

A Draft Proposal for
The NCHA National Circuit Finals

The Objective: Attract and keep NCHA competitors by creating prestige and motivation for increased participation at the local level by cutters who are not interested in hauling, or cannot feasibly haul, for the World Championships, but who desire and are able to compete and achieve in a smaller geographical area.

The Strategy: Improve the incentives and create value for participating in the NCHA by...

- Offering regional circuit opportunities for annual achievement in an environment that respects the needs and motives of rank-and-file competitors, while sustaining incentives and recognition for NCHA members desiring to haul for the World Finals.
- Creating a show infrastructure that gives all competitors the ability and incentive to rise to their desired and feasible levels of achievement.
- Giving regions maximum flexibility regarding format, location, and dates in order for them to be able to foster maximum attractiveness for their members and their affiliated regional associations and show producers.

The Method: A system of regional circuit shows and regional Circuit Finals, leading to an annual NCHA National Circuit Finals show.

- Each region puts on its own regional series of designated qualifying shows, leading to its own annual regional Circuit Finals show.
- NCHA puts on the NCHA National Circuit Finals show each year (e.g., in late winter/early spring).
- Each region decides its regional circuit qualifying shows and regional Circuit Finals show location, date, format, etc.
- Each region sends the top X finishers in its regional Circuit Finals to the NCHA National Circuit Finals show.
- Rider/horse earnings in the regional circuit qualifying shows, each region's Circuit Finals show, and the NCHA National Circuit Finals show count toward that year's World Standings.
- The regional circuit shows and NCHA National Circuit Finals show can include the same LAE and weekend classes as the current NCHA World Finals.
- Similar to other high-profile events, ranging from The American rodeo to the PRCA's National Circuit Finals Rodeo to the United States Golf Association's US Open, the ultimate NCHA National Circuit Finals show champions in each class are determined solely by a qualifying contestant's performance in the NCHA National Circuit Finals show

(i.e., the NCHA National Circuit Finals are “blank slate” and do not depend on qualifiers’ pre-Finals show earnings in the regional circuits).

Advantages:

- The World Finals path and the regional circuit/NCHA National Circuit Finals path complement each other and provide incentives for participating in the NCHA *at all levels*.
- The two paths to pinnacle achievement – the World Finals and the NCHA National Circuit Finals – correspond to those who can and want to “haul” for the World Finals and those who can’t or don’t want to “haul”, but who love competition and the sport of cutting.
- The system of regional circuits, regional Circuit Finals, and the NCHA National Circuit Finals creates moments of award and recognition at progressive levels of competition which clubs and affiliates can offer their rank-and-file cutters, strengthening those clubs and affiliates and increasing incentives to belong to the NCHA.
- The system of regional circuits, regional Circuit Finals, and the NCHA National Circuit Finals provides competitors with a “progression through levels” path to achievement that has proven successful across numerous sports membership organizations that simultaneously *and successfully* serve members who span the range from local amateurs to finest-in-the-world professionals (e.g., the PRCA, the NRHA, the United States Tennis Association, the United States Golf Association).
- Counting regional Circuit Finals show and NCHA National Circuit Finals show earnings toward that year’s World Standings “jump starts” interested competitors’ path to the World Finals.

Finances:

- Each entry in a region’s qualifying shows pays an \$X regional fee.
- Accumulated regional fees are divided among the regions for production of each regional Circuit Finals show and, upon the choice of the region, regional Circuit Finals-qualifying shows – creating financial incentive for clubs and their cutters to be part of the NCHA.

Questions:

- Should the NCHA regions eventually be reorganized in order to match current actual competitive patterns?
- Will the system of regional Circuit Finals plus a NCHA National Circuit Finals show naturally replace the current Eastern and Western Nationals?
- How many qualifiers should come from each region to the NCHA National Circuit Finals show?
- With berths in the NCHA National Circuit Finals show at stake, should qualification for a region’s year-end regional Circuit Finals show depend on a competitor’s *accumulated*

earnings in that region’s designated qualifying shows; should it depend on *placements* in that region’s designated qualifying shows (e.g., placing in the money in at least X shows); or, to build affiliate interest and participation, should qualification for a region’s year-end regional circuit finals show depend on earnings or placements at the sub-region *affiliate* level (as in the NRHA)? Would it be feasible for different regions to answer these questions differently?

- Should the top X regional qualifiers for the NCHA National Circuit Finals show be determined by accumulated earnings (*including* earnings in the region’s regional circuit year-end finals show) in that region’s designated qualifier shows; or should a region’s qualifiers for the NCHA National Circuit Finals show consist of that region’s top X competitors as determined *solely* by performance (earnings or a blank-slate finals “shootout”) in the region’s year-end regional Circuit Finals show?
- What is the appropriate location for the NCHA National Circuit Finals show? Numerous options can be considered, ranging from tying into the Super Stakes so as to enhance facilities use during the Super Stakes, to integration into other major horse sport events (such as the Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo, the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo, The American), to establishment of a base in a city with appropriate facilities and willingness to support the event, to rotation through multiple such cities.
- Since some competitors will be hauling across multiple regional circuits for the World Finals and to discourage “venue shopping” by haulers, should regional circuit competitors be required to declare a single regional circuit in which they are competing for a berth in the NCHA National Circuit Finals show? Or would it be sufficient to simply limit competitors to representing no more than one single region in the NCHA National Circuit Finals show?
- What is a reasonable level of \$X for the regional fee (see above) to be charged at all shows which count toward, and include, participation in a region’s year-end regional Circuit Finals show?
- How should the accumulated \$X regional fees be allocated (e.g., an equal amount to each region; proportional to each region’s generation of such fees; or a hybrid in which each region gets an equal amount from a portion of the nationally-accumulated fees, and the remaining portion of the nationally-accumulated fees is allocated according in proportion to each region’s generation of such fees)?

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