

MFHA Field Hunter Championship Rules and Conditions for Qualifiers and Finals

The MFHA Field Hunter Championship is to be held under the auspices of the Masters of Foxhounds Association. During the 2022-2023 hunting season, regional field hunter competitions will be held in each of the fifteen MFHA districts across the United States and Canada. The two (2) divisions of each Qualifier will be Adult/Junior Hunter (jumping) and Adult/Junior Hilltopper (non-jumping). (Please note: the non-jumpers will go at the same pace and over the same terrain as the jumpers.) The top six horses in each division of these Qualifiers will earn the title of MFHA Field Hunter. The top two (2) horses in each division from each District Qualifier will be invited to compete in the finals scheduled for May 27, 2023, during the festivities at the Virginia Foxhounds Show. From this group of competitors, the MFHA Field Hunter Grand Champion and Reserve Grand Champion for each division will be chosen.

GENERAL CONDITIONS

All horses, owners, trainers and riders must be acceptable to the Committees of the Qualifiers and of the Finals, hereafter referred to as the Committees.

The Committees reserve the right to refuse any entry.

Good sportsmanship must be exhibited at all times. Any discourteous behavior may result in disqualification.

All decisions of the judges are final.

The Committees and the owners of properties on which the competitions are held assume no responsibility for injury or loss incurred by either participants or spectators, and entries are accepted only under the condition that the participants release them, as well as fellow participants, from any and all liability.

The Committees may vary the conditions or courses in any way which may seem in the best interests of the competition.

No schooling will be allowed at any time over the competition course. Schooling fences, where appropriate, will be provided.

Riders must be in proper hunting attire. Horses should be clean and properly tacked for foxhunting. Bridles, bits, saddles and other equipment should be traditional hunting tack. Competitors may be penalized for deviations of tack (e.g. unusual bits, etc.) at the judges' discretion.

ELIGIBILITY FOR THE TWO DIVISIONS

Each horse and rider combination must have fairly hunted 6 or more times for at least half the hunting day with a MFHA recognized or registered pack. Riders must be

Page two

members or subscribers of a recognized or registered hunt. The above requirements are to be certified in writing by the Master of the appropriate hunt using the Horse and Rider Certification form provided by the Committee. The completed form must accompany the entry form.

All owners and riders must be subscribing members of the MFHA. A copy of the subscribing membership cards must accompany the entry form.

Horses and riders may only compete in the Qualifier being held for their hunt's MFHA District. In the instance where two Qualifiers are held in one district, a rider may compete two different horses, one in each Qualifier, provided all entry criteria are met for each horse/rider combination. A horse may only be competed in one Qualifier. If a rider belongs to two hunts each located in a different MFHA district, that rider may compete two different horses, one in each district, provided all entry criteria are met for each horse/rider combination. Again, a horse may only be competed in one Qualifier.

Juniors, those over 11 & under 18 years as of January 1, 2022, whether riding ponies or horses, will compete with adults. A parent's signature & the Junior's birth date are required on the entry form. A Best Junior Award will be given, when applicable, for each of the two divisions (jumping & non-jumping) at each District Qualifier and at the Finals.

COMPETITION FORMAT

Most of the Qualifiers are formatted like the Finals in four phases as follows:

- Turnout: The competitors, divided into two sections (Adults and Juniors), will first be judged on turnout, including appointments. This phase has its own award which will not count toward placings in a qualifier or in the Finals. It is independent of and judged separately from the performance phases of the competition and, as noted, is divided between adults and juniors unlike the performance phases. The Best Turned Out phase does not count toward the selection of the qualifying competitors. Once the judging is completed, the competitors, if not wearing safety headgear, must change into safety headgear before the riding phases begin. Please note that the performance phases, though not judged on appointments, are to be ridden in proper hunting attire and tack. Any substantial deviation from traditional attire and tack during the performance phases may incur penalties at the judges' discretion.

- Under Saddle: Competitors in the two divisions (first jumping, then hill-topping) will be asked to walk, trot, canter, hand gallop, halt, back or stand at the judges' discretion allowing the judges to see the horses' way of going and get an overall view of the competitors.

- **Cross Country:** This phase (the highest weighted of the three performance phases) consists of a mock hunt or possibly a short drag hunt, depending on the feasibility of using hounds. Competitors will follow a field master for approximately 2.5 to 3.5 miles over fair hunting country with obstacles and typical hunting situations, including checks, a ware staff, queuing up in front of a fence (not applicable to hilltoppers), etc.

- **Individual Test:** The judges will then pick 8 or 10 horses to perform an individual test. For the jumping division, it will consist of a handy hunter course of about 8 fences, possibly including a trot over fence, a gate to be opened and closed, a rail to be dropped, a lead over fence and a horse to be ponied. The test for the non-jumping division may include a hand gallop and halt, a gate to be opened and closed, a rail to be dropped, a lead over fence and a horse to be ponied. From each of these groups of 8 or 10 horses, a champion and reserve will be pinned for each of the two divisions.

The number of participants in a qualifier is not limited. If there are more than 50 participants, two divisions (with as equal numbers as possible) of under saddle and cross country will be run. Four or five individuals will then be chosen from each division and the individual test will be run with the top horses from each division combined.

REQUIRED FORMS

Entry Forms

The official entry form for all District Qualifiers may be obtained from the District Qualifiers or down-loaded from the MFHA website, www.mfha.org. All entrants must read and sign the entry form (which includes a release of liability and indemnity), and a parent or guardian must sign for a junior (under the age of 18 as of January 1, 2022).

Checks covering entry fees should be made payable to the appropriate District Qualifier following their instructions on the entry blank.

Owners shall be held responsible for all entry fees of all horses entered by them or their agents. Horses entered may be scratched without a veterinarian certificate, by written notice to the Qualifier or Finals chairman by letter or FAX received at least 5 days before the competition. A \$25 Entry Processing Fee is not refundable. Horses that are scratched from a Qualifier may be substituted with a new horse, who meets all of the entry requirements, at no additional charge.

Horse and Rider Certification

As described in the Eligibility section, each horse and rider combination must submit with the entry form a Horse and Rider Certification signed by the Master of the hunt they represent. It states that the pair has fairly hunted with and is qualified to represent that hunt. Forms are available on the MFHA website, www.mfha.org.

Page four

Coggins Tests and Other Health Documents

For District Qualifiers and for the Finals, all horses must be accompanied by a report (available on the day of competition) of an official negative test for equine infectious anemia (Coggins Test) conducted within the 12 months prior to the date of competition and a vet certificate showing proof of vaccination for EHV 1 & 4 conducted within 6 months prior to the date of competition. District Qualifiers must keep a log of the coggins dates and state accession numbers for state inspection if requested. For the Finals which will be held in Virginia, the Virginia Department of Agriculture requires an interstate health certificate dated within 30 days accompany any horse shipping from outside Virginia.

Releases

In addition to the entry form, all riders must read and sign waiver of liability forms provided by the District Qualifiers.

Medical Insurance

A copy of the rider's current medical insurance information and emergency contacts must be on their person while they are competing.

FINALS: The top two horses in each division of each District Qualifier will be eligible to compete in the Finals. Exceptions are:

- In the instance where two qualifiers are held in one district, the top horse in each division of each qualifier is eligible to compete in the Finals.
- In the instance where two districts are combined in one qualifier, entries from the two districts will be judged at the same time but scored separately. The judges may select two horses from each division of each of the two districts, with the possibility of eight horses chosen for the Finals from that Qualifier.

The same horse and rider pair must compete in the Finals as competed in the Qualifier; that is, no substitutions will be accepted for the Finals.

Entry forms for the finals on May 27, 2023 must be postmarked by April 24, 2023, and mailed to Penny Denegre, MFH, 22277 Foxstone Farm Lane, Middleburg, VA 20117.

AWARDS:

Winners must be present and dressed in proper hunting attire at all award ceremonies.

Qualifier Awards: The first six horses in each division at each District Qualifier will receive ribbons and the title of a MFHA Field Hunter. There will be an award for Best Junior and Best Turned Out.

Final Awards: The first and second place horses in each division of the Finals will earn the title of MFHA Field Hunter Grand Champion and MFHA Field Hunter Reserve Grand Champion. MFHA Best Junior and MFHA Best Turned Out will also be awarded.