'S OPEN DIVISION: Teams are women-only. Both the skier/snowboarder and rider must be women. This division follows the Open Class (Pro) level of competition. A team consists of a horse, rider, and skier/snowboarder.

WOMEN'S NOVICE DIVISION: Teams are women-only. Both the skier/snowboarder and rider must be women. This division is for beginner-level competitors and follows the Novice/Locals Class criteria. A team consists of a horse, rider, and skier/snowboarder.

SNOWBOARDER'S OPEN DIVISION: This division follows the Open Class (Pro) level of competition. Teams consist of a horse, rider, and snowboarder.

SNOWBOARDER'S NOVICE DIVISION: . This division is for beginner-level competitors and follows the Novice/Locals Class criteria. A team consists of a horse, rider, and skier/snowboarder.

COUPLE'S DIVISION: The rider and skier must be a couple. This is a fun/exhibition race for a special prize.

CENTURION DIVISION: Both the rider and skier must be over 50 years of age.

Youth Divisions

Pee-Wee (ages 5–10) and Junior (ages 11–16), based on the age of the skier/snowboarder.
Participants under 18 must have a parent's signature at sign-up.
An adult may pull a Pee-Wee skier, but a Junior skier must be pulled by a youth rider (age 16 or younger).
These are fun/exhibition divisions that compete for a special prize.

Skier/Snowboarder – All Divisions Rules and Recommendations

Rules:

1. A skier/snowboarder may choose their division of competition and is not required to advance to the next class solely because they win that division unless they fall under the advancement requirements listed below.
2. A skier/snowboarder must compete in only one division for the Open, Sport, or Novice divisions, but may cross-enter into the Snowboard and Couples divisions. A woman skier/snowboarder may cross-enter from a Women's division into only one other eligible division (Open, Sport, Novice, Snowboard, or Juniors).
3. A skier/snowboarder may compete only four times in one day but may not compete more than once behind the same horse. This rule applies across all divisions except Couples. If a skier/snowboarder competes behind a horse in one division and then cross-enters into Snowboard or Juniors, they must compete behind a different horse.
4. All skiers/snowboarders must wear approved snow sport helmets.

5. A skier/snowboarder who wins twice in the same division in the 14 months preceding the date of the race must move up to the next division.

Recommendations:

6. Eye protection is recommended.
7. It is strongly suggested that bindings be tested by a professional prior to skiing.

Rider – All Divisions Rules and Recommendations

Rules:

1. A rider may compete in more than one division but must ride a different horse in each division entered in Open, Sport, Women's Pro, Women's Novice, and Novice. A rider may cross-enter with the same horse in Pee-Wee, Juniors, Snowboard, or Couples.

Recommendations:

2. Helmets and protective vests are recommended for all riders.

Horse – All Divisions Rules and Recommendations

Rules:

1. A horse may compete in only one of the following divisions: Open, Sport, Novice, Women's Pro, or Women's Novice. A horse may cross-enter into Pee-Wee, Juniors, Snowboard, or Couples.
2. A horse may run no more than twice per day in Open, Sport, Women's Pro, Women's Novice, or Novice. A horse may run one additional time in Pee-Wee, Juniors, Snowboard, or Couples, for a maximum of three runs per day.
3. The Wood River Extreme Ski Joring Association recommends limiting each horse to two runs for the welfare of the horse and skier/snowboarder. At the team's discretion, a third run is allowed only as a single run in one of the cross-entered divisions: Pee-Wee, Juniors, Snowboard, or Couples.
4. A horse that wins twice in the same division in the 14 months preceding the date of the race must move up to the next division.

Recommendations:

5. Leg protection (boots or polo wraps) and bell boots are strongly recommended.
6. Horses should wear shoes or traction devices that improve traction (e.g., borium or calks).
7. For the horse's safety, the Association recommends that horses be at least four years old to compete.

Board Review and Appeals – Advancement Decisions

The Board of Directors may review wins that trigger an advancement requirement to determine whether they occurred at genuinely competitive events during the skijoring season (December 1 preceding year through current race date) or resulted from one-off circumstances. In making this determination, the Board may consider the circumstances and competitiveness of each event.

Before an advancement decision is finalized, the affected skier/snowboarder may appeal to the Board of Directors and present their case. The horse's owner or rider may appeal on the horse's behalf and present the case to the Board before an advancement decision for the horse is finalized.

Rules of Competition – General

Rules:

1. If there are only two teams in a division, the Association reserves the right to combine that division with another division and run them together.
2. Teams must compete as entered. No substitutions or changes are allowed after the Monday before the race, except in the event of an extreme emergency as determined by the Board of Directors.
3. All entries are nonrefundable once submitted.
4. A two-second penalty will be assessed for each missed or dropped ring.
5. A two-second penalty will be assessed for each missed gate.
6. A two-second penalty will be assessed if the horse hits a gate.
7. A two-second penalty will be assessed if the horse breaks the plane of any jump.
8. A team will receive no time for that run if the horse runs over the start or finish board.

9. A five-second penalty will be assessed if the skier misses a jump.
10. Competitors must listen to and follow the instructions of the starters, race officials, and other designated race personnel. Failure to do so may result in a no time for that run.
11. Adults may not compete in the youth divisions, except that an adult rider may participate in the Pee-Wee Division.
12. The overall payout in each division is based on combined times from Saturday and Sunday. Daily payouts are based on each day's times in each division and are awarded to the three fastest times. Some divisions are for special prizes only and some do not have daily payouts.
13. Impaired competitors will be asked not to compete.
14. No dogs are allowed at the venue.
15. Children are not allowed near the timing shack, announcer's booth, or sound system during the race.
16. If a horse, rider, or piece of equipment is deemed unsafe, any race official may require the horse and rider to leave the venue at any time.
17. An equipment failure will not result in a rerun.
18. Sparby Rule: Only one team may be in the starting gate area at a time. Skiers/snowboarders must remain outside the start gate area until their team is called. Once the arena judge declares the course clear, the team has four minutes to be ready and report to the start. If the team is not ready within four minutes, it will be moved to the end of the division and given one additional opportunity to run. If the team is not ready to start within four minutes on that additional opportunity, it will receive no time for that run.
19. If the skier/snowboarder drops the rope before crossing the start line, the team will be allowed one immediate restart after the false start. The four-minute clock begins or restarts when the arena judge determines that the course is clear. If the skier/snowboarder drops the rope again on the restart, the team will receive no time for that run. If the horse runs the course during the false start, officials may move the team back a few positions in the running order to allow reasonable recovery time. If the team is last in the division, it should be scheduled to run first, before the next division begins.
20. If the skier/snowboarder hits the flapper board but does not cross it and the clock starts, the skier/snowboarder will receive no time for that run.
21. When crossing the finish line, the skier/snowboarder must be holding the rope, standing, and on at least one ski.
22. If the skier/snowboarder loses the rope, the team will receive no time for that run.
23. Both ski tips and both boots must pass around a gate; otherwise, the gate is considered missed.
24. Skiers/snowboarders and riders may grab or spear rings using an arm and carry them on that arm across the finish line for the rings to count as successfully collected. Any rings dropped before the finish line are considered missed.
25. If a ring or rings fall from the stand before the skier/snowboarder approaches, no missed-ring penalty will be assessed. No missed-ring penalty will be assessed if a ring comes apart or is broken.
26. Batons are not allowed.
27. If the rider, skier/snowboarder, or horse is unable to complete the second run, the team may not find a replacement, and the team will be disqualified.
28. Skiers/snowboarders and horses are not allowed on the track before course inspection.
29. During course inspection, skiers/snowboarders must wear their skis/snowboard and may not ski or snowboard off the tops of the jumps.
30. Riders may walk their horse down the track only once, from start to finish.
31. All times will be made available to competitors.
32. Protests:
    a. All protests must be made immediately after the run is completed and before the next skier/snowboarder's run begins.
    b. The decision of the race jury is final.
33. The following will result in a no time:
    a. Violation of any state or federal law pertaining to the exhibition, care, or custody of horses during the race.
    b. Abuse of an animal on the track, or evidence of abuse before or during a horse's participation in competition.
    c. Use of illegal equipment, including added wire on bits.
    d. Failure to dismount or to present the horse and equipment to the horse gate official when asked.

Recommendation:

34. The rules will not be reviewed verbally with all competitors before the race. Only safety items will be discussed during the contestants' meeting.
35. Horses will be subject to random equipment checks. The Wood River Extreme Ski Joring Association Horse Gate Official will inspect all tack and the rope's attachment to the saddle. If requested by the Horse Gate Official, a rider may be asked to drop the bit.

36. The Association reserves the right to repair the course at any time during the race to protect the safety of competitors and horses.

Race Equipment

Rules:

1. No team may use a rope with a handle or any type of water-ski-style rope.
2. Teams must provide their own ropes and carabiners. Ropes may be no longer than 33 feet. WRESJA must approve the ropes during the pre-race track inspection and will mark them.
3. The rider may choose how to attach the rope to the saddle, provided the attachment complies with the following requirements:
    a. Attachment is to the saddle horn.
    b. Under strain, the attachment must be within four inches (4") of the cantle.
    c. The attachment must be made directly to the saddle's primary rigging rings using non-elastic material.
    d. The pull rope must connect to the saddle along the horse's centerline using a carabiner-type device.
    e. A Wood River Extreme Ski Joring Association Technical Delegate must approve any saddle attachment before the race.

Sportsmanship

To keep skijoring a fun, family-friendly sport, all participants are required to demonstrate good sportsmanship at every race. Ski-Joring officials, field flaggers, and other race officials may issue warnings or disqualify any person or team they determine is acting in an unsportsmanlike manner. Failure to follow a warning from race personnel may result in disqualification. Mistreating a horse; using inappropriate language toward officials, spectators, or other competitors; or throwing or mistreating equipment are grounds for disqualification. All protests and complaints must be brought to the Wood River Extreme Ski Joring Association Technical Delegate and Jury at that race. Every team must act in a sportsmanlike, reasonable, and professional manner.

Official time is the only time used for race results.