

2024 USPA I/I Tournament Conditions

A. General Program Information

(1) The USPA Intercollegiate/Interscholastic (I/I) Committee shall be led by the I/I Chairman. The I/I Committee will be broken into three sub-groups: I/I Tournament & Regular Season (**T&RS**), I/I Funding & Awards, and I/I Program & Club Sustainability. The I/I Chairman will serve as the chair of one of the sub-groups and will appoint a chair to each of the remaining sub-groups.

(2) The I/I Chairman shall appoint a National Host Tournament Committee (NHTC), which will include the following persons: COO of the USPA or their designee, the I/I Committee Chair(s), the chairs of the remaining two sub-groups, and three I/I Tournaments & Regular Season sub-group designees: Tournament Umpire, Tournament Experience, and Arena Rules. The NHTC shall conduct each I/I event/tournament. A coach of a participating team may not serve on the NHTC. All NHTC members shall serve one-year terms with no limit to number of years served.

a. Any exceptions or clarifications to the I/I Tournament Conditions will be handled and ruled upon by the NHTC. The decision of the NHTC shall be final.

b. To the extent there is an issue with eligibility or play that is not addressed in these conditions, the NHTC will turn to the NCAA rules for guidance.

c. In the event of any circumstances that may not be covered by these conditions, the decision of the NHTC shall be final.

(3) The USPA I/I Committee will have two Coaches' Representatives, that are nominated and voted on by the current year I/I coaches. There will be one Interscholastic Coach and one Intercollegiate Coach selected. Coaches' Reps will serve a two-year term, with a staggered rotation. The three sub-group chairs, in addition to the two I/I Coaches Representatives as ex-officio (non-voting) members, will serve as the I/I Leadership Group.

(4) The USPA I/I Chairman will appoint a Hardship Waiver Sub-Committee, as needed, which will include the following persons: the I/I Chairman, one member from each of the three I/I subgroups, one at-large member and the two Coaches' Representatives as ex-officio (non-voting) members, to total seven members.

(5) I/I Communication

a. The primary method of communication for the I/I Program shall be through email and the USPA website.

b. For the purpose of reminding teams of approaching deadlines, communication shall occur in the following order: 1. website 2. email 3. telephone.

c. All teams must supply current contact information to the USPA I/I Program Director and advise the Program Director of any changes. Teams are responsible for maintaining current contact information with the USPA.

B. Games/Events

(1) All games, events, and tournaments shall be played under the USPA Arena Rules, as outlined in the current year official USPA Rule Book, subject to such modifications as the I/I Committee may impose. Any modifications shall be published prior to the event.

Current year modifications:

a. All I/I Tournaments and Qualified Games will be played using a "Split String" as outlined in the I/I Information Packet. Procedures for using a split string as well as the

procedure for utilizing a spare if needed shall be followed as outlined on the split string sheet.

b. Teams are required to play four chukker games.

i. Prior staff approval with a minimum of 24-hour notice is required for the following exceptions:

a. To hold a shortened game on the following terms:

i. In the case of insufficient horses, teams may agree to play abbreviated games of no less than two chukkers.

b. Cases of last-minute scheduling will not be considered an acceptable reason to host a game of less than 4 chukkers.

c. Two chukker round robins

d. If shortened games are granted, a total of eight chukkers must be played by a team to meet the minimum tournament qualifications.

ii. NHTC approval may be granted after a game has been completed for the following exceptions:

a. If officials call a game due to inclement weather or darkness and it cannot be rescheduled, the score at the time the game was called shall stand and the game shall be considered complete.

b. In extreme weather conditions, chukkers may be shortened to no less than five minutes.

c. In the case of fatigued horses, chukkers may be shortened or a walk break can be taken halfway through the chukker to allow horses to recover.

iii. In the case of inclement weather during a tournament game, if the tournament game is to be canceled and not able to be re-scheduled, at least two chukkers must have been played to determine a winner.

c. All I/I games shall be played without handicap. In the event of a Penalty 7, if a player is disabled by a foul to the extent the Umpire permits or orders the player's retirement from the game, the Captain of the team fouled may:

i. Have the option of providing a qualified substitute.

ii. Request a player from the fouling team whose ability is closest to that of the disabled player, as determined by the Host Tournament Committee (HTC), with the advice of the umpires, be removed. The HTC shall have not more than 20 minutes from the time the foul occurred to make a determination. The Captain must decide how to proceed immediately following the HTC's determination.

d. The umpire may remove a player from a game if, in the opinion of the umpire, that player is creating an unsafe situation. Actions deemed unsafe include but are not limited to endangerment to other participants and/or mounts and repeated fouls caused by these actions. Eligible substitutes shall be allowed within the chukker the unsafe player has been removed. If no eligible substitute is available, then the game will continue two on three unless the opposing team opts to remove one of its players, in which case the game will continue two on two.

e. All I/I teams participating in post season tournaments will be assigned work duties as outlined in the General Work Routine Guidelines included in the I/I Information Packet.

f. All participants in any USPA I/I Tournament or any Qualified Game shall wear face and/or eye protection during competition.

g. Participants in any USPA I/I Tournament or Qualified Game shall only use artificial aids that adhere to the following standards:

i. Spurs

- (1). A participant shall not wear spurs with a sharp, square, or rough end.
- (2). Traditional type polo spurs; spurs must have a smooth, round, rolling rowel. The length of the spur's shank including the rowel, shall not exceed 1.5", and the diameter of the rowel shall be between .75" – 1" (*figure a*).

Figure a.



- (3). A Prince of Wales type spur with a rounded shank that shall not exceed .5" in length (*figure b*).

Figure b.



ii. Riding crop

- (1). The length of the riding crop's popper may not exceed 3 inches.

h. Unnecessary use of artificial aids will not be tolerated at any USPA I/I event.

i. Artificial aids may not be used unnecessarily or excessively, such as:

- a. Slash use of riding crop - loud and/or repeated strokes.
- b. Over use of riding crop - to include but not limited to:
 - (1). In excess of two strokes behind the saddle
 - (2). When mount is laboring
 - (3). Following a missed play or shot
 - (4). On the way back to the lineup
 - (5). During a dead ball.

c. Over use of spurs - to include but not limited to:

- (1). Excessive force
- (2). Unnecessary use of spurs

i. Umpires shall not appear in any I/I event in other than proper uniform and wearing a protective helmet of the same kind and in the same manner as is required of players.

j. All participants in any USPA I/I Tournament/Event shall wear suitable shoes when working around horses. All shoes must be closed toed and closed heeled.

k. Teams will be allowed one (1), ninety (90) second timeout per half. Unused first half timeouts will not transfer to the second half. Timeouts will not transfer or be awarded during an overtime shootout. A timeout may be used at any dead ball opportunity or after a goal is scored. A team member must ride to the umpires and indicate that he/she would like to use their timeout, or a coach may get an official's attention from the sideline in order to call the timeout. Coaches may elect to enter the arena or have their team stand near the coaching area. If a coach elects to enter the arena, they must enter immediately

after a timeout is requested. Once teams have converged on their coach, or around their captain if no coach is available, the timer shall begin the count down. Substitutions may only be made during a timeout. The substitute(s) must be ready to play when the timeout ends. No warmup time shall be given to the substitute(s). A team wanting to substitute during a timeout that they have not called must notify the umpire that they will be proceeding with the substitution process. The full ninety seconds of a timeout will be available to both teams, regardless of which team initiates the timeout. The end of a timeout shall be indicated by a horn or the official's whistle. In the event teams do not return to the area where play shall be resumed in a timely manner or coaches do not leave the arena within 15 seconds of the horn, the umpires shall blow the whistle to indicate improper play and determine the appropriate penalty assessment.

- i. A timeout will not be charged if team members need to switch horses within their string.
- ii. A timeout will not be charged if a player needs to fix a part of their tack.
- iii. A timeout will not be charged if a player must take an injury timeout. A substitution will not be charged if a player must be brought in to take the place of an injured player.
- iv. A timeout will not be charged if a team substitutes during their opponent's timeout.

l. All games must end in a win/loss situation. All ties at the end of regulation play shall be broken by a shootout. Shootout procedures can be found in USPA Arena Rule 5. c. 2. The following modifications can also be made:

- i. Coaches shall be allowed into the arena during the shootout but must remain behind the 25-yard line opposite of where the penalty shots are taking place.
- ii. If the shootout is still tied after two rounds at a Preliminary **or Regional** tournament and no shot has scored or touched the end wall, the Host Tournament Committee may elect to move the shootout to the 15-yard line.

m. Tournaments with three teams may be played under the American System, the Single Elimination System or as a round robin depending on availability of horses, weather or other factors.

- i. If a round robin is played, all games must end in a win/loss situation. All ties at the end of regulation play shall be broken with a shoot-out. In the event of a three-way tie at the end of the tournament, net goals shall be used to determine a winner (goals score by team – goals scored by opponents = net goals). If a tie remains, gross goals shall be used (goals scored). If a tie remains after gross goals, a shoot-out between teams will take place to determine a winner.

n. Following a scored goal, play will be resumed by a bowl-in at the center of the arena.

o. In the event a single player is not allowed to begin the game due to non-compliance with the USPA Arena Rules, sickness, or injury, the team may begin the game with two players, provided they have received prior approval from the NHTC or I/I staff.

(2) All games played by teams to determine rankings in tournaments shall be under the jurisdiction of the I/I Committee.

a. In order for the NHTC to accurately seed regional tournaments, all I/I teams are required to play a mandatory minimum of two Qualified games by **January 3, 2024** for Interscholastic (IS) teams and **December 1, 2023** for Intercollegiate (IC) teams.

b. A Qualified Game is competition between two teams in which all players meet the requirements of individual and team eligibility as defined in the USPA I/I Tournament Conditions. Games played against teams not meeting the standard qualification requirements will be sent to the NHTC for review and approval. Games may only be qualified by the NHTC. All regular season qualified games must end in a win/loss situation. All ties at the end of regulation play shall be broken by a shoot-out.

i. IC teams must play a minimum of **two** Qualified Game **before December 1**. At least one Qualified Game must be played against a team in their assigned region/division (see below). A second Qualified Game may be against a team from a different region.

ii. IS teams must play a minimum of one Qualified Game **before December 1** against a team in their assigned region/division (see below). A second Qualified game may be against another I/I team from a different region or division.

1. If no other in-division team resides within 600 miles of a club, a team may play any other IS team for their Qualified Games. If no other IS team resides within 600 miles of the club, the team may play an IC team for their Qualified Games. The team's coach must alert I/I staff if they believe there is no other in-division team within 600 miles of their club. Staff can verify, and then aid in finding opponents if necessary.
2. IS teams may be granted permission by the NHTC to play the required two games against any IS team, regardless of region, or against an IC team if necessary. The NHTC may ask that additional games be played for seeding preliminary/regional tournaments.

Intercollegiate Regions			
Central	Northeastern	Southeastern	Western
Arkansas	Connecticut	Alabama	Alaska
Colorado	Maine	Delaware	Arizona
Iowa	Massachusetts	Florida	California
Kansas	New Hampshire	Georgia	Hawaii
Louisiana	New Jersey	Illinois	Idaho
Minnesota	New York	Indiana	Montana
Missouri	Pennsylvania	Kentucky	Nevada
Nebraska	Rhode Island	Maryland	Oregon
New Mexico	Vermont	Michigan	Utah
North Dakota	Ontario, Canada	Mississippi	Washington
Oklahoma		North Carolina	British Columbia, Canada
South Dakota		Ohio	
Texas		South Carolina	
Wyoming		Tennessee	
		Virginia	

		West Virginia	
		Wisconsin	

Interscholastic Regions			
Central	Northeastern	Southeastern	Western
Arkansas	Connecticut	Alabama	Alaska
Colorado	Maine	Delaware	Arizona
Iowa	Massachusetts	Florida	California
Illinois	New Hampshire	Georgia	Hawaii
Indiana	New Jersey	Maryland	Idaho
Kansas	New York	Mississippi	Montana
Kentucky	Rhode Island	North Carolina	Nevada
Louisiana	Vermont	Pennsylvania	Oregon
Michigan	Ontario, Canada	South Carolina	Utah
Minnesota		Tennessee	Washington
Missouri		Virginia	British Columbia, Canada
Nebraska		West Virginia	
New Mexico		Jamaica	
North Dakota			
Ohio			
Oklahoma			
South Dakota			
Texas			
Wisconsin			
Wyoming			
Guatemala			

c. The official roster of an I/I team shall be the qualified players listed on the official eligibility paperwork submitted to the USPA, with all eligibility requirements signed off on and verified. Only qualified players appearing on the USPA I/I official roster will be eligible to participate in USPA I/I official regular season games. Clubs allowing players to play in regular season games who are not listed on the official USPA I/I roster, will be subject to penalties by the USPA, and potential disqualification from the tournament season.

d. A Qualified Player is a current USPA member that meets all I/I eligibility requirements as defined in the USPA I/I Tournament Conditions.

e. Scrimmages do not count toward a player's use of eligibility.

f. The NHTC reserves the right to review all games played (Qualified and Nonqualified) when necessary for seeding purposes.

g. Official USPA score sheets shall be used at all regular season and tournament games. Score sheets can be obtained from the USPA.

h. Score sheets must be legible and include team names, official team rosters (players' full names), umpires' full names, game date, and host club name. To be valid, a score sheet must be signed by both coaches and/or captains. Each team's coach/captain shall be given a copy of the score sheet.

i. The signed score sheet for each Qualified Game must be submitted to the USPA within seven days from the day the game is played. Score sheets may be submitted via uspolo.org.

3) The official I/I season starts September 1st of the current year and ends at the conclusion of the National Tournament for that academic year.

C. Tournaments

(1) All I/I Tournament games will follow the Tournament Conditions as written in the I/I Section of the current year USPA Rule Book.

(2) All I/I tournaments and divisions will be seeded by the NHTC and played by Single Elimination unless otherwise designated by the NHTC and/or the **T&RS** prior to the event. Consolation chukkers will be provided at all preliminary and regional tournaments if sufficient horses are available. Seeding will be based on win-loss records and other information available to the NHTC. This information may include but is not limited to:

i. The addition or loss of a player(s) to a team's roster due to that player(s)' eligibility or availability.

ii. Strength of playing schedule.

iii. Other circumstances with regard to a team's win-loss record.

a. All Interscholastic teams, provided they have complied with all rules and regulations outlined in the USPA Rule Book and Tournament Conditions, will be given an opportunity to compete in post-season play. Teams will be seeded into either a preliminary tournament or receive a bye into a regional tournament. All Interscholastic regional winners will advance to their respective National Interscholastic Tournament. Regions and team assignments will be defined prior to the start of the I/I tournament season.

b. All Intercollegiate teams, provided they have complied with all rules and regulations outlined in the USPA Rule Book and Tournament Conditions, will be given an opportunity to compete in post-season play. Teams will be seeded into either Division I or Division II after December 1. A team may make an appeal to the NHTC to change their Division assignment within one week of the selection.

i. Division I teams will be separated into East (Northeastern and Southeastern Regions) and West (Central and Western Regions) regional tournaments with the top teams for both men and women. All Intercollegiate Division I regional winners will advance to the Division I National Intercollegiate Tournament. In the event a region does not have enough teams to host a women's or men's regional tournament, the NHTC may elect to cancel that women's or men's regional tournament and send teams directly to the Division I National Intercollegiate Tournament.

ii. Division II teams will be seeded into either a preliminary tournament or receive a bye into a regional tournament based on the results of regular season play and other information available to the NHTC. All Intercollegiate Division II regional winners will advance to the Division II National Intercollegiate Tournament. Regions and team assignments will be defined prior to the start of the I/I tournament season. In the

event a region does not have enough teams to host a women's or men's regional tournament, the NHTC may elect to **combine regions** or cancel the women's or men's regional tournament and send teams directly to the Division II National Intercollegiate Tournament.

c. The NHTC reserves the right to select one or more "wild card" teams to compete in Regional/National Tournaments. Selection is based on the observation of teams, primarily at the preliminary and/or regional tournaments and during the regular season, by the I/I Committee, I/I Program Director, the I/I Tournament Manager, the I/I Tournament Coordinator, I/I umpires, and I/I tournament managers.

i. Availability of appropriate horses, both physically and financially, shall be taken into account.

ii. The following shall be taken into consideration: 1. **Preliminary**/Regional tournament performance, 2. Regular season performance, 3. Rostered player information, 4. Manager and umpire input

iii. Priority shall be given as follows: 1. To invite teams which can potentially win the Regional/National Tournament, 2. To assemble the strongest teams in the region/country.

iv. In the event of limited horses and space at the National Tournament, the NHTC has the authority to organize a play-off between potential wild card teams, including: a lower placed team with a second-place team, with the winner advancing to the National Tournament. Teams offered a play-off do not have to be from the same region. At least one USPA certified umpire will be provided for the play-off.

v. In the event of disciplinary issues, the NHTC may bypass a team no matter what place they finished at the **Preliminary or** Regional Tournament.

(3) The I/I committee, NHTC, I/I Program Director or their representative reserves the right to alter the number or length of chukkers played in any USPA I/I Tournament to accommodate all participating teams, availability of horses, and/or condition of horses.

a. The Division I National Intercollegiate Championships will be played utilizing a six, five-minute chukker format, on a split string, unless otherwise determined by the Tournament & Regular Season Committee/NHTC.

b. The Division II National Intercollegiate Championships, Open and Girls' National Interscholastic Championships, and all Regional Tournaments will be played utilizing a four, six and a half minute chukker format, on a split string, unless otherwise determined by the Tournament & Regular Season Committee/NHTC.

(4) If sufficient horses are not available and all possible solutions have been exhausted, playing priority shall be given to teams supplying or sourcing horses for the tournament. The remaining teams without an assigned string will not compete in the tournament. Teams outside of the 600-mile shipping limit will be aided by the USPA in sourcing a string.

(5) There shall be no practice, game play, short work, or stick and balling:

a. Of any horses scheduled to be used in the tournament, at any location, by any individual, from the beginning of the tournament team meeting through the end of the last tournament game.

b. By any individuals or teams participating in the tournament from the beginning of the tournament team meeting through the end of the last tournament game or a player's team

plays their final game in the tournament, **excluding consolation games**. This does not preclude pre-game warm-up.

(6) The I/I Committee shall establish a tournament entry fee schedule in addition to providing reimbursement of appropriate costs for participants of specific tournaments.

a. All teams entering an I/I tournament shall be subject to the following fees:

i. All teams shall submit a non-refundable \$800.00 tournament entry fee, payable to the USPA **by December 1**.

ii. Teams entering a second I/I Tournament (Regional or National) shall be charged an additional \$800.00 entry fee (payable to the USPA) prior to the first game of the Tournament.

b. Any monies received to defray tournament expenses from USPA, member schools and clubs or any sponsor shall be allocated by the USPA I/I Committee in such a way that no individual or team is favored. Primary consideration in allocating such funds will be towards the expense of shall be final.

(7) USPA member schools and clubs are required to supply or source horses to preliminary, regional, and/or national tournaments that they are attending.

a. Individuals/Programs supplying horses to a preliminary, regional, or national tournament shall be reimbursed shipping rates and game rates as published in the yearly I/I Information pack. Less than a full string will be reimbursed on a prorated basis. All published host site and horse provider reimbursement rates apply, unless a negotiated amount is agreed on in advance. Reimbursements shall be made upon receipt and approval of an official Tournament Invoice (available from the I/I Tournament Manager). The invoice must be signed by the I/I Tournament Manager or the I/I Program Director with all required information and receipts included. Completed invoices shall be submitted to the USPA no later than **June 15th** of the current year or returned to the I/I Tournament Manager. Event name, location and date must be included on the invoice.

b. A horse owner providing horses to play or umpire in an I/I tournament will be required to provide the following to the I/I staff no later than one (1) week before the scheduled tournament start date:

i. A negative Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA or Coggins) test result dated within twelve (12) months of the tournament end date if so required by state or federal law, or the tournament host site.

ii. A certificate of veterinary inspection (health certificate) if so required by state or federal law, or the I/I Horse Health Document dated within thirty (30) days of the tournament end date. The chosen document must include the Henneke Body Condition Score of each horse participating in the tournament. Horses that do not score a 4, 5, or 6 on the Henneke scale will not be allowed to participate or receive reimbursement.

iii. Additional proof of vaccinations as requested by tournament host sites. Horse providers will be advised of any additional host site vaccination requirements by January 1 of the tournament year.

c. All playing and umpiring horses will undergo a pre-tournament veterinary inspection at the tournament site before their first game. The inspection will include a body condition score assessment, a “menace” test to check vision, and a jog pattern to assess soundness for play. Horses shipped that are determined by the Tournament Veterinarian and/or Host

Tournament Committee to be unsuitable for play due to a failed Body Condition Score, jog test, or other factors will not be eligible for reimbursement.

d. All playing and umpiring horses must appear in proper fitting tack, to include, but not limited to: saddles with over-girths and appropriately sized stirrups; bridles including a standing martingale, breast plate, two (2) sets of reins (straight or draw reins) for Intercollegiate and Interscholastic (recommended but not required for Middle School); wraps and/or protective boots for all four (4) legs and tape to secure the wraps; and grooming supplies. Saddle pads are highly recommended.

e. Unless injured, horses scheduled to play in a tournament must remain available as scheduled in order to receive tournament reimbursement.

f. Reasonable veterinary expenses will be reimbursed for injuries that occur during a tournament. This does not include injuries sustained in transit either to or from the tournament. This reimbursement is only for care given at the tournament site.

(8) The I/I Committee, NHTC, Program Director, the USPA or any of their employees or representatives shall not be held responsible for any personal and/or team equipment at the tournament site.

(9) The I/I Committee, NHTC, Program Director, the USPA or any of their employees or representatives do not assume any responsibility for the value of horses loaned to the tournament, or for the value of equipment broken, lost or stolen at the tournament.

(10) The USPA I/I Committee shall ensure that the following will be at each tournament:

a. Suitable arena for tournament polo

b. Tournament Manager

c. Host Tournament Committee to include the following persons:

Tournament Manager, Tournament Umpires, any I/I Committee members and NHTC members present and select USPA members as named by the referenced individuals

d. Umpires and referee

e. Equine Welfare Representative

f. Tournament balls, split string sheets, score sheets

g. Team Packets for all participating teams

h. Awards for tournament winners

i. Certificates for tournament all stars and sportsmanship recipients

j. Best Playing Pony and Best Playing String certificate/award

k. Horsemanship Award

l. Hay and water for tournament horses during the event

(11) Tournament Voting Procedures

a. All Star and Sportsmanship

i. Each team playing in a tournament will receive an All Star and Sportsmanship ballot. Each team shall vote for four All Star candidates and each team member will vote for one Sportsmanship candidate (up to four sportsmanship votes per team) as instructed on the official ballot, based on the listed criteria.

ii. All Star and Sportsmanship Award candidates are for the present tournament only and candidates must be on a participating team's roster that is playing in the tournament.

iv. A player that has received a red card during the Tournament is not eligible for the Sportsmanship Award. Nominees that have received yellow card(s) are subject to review by the Host Tournament Committee.

- v. Collegiate: men's teams will vote for men recipients, women's teams will vote for women recipients. There shall be one male and one female sportsmanship recipient per IC tournament and four male All Stars and four female All Stars per IC tournament.
- vi. Scholastic: Open teams will vote for open division player recipients; Girls' teams will vote for girls' division recipients. There shall be one sportsmanship recipient and four All Stars per IS divisional tournament.
- vii. The Host Tournament committee shall also submit a collective vote for all star and sportsmanship candidates.
- viii. The Host Tournament Committee shall have the ability to break any ties. With a unanimous vote, the HTC may change the recipients of tournament awards if they feel that a deserving individual was omitted from the teams' ballots. The HTC may disqualify individuals for conduct exhibited at the tournament.
- b. Best Playing Pony and Best Playing String
 - i. The Tournament Manager or designated individual shall collect horse scores from teams playing at the conclusion of each game. Horses shall be scored 1 – 10, 10 being the best score. The tournament manager/HTC reserves the right to request more accurate horse scores if, in their opinion, a player or team is manipulating the scoring in any way.
 - ii. The horse receiving the highest average score shall be named Best Playing Pony (BPP) of the tournament. Horses must have played at least two games in the tournament to be eligible for BPP. Any ties for BPP will be broken by random draw.
 - iii. All total scores of horses within a string, including spares, shall be added and divided by the number of horses played in that string. The string with the highest average shall be named Best Playing String (BPS) of the tournament. Strings must have played at least two games in the tournament to be eligible for BPS. All tied strings will be recognized.
- c. All Star and Sportsmanship ballots and horse scores shall be turned in to the tournament manager or HTC representative promptly at the time designated.
- d. The Horsemanship award will be awarded based on the decision of the HTC to the player who best demonstrates horsemanship, both on and off the field. If multiple tournaments are played in the same location at the same time, one Horsemanship award will be given for each division playing (Girls', Open, Women, Men).

D. Intercollegiate Eligibility

(1) Individual Eligibility

- a. An individual must be a current Lifetime, Registered or Affiliate Player member of the USPA to be eligible for participation in any IC Tournament or Qualified Game(s). Non-members are not covered by USPA excess liability insurance. New students must join in the fall and renew membership in the spring. Students may join online at www.uspolo.org.
- b. A student must be enrolled as a full-time student in good standing, making progress toward a degree on the main campus which the college/university polo team represents.
- c. A student must be an undergraduate or graduate student of the college that he/she represents, as verified through the college/university's Registrar's office. Graduate students must meet all other eligibility requirements.

- d. A student may not have reached his/her 26th birthday prior to September 1st preceding the date of the intercollegiate season for which eligibility is sought.
- e. A student may have five- and one-half consecutive years from the time of first matriculation (as a full-time student), at any college or university regardless if the student has transferred to its current institution, in which to complete four years of eligibility.
- f. A student who enters active-duty military service immediately following high school and/or a student entering active-duty military service after being enrolled at a college or university will have the five-year period extended for the length of that military service. The five-year period will commence beginning the first academic school year after discharge. The upper age limit will be waived.
- g. No player may play for more than one collegiate club within the same I/I season. Any player that is listed on a qualified game score sheet submitted to the USPA is ineligible to compete for another collegiate club during the same season.**
- h.** The Registrar of the institution at which the student is enrolled must verify the following:
- i. Student is enrolled as a full-time student (undergraduate or graduate student) on the main campus which the college polo team represents.
 - ii. Student's first year of matriculation (full time).
 - iii. If the Student has transferred any credits from another institution.
 - iv. If student is in his/her final semester/quarter, the student may carry less than a full-time academic load. The registrar must verify that this is the student's final semester/quarter. This allowance is only permitted once and only if the player is a graduating senior and a letter from the Registrar confirming such status is obtained.
- i.** An Official Representative from the institution's governing body of the polo program (i.e., Recreation Sports Dept., Student Government, Athletic Dept.) in which the student is enrolled must verify the following:
- i. Student maintains a passing average, is in good standing, making progress toward a degree on the main campus which the college polo team represents.
 - ii. Student is scholastically eligible to participate in sports at his/her college/university.
 - iii. If the Student was enrolled in active military service.
- j.** Students must complete the Full Time Student Verification Form, completed by their academic advisor or school registrar, and submit to the USPA by the dates of December 1st for those students competing during the fall season and one week before their **national tournament** for those students who advance to the national tournament.
- k.** A student, including one who has misrepresented his or her Individual Eligibility, who has played in any intercollegiate qualified game in any region during the I/I season (September 1st through the National Tournament), is considered to have used a year of eligibility whether or not the student plays in a USPA intercollegiate tournament.
- l. All students must participate in at least 1 regular season game with their chosen team to be eligible to compete at preliminaries, regionals, and/or nationals. Exceptions may be granted by the NHTC for injury, sickness, internships and academic opportunities that take a student away from campus for an extended amount of time.**
- m.** A student may request a waiver to the Tournament Conditions as written in section 3 following the guidelines and procedure as outlined in the I/I Information Packet.

(2) Team Eligibility

- a. An Official Representative from the institution's governing body of the polo program (i.e., Recreation Sports Dept., Student Government, Athletic Dept.) in which the students are enrolled must verify that the team, **consisting of a minimum of three (3) eligible rostered players**, is recognized by the Institution and is authorized to represent the college/university at local, regional and national events.
- b. A team in the Intercollegiate Program must be or be hosted by a USPA member club as defined in the USPA By-Laws with dues paid for the current calendar year of intercollegiate competition. **Host clubs must be within a distance of 200 miles from the college/university campus.** Hosted teams must renew their club form at the start of each I/I Season, due at the Intent to Compete date.

3) Gender

- a. As intercollegiate tournaments are available for both men and women, no man may play in a women's intercollegiate event/tournament, and no woman may play in a men's intercollegiate event/tournament.
- b. The USPA acknowledges that certain individuals are transgender and may be undergoing treatment for gender transition. Any transgender individual who has not taken or received hormone treatment related to gender transition may participate on any team in accordance with his or her gender assigned at birth. A trans male (FTM) who has not received or taken testosterone or other gender transition hormone treatment may participate on either a men's team or a women's team; however, a trans female (MTF) who has not received or taken gender transition hormone treatment may participate only on a men's team, and shall not participate on a women's team.

A trans male (FTM) who has received a medical exception for treatment with testosterone for diagnosed Gender Identity Disorder, gender dysphoria, or transsexualism may compete on a men's team, but is no longer eligible to compete on a women's team. Any individual who has received a medical exception for treatment with testosterone must provide documentation of the medical exception, as well as documentation verified by a medical doctor of a diagnosis of Gender Identity Disorder, gender dysphoria, or Transsexualism. A trans female (MTF) who has received or taken, or is receiving or taking, testosterone suppression medication or other hormone treatment related to Gender Identity Disorder, gender dysphoria, or Transsexualism may participate on a men's team, but may not participate on a women's team until completing at least one calendar year of continuing hormone treatment. Any individual who has received or is receiving hormone treatment shall provide documentation of such treatment, including information reflecting any relevant diagnoses, the type of medication or treatment taken or received, the dates of treatment and diagnosis, and any other information that may be requested by the USPA. Any transgender athlete who fails to provide appropriate documentation shall be declared ineligible until satisfying all requests from the USPA. The USPA reserves the right at its discretion to investigate the eligibility of any individual seeking to participate in any event as a member of the USPA. Such investigation may include requiring an individual to provide to the USPA or its investigators blood samples, urine samples, or other medical information.

In order to avoid challenges to an individual's participation during a season, an individual who has completed, plans to initiate, or is in the process of taking or receiving hormone treatment in connection with a gender transition should submit to the USPA a written

request to participate on a team, noting the individual's name, address, contact information, prospective team, and current status of gender transition (e.g., completed male-to-female transition or anticipated female-to-male transition) with relevant dates of initiation and completion. Students seeking to participate in interscholastic and/or intercollegiate competition should submit such requests to the director of athletics (or appropriate club representative) of the individual student's academic institution, who must assume responsibility for notifying the USPA of the student's request and communicating any information necessary for an eligibility decision to be made. The athletic director shall maintain confidentiality with respect to all such communications, unless the student waives such confidentiality.

Retaliation is strictly forbidden against anyone who complains about discrimination based on gender identity or expression. Retaliation by a team or institution may result in any such organization forfeiting its right to participate in one or more USPA events, at the discretion of the USPA.

While the USPA endeavors to maintain standards that would permit individuals to compete in NCAA-, Pan American Sports Organization-, and/or US Olympic & Paralympic Committee-sanctioned events, it is noted that the standards imposed by competitions affiliated with such organizations may in some cases vary from the eligibility standards provided herein, and therefore elite-level athletes seeking to potentially compete at a high level within any other organization should be mindful of independent standards enforced by each organization.

(4) Coaches – All intercollegiate teams are required to have a designated coach who meets all the requirements contain in H. Coaches' Eligibility. An Intercollegiate team that does not have a designated coach meeting each of the requirements of section H. Coaches' Eligibility, shall be ineligible to participate in and may be disqualified from participating in, a USPA-Sanctioned event.

E. Interscholastic Eligibility

(1) Individual Eligibility

- a. An individual must be a current Lifetime, Registered or Affiliate Player member of the USPA to be eligible for participation in any IS Tournament or Qualified Game(s). Non-members are not covered by USPA excess liability insurance. New students must join in the fall and renew membership in the spring. Students may join online at www.uspolo.org.
- b. A student must not have reached his/her 19th birthday prior to September 1st preceding the date of the interscholastic season for which eligibility is sought.
- c. An official school representative must verify the following:
 - i. Student must be enrolled at a public, private or parochial school or an approved home school or online program, grade 7 through 12, and be making progress toward graduation.
 - ii. Student must maintain a passing grade average and be scholastically eligible for other interscholastic sports at the school.
 - iii. Students who graduate a semester early may continue to compete on their team for the remainder of the school year, provided that they **have been enrolled at the high school level for at least one term of the current academic year, have participated**

on their team during the current I/I season, and are not enrolled as a full-time college student.

d. A student may request a waiver to the Tournament Conditions as per the guidelines and procedure as outlined in Section 3 of the I/I Information Packet.

(2) Team Eligibility

a. Coaches – All interscholastic teams are required to have a designated coach who meets all the requirements contain in H. Coaches' Eligibility. An interscholastic team that does not have a designated coach meeting each of the requirements of section H. Coaches' Eligibility, shall be ineligible to participate in and may be disqualified from participating in, a USPA-Sanctioned event.

b. The coach of each team shall verify the team's collective eligibility.

c. A member school or youth organization must be a USPA member club as defined in the USPA By-Laws with dues paid for the current calendar year of interscholastic competition. A member school team in the Interscholastic Program must be composed of **a minimum of three (3) eligible rostered players** enrolled at the member school. The school must recognize polo as an organized school activity at the varsity or club level.

d. A team representing a member club of the USPA shall be composed of **a minimum of three (3) eligible rostered players** associated with a member club. Students are eligible to participate on any team whose member club's physical address is within a 100-mile radius of the student's official home address and/or boarding school. For eligibility purposes, the student's official address shall be the address listed in the USPA database as of the Intent to Compete date.

i. Students that do not have at least 3 clubs within a 100-mile radius will be allowed to compete at any of the 3 closest clubs to their home address, measured as the crow flies, with an interscholastic program, as shown on the club search at uspolo.org. If a member school team is one of the closest 3 clubs to a student and they are not eligible to play on that team, the member school club will not count toward the student's 3 club options.

ii. If a team is added later than the Intent to Compete date that is closer to a student than the 3 original clubs, the student may participate with them if they have not already shown up on another club's score sheet.

iii. Students who have a preference in division may use the team list as of the Intent to Compete date as their guide to the three closest clubs within the division they wish to play.

iv. All students must participate in at least 1 regular season game with their chosen team to be eligible to compete at preliminaries, regionals, and/or nationals.

f. Players may be added or deleted from an official IS roster up until the IS eligibility deadline as stated in the Required Forms section of the USPA I/I Tournament Conditions.

g. No player may play for more than one member school or club within the same I/I season. From the time the score sheet of a Qualified Game is submitted to the USPA to

the time an official roster is submitted to the USPA, the players whose names appear on that score sheet may transfer to other teams within a member school or club but may not transfer to a different member school or club. The NHTC may waive this limitation in the event a documented medical injury to one team member will leave the team without a sufficient number of players to participate in the tournament. In such an event, a written request must be presented to the USPA within 7 days of the injury/incident, and no less than 2 weeks prior to the start of the first tournament of the proposed new team.

(3) Gender

a. An all Girls' Interscholastic team representing a USPA member school or club may enter either the Girls' Interscholastic Tournament or the Open Interscholastic Tournament, but not both.

b. The USPA acknowledges that certain individuals are transgender and may be undergoing treatment for gender transition. Any transgender individual who has not taken or received hormone treatment related to gender transition may participate on any team in accordance with his or her gender assigned at birth. A trans male (FTM) who has not received or taken testosterone or other gender transition hormone treatment may participate on either a men's team or a women's team; however, a trans female (MTF) who has not received or taken gender transition hormone treatment may participate only on a men's team, and shall not participate on a women's team.

A trans male (FTM) who has received a medical exception for treatment with testosterone for diagnosed Gender Identity Disorder, gender dysphoria, or transsexualism may compete on a men's team, but is no longer eligible to compete on a women's team. Any individual who has received a medical exception for treatment with testosterone must provide documentation of the medical exception, as well as documentation verified by a medical doctor of a diagnosis of Gender Identity Disorder, gender dysphoria, or Transsexualism. A trans female (MTF) who has received or taken, or is receiving or taking, testosterone suppression medication or other hormone treatment related to Gender Identity Disorder, gender dysphoria, or Transsexualism may participate on a men's team, but may not participate on a women's team until completing at least one calendar year of continuing hormone treatment. Any individual who has received or is receiving hormone treatment shall provide documentation of such treatment, including information reflecting any relevant diagnoses, the type of medication or treatment taken or received, the dates of treatment and diagnosis, and any other information that may be requested by the USPA.

Any transgender athlete who fails to provide appropriate documentation shall be declared ineligible until satisfying all requests from the USPA. The USPA reserves the right at its discretion to investigate the eligibility of any individual seeking to participate in any event as a member of the USPA. Such investigation may include requiring an individual to provide to the USPA or its investigators blood samples, urine samples, or other medical information.

In order to avoid challenges to an individual's participation during a season, an individual who has completed, plans to initiate, or is in the process of taking or receiving hormone treatment in connection with a gender transition should submit to the USPA a written request to participate on a team, noting the individual's name, address, contact

information, prospective team, and current status of gender transition (e.g., completed male-to-female transition or anticipated female-to-male transition) with relevant dates of initiation and completion. Students seeking to participate in interscholastic and/or intercollegiate competition should submit such requests to the director of athletics (or appropriate club representative) of the individual student's academic institution, who must assume responsibility for notifying the USPA of the student's request and communicating any information necessary for an eligibility decision to be made. The athletic director shall maintain confidentiality with respect to all such communications, unless the student waives such confidentiality. Retaliation is strictly forbidden against anyone who complains about discrimination based on gender identity or expression. Retaliation by a team or institution may result in any such organization forfeiting its right to participate in one or more USPA events, at the discretion of the USPA.

While the USPA endeavors to maintain standards that would permit individuals to compete in NCAA-, Pan American Sports Organization-, and/or US Olympic & Paralympic Committee-sanctioned events, it is noted that the standards imposed by competitions affiliated with such organizations may in some cases vary from the eligibility standards provided herein, and therefore elite-level athletes seeking to potentially compete at a high level within any other organization should be mindful of independent standards enforced by each organization.

F. National Alumni Tournament

- (1) Player must have participated in an interscholastic or intercollegiate program at his or her school/club.
- (2) Player must be a current **Lifetime, Registered or Affiliate Player** member of the USPA. A handicap is not required.
- (3) To be eligible for the National tournament, a Player must have done at least one of the following within the last year:
 - a. Played in an alumni event at his or her school/club or USPA Circuit I/I Alumni Event.
 - b. Been an active coach of an I/I team.
 - c. Umpired at least 3 USPA I/I Regular season games or tournament games
 - d. Tournament managed at a USPA I/I tournament
 - e. Made a donation in the form of a horse, tack, equipment, or monetary to an I/I program
 - f. Volunteered 10 hours in support of an I/I club
- (4) An entry fee of \$100 per player will be collected prior to the start the event. Check to be made to the I/I program of player's choice. The USPA will supply the following: Arena rental, USPA Certified Umpires, trophies, EMT and tournament manager.

G. Middle School Tournament

- (1) Player must be enrolled in an academic program in which they are currently in the 5th through 8th grades. Players that meet both the eligibility requirements for the Middle School and Interscholastic Tournaments will be allowed to play in both sets of tournaments.
- (2) Player must be a current registered member of the USPA. A handicap is not required, but the Player needs to be ready for tournament play.

(3) A registration fee of \$50 per Player will be collected by the USPA before a player may register for any Middle School Tournament. **For the purposes of this annual registration fee, the Middle School Tournament season will run from July 1 to June 30 of each year.** Host Clubs may charge an additional entry fee for their Tournament.

(4) The Middle School Tournaments shall be played under the USPA Intercollegiate/Interscholastic Tournament Conditions as outlined in B. Games/Event and C. Tournaments, with the following modifications:

- a. Games will be played in a 4 chukker format. Players will have the option to play either 2 or 4 chukkers based on the number of horses they bring to play.
- b. Taking into consideration the safety of the players in the Middle School Tournaments, games will not be played in the split string format for this tournament only. Players will be responsible for using their own horse(s) or leasing appropriate horses for the Tournament.
 - i. The Player is responsible for the shipping and housing of their horse(s). The Host site will provide stabling options to Players and Coaches before the Tournament.
 - ii. If the **Host Tournament Committee** determines that a Player's horse is unfit to play for the number of chukkers it has been assigned, the horse will be pulled from the game and a replacement found, if possible.
- c. Shootouts for Middle School Tournament Games will take place at the 15-yard line. If the shootout moves into multiple rounds, the Host Tournament Committee may move the shootout to the 25-yard line.
- d. Tournaments will be played in an "open" format. Boys and girls will be allowed on the same teams.
- e. Players will be placed in a pool for coaches and the Tournament HTC to create appropriate teams, keeping in mind each Player's ability and horse availability.
- f. Work guidelines
 - i. Players will be required to follow the assigned work guidelines of the tournament as set by the Tournament HTC. These guidelines may include, but are not limited to: walking horses, lining the arena, and goal judging.
- g. Voting Procedures
 - i. Best Playing Pony – The Umpires will choose the BPP. Other committee members in attendance may have a vote as well.
 - ii. Horsemanship Award – The HTC will choose the Horsemanship Award winner.
- h. The following paperwork is due to the USPA ten (10) days before the tournament start date:
 - i. Registration Fee
 - ii. Player Application
 - iii. Current USPA membership
- i. There will be no requirement for qualifying games to be eligible to play in the Middle School Tournaments.
- j. USPA will supply trophies and awards.

(5) There will be no tournament application process for USPA Member Clubs to host a Middle School Tournament, but the Member Club must contact the I/I staff at least three weeks ahead of the desired tournament start date.

H. Coaches' Eligibility

1) All designated I/I coaches must meet the following requirements: Due at the Intent to Compete Date or before the first game of the season if it takes place before the Intent to Compete is due.

- a. Must be a current Lifetime, Registered Player, Affiliate Player, or Social-Non-Playing Member of the USPA to be eligible to coach any I/I team. USPA members are subject to the USPA's Code of Conduct. New coaches must be current at the beginning of the I/I season and must maintain membership through the conclusion of I/I season. Coaches may join online at www.uspolo.org.
- b.) Coaches must submit to and pass a yearly criminal background check at the beginning of the I/I season.
- c.) Coaches are required to take Online Concussion training
- d.) Coaches are required to complete USOC Safe Sport Online Training and refreshers on a yearly basis and to take any training updates offered in the future as designated by the I/I staff.
- e.) Coaches are required yearly to sign the USPA's I/I Coaches' Code of Conduct and Youth Protection Policy.

Before participating, each team shall designate a head coach and assistant or volunteer coaches if applicable. Coaches, assistant and volunteer coaches must complete USPA I/I Coaching Requirements in order to enter the arena and interact with players between periods, during a tack time, or a time out during tournament games. A parent or non-coaching individual can be approved to enter the arena between chukkers and in the event of a fall at the coach's direction.

The head coach shall be in control of and responsible for the actions of all team personnel, including players. It is the coach's responsibility to supervise and manage these adults within the time allotted and the coach will be held accountable for all actions while in the arena. A maximum of five adults, including coaches, are allotted per team per game to have access to the arena. If an adult that is not approved by the coach is seen in the arena working with players, the HTC will be notified and decide on any discipline if deemed necessary, which could include removal from the tournament for individual or team.

AN INDIVIDUAL THAT DOES NOT SATISFY EACH OF THE REQUIREMENTS SET FORTH ABOVE IN THIS SECTION H., SHALL BE INELIGIBLE TO ACT AS A DESIGNATED COACH FOR AN I/I TEAM, AND MAY JEOPARDIZE THE I/I TEAM'S ABILITY TO PARTICIPATE IN A USPA-SANCTIONED EVENT.

I. Required Forms

- 1) All Tournament Conditions, Individual Eligibility and Team Eligibility requirements must be met by the following deadlines:
 - a. October 3 – IS and IC Team deadlines
 - i. Intent to Compete Forms - Used for the purpose of planning preliminary/regional tournaments. Teams which do not submit an Intent to Compete Form by October 3rd will not be allowed to compete in an I/I Tournament.

- ii. Coaches Forms
 - iii. Tentative Rosters
 - iv. IC **and** IS Team Host Club form. (For those **IC** teams that are not their own club)
 - b. **November 14**
 - i. Intercollegiate Full Time Student Check form.
 - c. December 1 – IC team deadlines
 - i. Tournament entry fee of \$800
 - ii. Minimum **2** game score sheet submitted.
 - d. December **1**– Interscholastic team deadlines
 - i. Tournament entry fee of \$800
 - ii. Interscholastic Individual Eligibility Form (IS players) – one per player
 - iii. Minimum 1 game score sheet submitted
 - iv. Interscholastic Team Eligibility Form (IS players) – one per team
 - v. I/I Rules Test – tests shall be taken individually or as a team and is intended to be taken open book. The I/I rules test can be obtained on the USPA website and taken online.
 - vi. Final Roster – one per team
 - e. January 1st
 - i. USPA Club dues
 - ii. USPA Individual Membership
 - f. January **3** – Interscholastic team deadline
 - i. Scoresheets for two Qualified Games
 - g. **January 31**– Intercollegiate team deadlines
 - i. Intercollegiate Registrar Verification Form – one per team
 - ii. Intercollegiate Team Eligibility Form – one per team
 - iii. I/I Rules Test – tests shall be taken individually or as a team and is intended to be taken open book. The I/I rules test can be obtained on the USPA website and taken online.
 - iv. Final Roster – one per team
 - h. **One week prior to the start of the national tournament** - Intercollegiate team deadline (if advancing to Nationals)
 - i. Full Time Student Check form
 - i. All required forms are included in the I/I Information Packet and on the USPA website's I/I pages, www.uspolo.org.
 - j. Completed forms, score sheets, and payments shall be directed to the USPA.
- (2) All forms will remain in effect for the entire academic year, providing the student does not subsequently become ineligible. It is the responsibility of the player and the team coach/advisor to report changes in eligibility status to the USPA immediately. Failure to report changes in eligibility could result in:
- a. Suspension of the player or team for future games, for the entire season or for future seasons.
 - b. Forfeit of all games played while player was ineligible.
 - c. Additional penalties that may be imposed by the I/I Committee.

J. Violations and Penalties

(1) Violations and Penalties for not complying with USPA I/I Tournament Conditions shall be determined by the NHTC per the following guidelines:

- a. Failure to meet paperwork deadlines shall result in a loss of opportunity to compete in I/I Tournaments and Qualified Games.
- b. Failure to meet eligibility requirements shall result in an individual's or a team's loss of opportunity to compete in I/I Tournaments and Qualified Games.
- c. Failure to meet code of conduct or tournament work requirements shall result in a penalty to be determined by the NHTC, which may include a loss of opportunity to compete in both present and future I/I Tournaments and Qualified Games.
- d. Failure to meet any other Tournament Condition shall result in a penalty to be determined by the NHTC.

(2) The USPA I/I Chair(s) may convene a select committee to review violations of or conduct detrimental to I/I polo and the Committee's decision shall be final.

(3) All protests are governed by the Association's Sport Protest Procedures, Part III of the Association's Disciplinary Procedures Policy.