

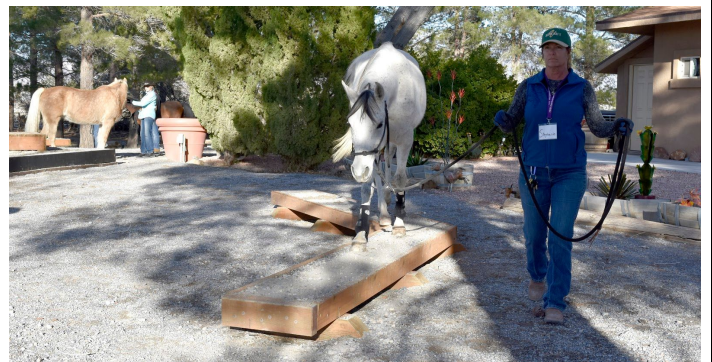


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IMTCA Mountain Trail Challenge Competition Cheat Sheet

Overview - Participants - Divisions - Levels - Scoring



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Overview — A competitive event for Mountain Trail and Extreme Mountain Trail is known as a 'Challenge.' Challenges are judged events designed to show the confidence, boldness and athletic ability of all breeds and all disciplines of horses, ponies and mules while being challenged by trail obstacles. A Challenge tests a horse and rider's ability to safely navigate obstacles as they move forward in a natural gait that covers ground as if they were on a long day's ride. Judges evaluate rider and horse pairs on technical accuracy, finesse, forward motion, confidence, and horsemanship. In Challenges contestants are required to navigate a course with at least 6 approved obstacles and no more than 16. Mountain Trail requires navigating obstacles at a walking pace. Extreme Mountain Trail requires navigating between obstacles at all gaits. Extreme Mountain Trail is not a race, but the combination of loping, cantering, trotting, jogging and/or gaiting makes this sport move along at a faster pace than Mountain Trail.

Eligible Equines — A Mountain Trail horse may be any equine species — and any breed of equine species — including horses, minis, drafts, donkeys, mules, and any hybrids. Equines, like minis, that cannot be ridden may compete in-hand.

Participant Types — Participant Types define how the participant will complete the class.

Lead Line This is defined as a horse/participant pair where a participant rides the equine under-saddle and requires a lead line from an adult by their side

In-Hand This is defined as a horse/participant pair where a participant handles and leads the equine from the ground

Rider This is defined as a horse/participant pair where where a participant rides the equine under-saddle

Divisions — Divisions define the type of participant who can participate in these classes.

Novice This is defined as any first year Mountain Trail handler/rider as of January 1st of the current calendar year

Youth This is defined as participants under the age of 18 years old as of January 1st of the current calendar year; minimum age to compete is 6 years; all youth competitors are required to wear helmets

Adult This is defined as participants 18 and older - (*Note: for Schooling Challenges only, Trainers may compete in the Adult Division if no Open Division is offered*)

Open This is defined as any handler/rider, except for Novice; Trainers may only compete in the Open Division (*Note: for Schooling Challenges Trainers may compete in the Adult Division if no Open Division is offered*)

Levels — Levels define the strength of partnership required between rider and horse to successfully compete in Mountain Trail.

Level 1 — Beginning/training; walking only; in-hand or riding. Level 1 indicates a beginning Mountain Trail partnership. The rider and horse pair may not have established complete trust and may be uncertain about each others' ability to negotiate simple obstacles. Courses in Level 1 should be easy to explain and require basic maneuvers and techniques to successfully complete. The Level 1 course will be completed at a flat-footed walk in a forward motion.

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Level 2 — Intermediate/developing; walk and trot; in-hand or riding. Level 2 indicates an established and developing Mountain Trail partnership. The rider and horse have developed a basic rapport, exhibit trust when negotiating obstacles, have started to incorporate some finesse, can negotiate some complex difficult obstacles and patterns, and can successfully complete a longer course. Courses in Level 2 should be more complex and challenge the rider and horse to employ intermediate maneuvers and techniques to successfully complete. The Level 2 course may include some jog, trot, running walk, gait or intermediate gait up to and between obstacles; 180 and 360 degree maneuvers on some obstacles.

Level 3 — Advanced/master; walk, trot and canter/lope; in-hand or riding. Level 3 indicates a more sophisticated and precise Mountain Trail partnership. The rider and horse have established a strong and connected rapport, exhibit a polished trust, can negotiate difficult obstacles and patterns with finesse, and are conditioned to boldly complete longer courses. Courses in Level 3 should be complex and challenging, requiring advanced maneuvers and techniques, and a high level of finesse to successfully complete. The Level 3 course may include some jog, trot, running walk, gait, intermediate gait, canter, lope, canter/lope up to and between obstacles.

The IMTCA Scoring System — The IMTCA Scoring System is recognized as one of the leading formats for fair and equitable judging of an equine event that combines technical and stylistic elements coupled with consideration of “degree of difficulty.” Scoring is based on the ability of rider and horse partnership to safely navigate the course, moving boldly forward with a willing attitude, negotiating the obstacles with calmness, patience, and finesse. It is recognized that each breed may have a different head set, speed of forward motion or gait. ***Refer to attached 2018 Judges Scoring Reference sheet for more information.***

Scoring Overview — Every rider/horse pair starts with 70 points. Points are earned and deducted as Pairs complete each obstacle. The same judging criteria are applied to each obstacle without exception.

The Anatomy of an Obstacle — Each obstacle is judged in three sections: the entry, navigating (the body), and the exit. A gait between obstacles, other than a walk, is itself considered an obstacle and is also judged in three sections. Points can be earned or deducted while completing each section of an obstacle.

Point Deductions For Each Obstacle — Up to 9 points can be deducted while working each obstacle; up to 2 points for the entry; up to 5 points for the body; and up to 2 points for the exit. When no mistakes are made in any section of the obstacle then the pair earns a zero. After 3 refusals for any obstacle, 9 points are deducted and the Pair is asked to move on. If a Pair misses an obstacle or chooses not to attempt an obstacle 18 points are deducted. ***Refer to attached 2018 Judges Scoring Reference sheet.***

Wow (Plus) Points For Each Obstacle — Pairs can earn up to 3 Wow (or Plus) points for each obstacle, 1 point while navigating each section. If a pair navigates an obstacle in such a way that a judge experiences a Wow factor then they may Plus the pair's score, 1 point for each section. ***Refer to attached 2018 Judges Scoring Reference sheet.***

Horsemanship Points — Pairs can also earn up to 5 Horsemanship points. ***Refer to attached 2018 Judges Scoring Reference sheet.***

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Other Miscellaneous Rules and Requirements

- Both English and Western tack are appropriate
- The minimum age for horses in-hand is six months
- The minimum age for horses under saddle is two years
- Participants on horseback or in-hand handlers must be at least 6 years of age, or receive pre approval from Happy Hoof Beats
- A horse may be ridden bitless
- Western Donut and Prong bits are not allowed
- English Excessive Port and Triangular Mouth bits are not allowed
- Snaffle bit rings may be no larger than 4" (100 mm) in diameter
- Gag bits, of any style are not allowed
- Horses may not be ridden under saddle in halters
- For handlers, halters and lead ropes will be rope, leather, or synthetic. Lead ropes shall be sufficient length to safely maneuver through the obstacles, 12' – 15' is recommended
- Halters, cavessons, bosals, bosalitas, or nosebands are allowed to be worn under a bridle — they must allow for two fingers to fit between the equipment and the horse's jaw
- Halters, mechanical hackamores, or other styles of bitless headstalls that apply compressive pressure are not allowed
- Draw reins are not allowed
- Chains and correction halters that tighten are not allowed
- Standing and running martingales are not allowed
- Tie-downs are not allowed



The IMTCA Handbook can be downloaded at imtca.org.

IMTCA Judge Scoring Reference 2018

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Points	-1/2	-1 to -1 1/2	-2	-3	-4	-5	+1
Entry 2 points	Slightly off center	Not straight 1 horse length	Refuse 2				Acknowledges obstacle No break of gait (wow)
	Slightly not 1 horse length	Pause more than 3 seconds	Won't enter				
	Slightly not straight	Refuse 1	Jump in				
	Hopping in/out (2 front or 2 back)	Horse not straight					
		Hopping in					
Points	-1/2	-1 to -1 1/2	-2	-3	-4	-5	+1
Body 5 points	Tic	Hopping in	Stumbles	Horse distracted	Small rearing	Out of obstacle 2 feet	Nice consistent forward gait (wow)
	Slightly off center	Break gait	Rushing	Consistent tight rein	Unsafe but not -5	3 refusals	
	At entry	Per each stride	Break gait	Horse not listening		Falls off obstacle	
	Slightly un- straight	Each off center stride	By 2 strides			Off course	
	Hopping in/out (2 front or 2 back)	Lose fwd motion	Wrong lead at lope			Disobedience	
		Moves or steps on obstacle	Break gait at lope			4+ steps on dismount or ground tie	
		Incorrect gait or lead	Knockdown			Holding on to saddle except mount, dismount or Going up/down hill	
		Horse steps 1 on dismount	1 foot out of obstacle			Excessive whipping or spurring	
		Ground tie				Horse rears/bucks	
		Skip required space/step				Seriously unsafe	
		Off center/				Drops obstacle	
						Let go of gate	
Points	-1/2	-1 to -1 1/2	-2	-3	-4	-5	+1
Exit 2 points	Slightly off center	Hurry/rushes	Not safe				Acknowledges obstacle No break of gait (wow)
	Slightly not 1 horse length	Not straight 1 horse length	Jumps out				
	Slightly not straight	Not centered	Doesn't exit at exit				
	Hopping in/out (2 front or 2 back)	Hopping out					
Entry Disqualification							
Horse or rider falls		Abuse/aggressive schooling				Improper language to judge	
Horsemanship = 5 points Deductions (-1 to -5)							
Excessive use of hands to instill fear or praise		Equipment failure or unsafe				Does not acknowledge Judge	
Jerk on bit		Enter/Exit from incorrect side/direction					
Excessive spurring		Riding outside boundary				2 hands riding Western in shank bit	
Overcorrection of horse		Failure of correct gait between obstacles				2 hands riding Western Senior Horse in snaffle, or bosal	
Dirty tack		Failure of travel line between obstacles				Novice and Level 1 = -1	
Dirty horse		Head too low or over flexed				Level 2 = -2	
Consistent tight rein		Inappropriate to judge				Level 3 = -3	
						Open = -5	

