RULES & REGULATIONS

COMPETITION HANDBOOK | SKIJOR ALBERTA

Rodeo on Snow • Athlete safety • Fair competition • Western heritage

1 Purpose & authority

Skijor Alberta promotes safe, fair and competitive equine-powered winter sport. Each team consists of three athletes: a horse, a rider and a skier or snowboarder (collectively, the “slider”). All participants, coaches, support persons and spectators are expected to uphold these rules and the Code of Conduct throughout the event, including staging, competition and awards.

The President, Equine Director and Ski Director may make safety and conduct decisions within their respective authority, including removal or disqualification as described below. Event officials’ safety directions must be followed immediately. Venue-specific requirements may supplement these rules but must not compromise safety or competitive fairness.

2 Competition divisions

Junior

Both the horse rider and the skier must be under 18 years of age on the date of competition. A parent or legal guardian must complete the required minor consent and waiver documents. Junior participation is subject to any additional event-specific safety and eligibility requirements.

Novice

For developing competitors who are new to skijoring or building experience. A competitor who has previously won a championship buckle at a skijor event is not eligible for Novice and must enter Open (or another appropriate eligible division).

Open

For experienced competitors demonstrating a higher skill level and typically faster competitive times than Novice. Competitors who have won a skijor buckle are to enter Open unless otherwise eligible for a separately designated division.

Snowboard

A separate division for snowboard athletes. The event will configure or adapt the course, as practical, to better suit snowboard riding while maintaining appropriate safety and consistent judging.

The event may review entries and reclassify competitors where necessary for fairness or safety. Division eligibility and the final competition format will be confirmed at check-in.

3 Race format, timing & scoring

- Each team will run one time in their division
- A skier or snowboarder must negotiate the prescribed gates and jumps. Both ski tips and both boots must pass around a gate for the gate to count; snowboard competitors must follow the course instructions provided at the safety meeting.
- To record a valid finish, the slider must cross the finish line upright or crouched, in control, with the rope in hand, and with no more than two body contact points on the ground.
- Official times and penalties are announced after each run and posted on the official timing board.

Time penalties

- 2 seconds — horse leaving the designated course.
- 2 seconds — horse knocking over an obstacle.
- 2 seconds — slider missing an obstacle or gate.
- 2 seconds — slider missing a designated jump, where applicable under the course rules.
- 5 seconds — missed required jump.

Where a jump is designated as a required jump, the 5-second missed-jump penalty applies rather than an additional 2-second missed-jump penalty for the same infraction. Officials will explain course-specific scoring at the safety meeting.

4 Horse & rider requirements

- A horse may compete on a maximum of 3 teams, except that a horse entered in Novice may be permitted to run more than once subject to approval and welfare considerations.
- A rider may ride up to 3 horses in one competition day.
- Horses must be ridden in a standard bit or hackamore; riding in halters is prohibited.
- A western saddle is required. Appropriate traction, including corks or borium where suitable, is strongly recommended.
- No horse, rider, skier or snowboarder substitutions are permitted during competition.
- Officials may refuse a horse entry or start when its behaviour presents a danger to staff, competitors or other horses, particularly in the staging area.

5 Skier & snowboarder requirements

- A slider may compete on up to 3 separate teams, subject to division eligibility and event approval.
- An approved, properly fitted helmet and eye protection are mandatory.
- Adult divisions require competitors to be at least 18 years old; Junior participants must meet the Junior division criteria.
- The slider must keep control of the rope through the finish and comply with the prescribed course.
- No substitutions of team members are permitted once competition has begun.

6 Race equipment

- Competitors must bring their own equipment, ensure it is suitable and in safe working order, and arrive prepared for inspection and competition.
- Tow ropes must be longer than 35 feet and shorter than 50 feet in length.
- Tow ropes must have a diameter of at least 3/8 inch.
- Handles and knots on tow ropes are prohibited.
- All ropes, rigging and other equipment are subject to inspection and approval by event safety officials before use.
- HIGHLY recommend a quick release on the rigging system
- A western saddle and approved tow-rigging arrangement are required. The event safety briefing will identify any additional restrictions.

7 Safety inspections & medical support

Designated safety inspectors will check horses, riders, sliders and equipment at the gate. If any component is considered unsafe, the Equine Director or another authorized official may deny entry or direct the team to leave the track. The rider must comply immediately.

An ambulance and/or first-responder crew will be on site, with backup emergency medical support arranged as appropriate. Veterinary support will be available during competition; treatment fees for privately owned horses remain the responsibility of the owner or entrant.

8 Equine welfare & humane treatment

The welfare of horses is paramount. The on-site veterinarian or veterinary technician may recommend or direct that a horse be withdrawn for health or safety reasons. The President, Equine Director and Ski Director each have authority to disqualify a horse and rider for mistreatment or unsafe conduct. Upon such direction, the horse and rider must exit the track immediately.

Horse abuse includes any act or omission likely to cause unnecessary pain, fear, injury or distress. Prohibited conduct includes:

- Excessive whipping, striking or beating;
- Use of any electric-shock device;
- Excessive or persistent use of spurs;
- Jabbing, jerking or otherwise misusing a bit or other equipment;
- Any other deliberate or reckless treatment that compromises a horse's welfare.

Any board director or authorized event official may request veterinary examination of a horse before it is allowed to race or continue. A horse may be scratched or disqualified when its welfare or safe participation is in question.

9 Code of conduct & sportsmanship

Participation in a Skijor Alberta event is a privilege conditional on respectful, safe and ethical conduct. These standards apply to competitors, owners, crew, volunteers, officials, board members, sponsors and attendees throughout the event site and at all event-related activities.

Expected standards

- Treat every person with dignity and respect, regardless of experience, division, role or competitive result.
- Compete fairly; respect the rules, official decisions, other athletes and the welfare of every horse.

- Use calm, professional language when raising concerns; address officials through the designated process and without interrupting competition.
- Follow reasonable instructions from event officials, medical personnel, veterinary personnel and security.
- Maintain self-control, act responsibly and help foster a family-friendly, welcoming environment.
- Do not engage in bullying, intimidation, harassment, discrimination, retaliation, threats, aggressive confrontation or physical violence.
- Do not verbally abuse, insult, humiliate or mistreat competitors, staff, volunteers, board members, officials or members of the public.

Zero tolerance & enforcement

Skijor Alberta maintains a zero-tolerance policy for verbal violence, threats, harassment, intimidation, physical violence and mistreatment of competitors, staff, board members, volunteers or the general public. Any breach of this Code at any time during the event may result in immediate disciplinary action, without prior warning where the seriousness of the conduct warrants it.

The President, Ski Director or Equine Director may disqualify a participant from the event, revoke event privileges and direct that person to leave the track or premises. Security may escort the person from the venue. A person who refuses a lawful direction to leave may be removed by security in accordance with venue procedures and applicable law; police may be contacted when necessary. Further action may include suspension from future events, subject to an appropriate review process.

Safety-critical directions take effect immediately. Where practicable, the person concerned may provide an explanation to event leadership after the immediate risk has been controlled. Good-faith reporting of safety or misconduct concerns is encouraged and retaliation is prohibited.

10 Complaints, protests & official decisions

Concerns about track conditions must be raised promptly, professionally and through the designated event official. Skijor Alberta delegates will review the concern and determine appropriate action.

Questions about scoring or time must be brought to the Arena Boss or Finish Line/Timing Judge immediately after the run and before leaving the finish area. Announcers and volunteers do not adjudicate scoring protests. Decisions will be communicated by the appropriate event official.

11 Grounds for disqualification

- Violation of applicable laws or venue rules;
- Animal abuse, mistreatment or conduct endangering any person or horse;
- Use of prohibited or unsafe equipment, or refusal of required inspection;
- Failure to dismount, present a horse or equipment, or follow an official safety direction;
- The slider dropping or releasing the rope during a competitive run;
- A rider or slider being intoxicated or impaired by alcohol or drugs;
- Any serious or repeated breach of the Code of Conduct.

The organizers may take immediate action when safety, welfare or orderly operation of the event is at risk. All competitors are responsible for knowing these rules and attending the mandatory safety briefing.