



SADDLE SEAT SOUTH AFRICA



sport, arts & culture

Department:
Sport, Arts and Culture
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Member of SASCOC and The South African Equestrian Federation

Datum/Date: 15 MAY 2024

Verwys/Reference: 2025 Colour Guidelines \$ Policy

INTERPROVINCIAL COMPETITION POLICY

&

NATIONAL AND FEDERATION COLOUR GUIDELINES

2025

The SSSA board reserves the right to make changes to the policy and guidelines to ensure fairness, consistency, transparency, and accountability during the selection process. These adjustments are essential to uphold the integrity and high standards of our organization.

1. PROVINCIAL HEATS

- 1.1 There will be 2 (two) Provincial qualifying HEATS for the riders.
- 1.2 For these Provincial HEATS, the provinces will be combined based on the location of the riders.
- 1.3 **2025 HEAT 1: WC, EC, NC & FS. HEAT 2: MP & NG.**
- 1.4 To ensure fairness and eliminate any potential “*home ground advantage*”, please note that HEATS may not be scheduled at any stable where the participating riders have their horses in training. This rule is implemented to provide an equal opportunity for all riders, regardless of their training locations, and to maintain the integrity of the competition.
- 1.5 **The schedule in (1.3) will be reviewed and finalized by SSSA in August 2024.**
- 1.6 No rider is allowed to participate in a different heat than the one indicated by this provincial policy in (1.3).
- 1.7 **QUALIFYING TIME FRAME FOR PROVINCIAL COLOURS: 1JANUARY – 15 MARCH 2025.**
- 1.8 The two Provincial HEATS will be judged by the same set of 3 ALL BREED selectors.
- 1.9 Entry fees for the Provincial HEATS will be determined by the costs of selectors and venue.
- 1.10 EACH PROVINCIAL GROUP IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS OWN COSTS (TRAVEL, ACCOMMODATION, VENUE FOR SELECTERS AND VIDEOGRAPHER).
- 1.11 The total costs for the specific HEAT are shared by the number of riders from the provinces and/or through fundraising by the provinces.
- 1.12 **Drug tests may be requested (doping fees will be payable by all entries).**
- 1.13 ALL BREED horses with a GREEN SAEF PASSPORT are eligible to participate.

2. FINAL AND COC

- 2.1 Once the Provincial HEATS are completed, a FINAL will be scheduled during the 2025 Champion of Champions (COC) in Bloemfontein.
- 2.2 The FINAL will have the status of a National Saddle Seat Championship.
- 2.3 No rider will be considered for the FINAL unless he/she has participated in his/her designated provincial heat (medical reasons ONLY will be considered on merit).
- 2.4 A final group of riders who participated in their respective heats will be invited to take part in the FINAL for national colours awards. **The size of the final group will be determined upon the completion of all HEATS.**
- 2.5 This FINAL will be evaluated by the same three selectors who participated in the provincial HEATS, in addition to the appointed judges for the Champion of Champions (COC).
- 2.6 The selectors will formulate a final result based on both the HEATS and COC results and name the top riders to be considered for National or Federation Colours.
- 2.7 The size of the teams will be determined by the status of the ISSEA approved International Competition.

3. AGE DIVISIONS, ELIGIBILITY & PARTICIPATION AGE DIVISIONS

- 3.1 Riders must be 14 years of age on the 1ST (first) day of January 2025 to qualify for **THE SENIOR PROTEA TEAM** and 12 years of age for the **PROSPECTIVE B TEAM** status.
- 3.2 SSSA proposes that for competitions held in the final quarter of the year, this rule in (3.1) be adjusted so that riders must be 14 years of age by

the first day of the competition instead. This change will allow riders more time to develop throughout the year, providing a fairer opportunity for them to reach the necessary level of readiness and competitiveness.

Implementing this amendment will better align our policy and guidelines with the developmental needs of young riders, ultimately supporting their growth and progression in the sport.

- 3.3 For JUNIOR colours there are no age categories e.g. u/14 or u/16 etc. When application is being made, reference will be to JUNIORS and not to any particular age group.
- 3.4 Note, International bodies of some of the Disciplines categorise JUNIORS up to the age of u/21. If a Discipline's International Federation allows for JUNIOR competitions up to and for u/21, these athletes will be selected as JUNIORS. SSSA will bring this application to ISSEA.
- 3.5 The aforementioned 1 January date refers to the year in which the Competitions for which the teams are selected are to be held, and not the date of the HEATS & FINAL if the two do not occur in the same year.
- 3.6 Riders previously representing the SA Senior Protea Team/s may not revert back to a SA Junior or President team in the division/s for which he/she obtained Senior status.
- 3.7 A rider MAY qualify for SA Senior Protea Team status in the Three-gaited division and for SA Junior Team status (or President) in the Five-gaited division or vice-verse IN THE SAME YEAR.
- 3.8 Riders are eligible to represent the Protea teams in both the Three and Five-gaited divisions.

4. ELIGIBILITY FOR THE NATIONAL TEAM SELECTION PROCESS

- 4.1 Riders must be South African citizens.
- 4.2 ALL riders under the age of 18 years must provide SSSA with an “Unabridged Birth Certificate”.
- 4.3 Riders 16 years and older, must be in possession of an RSA ID CARD Or an “Unabridged Birth Certificate”.
- 4.4 Riders must have an RSA Passport.
- 4.5 RSA Passport must be valid for a minimum of 6 months after the date of the International Competitions.

5. TEAM NAME AND COMPOSITION

- 5.1 **SA SENIOR PROTEA TEAM:** Green and Gold BLAZER, with Protea badge. The number of riders will only be determined once the international competitions are scheduled and confirmed.
- 5.2 Consent may be given to a JUNIOR athlete for SENIOR colours, provided the correct qualifications and criteria of SSSA Council have been acknowledged.
- 5.3 **PROSPECTIVE B TEAM:**

“Prospective” only and will be selected in accordance with the 2025 criteria set forth. This team will not receive ANY Colours unless the conditions as per clause 5.4 realise.

- 5.4 In the event that an International Competition realises in 2025 for South Africa the riders in clause (5.3) from the 2025 National and Inter Provincial Championships will form EITHER a President/Federation Team OR a SA Junior Protea Team that will represent the Equestrian Federation in said International Competition.
- 5.5 SSSA will ensure that a decision on a competition and the status of the team in (5.3) are reached well in advance, as per SASCOB Biting and Hosting regulations, to provide ample time for preparations.
- 5.6 The Prospective Team will ALSO be announced on the Gala evening, which can serve in the event that the conditions as per clause 5.4 realise during the 2025 year.

6. INDIVIDUAL RIDERS & MEDAL CLASSES.

- 6.1 Individual riders are not applicable. Any rider can participate in the HEATS, as long as he/she is in a good standing with their respective provinces.
- 6.2 Medal classes will continue to be held at regional shows, and SSSA encourages all riders to support these classes and use them as valuable training opportunities under competition conditions.
- 6.3 The selectors reserve the right to utilize reports from medal classes in cases where a rider is unable to attend one of the scheduled preliminary events due to medical reasons. Each case will be evaluated individually based on its merits to ensure fair consideration. This approach aims to maintain high standards of competition while accommodating unforeseen circumstances.
- 6.4 The Council of SSSA maintain the right to place a single rider per section in the FINAL to provide for development.

7. HEAT FORMAT (PROVINCIAL COMPETITION):

7.1 Each day/session will count EQUAL weights in the final calculation.

7.2 Ties to be broken according to the tabulation criteria.

7.3 **SESSION 1: Rail and Test.**

- Dress Code: Kentucky outfit as specified in SSSA Rules.
- Order of go to be drawn randomly for the test.
- Each test is recorded on video, and selectors make the final score on test segments after thoroughly studying the footage.
- After the results of Day 1 are determined, selectors discuss the video material of the tests, and form new horse-rider combinations to be evaluated the next day (next session).
- **Score 1:** $\frac{\text{Rail}}{100} + \frac{\text{Test}}{100}$
- This score will be converted to a HEAT RANK for DAY1

7.4 **SESSION 2: Maneuvers on swapped horse.**

- Dress code: Black Kentucky Jod/Kentucky outfit pants, uniform collar shirt.
Hair: Buns.
Horse: Double bridle and top tail.
- Each rider lines up next to their horse in the collection ring. Selectors will ask riders to complete maneuvers on various horses until they are collectively satisfied.
- Coaches remain uninvolved.

- No outside help from coaches. However, judges will ask coaches to get involved if needed.
- Warm up time of 5 minutes allowed at the start of the session.
- **Score 2:** $\frac{\textit{Seat}}{50} + \frac{\textit{Horsemanship}}{50}$
- This score will be converted to a HEAT RANK for Day2

FINAL HEAT RANK = (Rank Day1)+ (Rank Day2)

Explanation: The rail and test scores will count equally towards the final score.

Score 1 and Score 2 will be combined and will also count equally toward the FINAL HEAT RANK.

- 7.5 This final heat ranking is purely academic and contribute to the Provincial Team Awards, and will not be used in any further calculations.
- 7.6 **However, the percentages of each rider from Heat 1 will be carried forward to the FINAL in Bloemfontein.**
- 7.7 This ensures that the riders' performances based on the % values in the initial heats have a direct impact on their standings in the final competition, and NOT the ranking in each HEAT.

8. INTERPROVINCIAL COMPETITION

- 8.1 Saddle Seat South Africa annually hosts an Inter-Provincial Saddle Seat competition in conjunction with the National Protea Selection Protocol.
- 8.2 The Inter-provincial competition will only take place during the HEATS.
- 8.3 Each province may enter **six** riders for the Three-gaited and the Five-gaited division, and may compete in both the Three and Five-gaited divisions.

9. FINAL FORMAT (COC COMPETITION)

- 9.1 A TOP GROUP of riders from the COMBINED provincial heats will be entered into the 1st leg of the COC competition by SSSA.
- 9.2 These selected riders may compete on any breed of horse for this purpose only.
- 9.3 The rules and regulations of the COC competition must be strictly adhered to by the SSSA riders.
- 9.4 The 3 SSSA selectors will judge the riders from outside the arena.
- 9.5 The scores of the COC judges and the 3 selectors will be combined to form a Grand Final Score for the Protea Selection Protocol.
- 9.6 The COC judges' scores will contribute 40% to the final score of Day 1, and the 3 selectors' scores will contribute 60%.
- 9.7 No H/L (high/low) will be performed on the selectors' scores.
- 9.8 **GRAND FINAL SCORE (GFS):**

This score will be used to select the 2025 National Teams.

GFS = 0.3*Score 1 + 0.3*Score 2 + 0.3*Combined COC Score

(Score 1&2 from the Provincial Heats)

- 9.9 Selectors reserve the right to consider other results like medal class outcomes or any other score that might be seen as significant to incorporate in their final decisions when a rider has missed any one of the provincial heats or COC competition due to medical reasons.

10. RULES REGARDING SWAPPING OF HORSES

- 10.1 Riders shall NOT be allowed to swap horses between their RAIL and TEST, unless the horse is excused by a qualified veterinarian OR any official(s) which has the mandate to do so (see clause 12).

This measure is crucial in ensuring that all participants are judged based on their skill, performance, and partnership with their designated horses, without any unfair advantage gained through horse substitutions.

- 10.2 Riders shall be allowed to swap horses between HEATS and the FINAL, whether or not the horse is excused by a qualified veterinarian.
- 10.3 All horses that participate on day 1 of each HEAT must be available for participation on day 2.
- 10.4 Any rider who refuses to ride a horse assigned to him/her on day 2 by the selectors, will face disciplinary actions.

This decision was made to ensure fairness and respect for the sport, as well as the safety of both riders and horses. We believe that adherence to this policy will uphold the standards of our competitions and maintain

the trust of our riders, trainers and parents alike.

12. HORSE BEHAVIOUR

- 12.1 If a horse behaves in an unruly manner at mounting, there will be a 5-minute timeout for the trainer of said horse to be called to correct the matter.
- 12.2 If the horse behaves in an unruly manner to the extent that it is declared unsuitable and unsafe, the horse will be excused, and the rider in question will be permitted to ride his/her backup horse.
- 12.3 FALLS. The fall of horse or rider does not necessarily cause elimination but is penalized at the Selectors' discretion and/or the standard *bad luck* rule.
- 12.4 In the case of a soundness or health problem, the officials will refer the horse to the treating veterinarian for a professional assessment and appropriate care.
- 12.5 In the case of unruly behavior, the official(s) will report the horse to the Ring Master for consideration of a replacement.
- 12.6 It is imperative that our officials are strictly committed to ensuring the well-being of all participating horses. In alignment with SSSA guidelines, officials must not permit any horse to continue competing if there is an agreement that the horse is unsound or behaving unruly.
- 12.7 This decision-making process should be thorough and prioritize the health and safety of the horses and rider above all else.

Ensuring the welfare of the horses is a moral obligation and SSSA trust that all officials will exercise due diligence and compassion in their assessments.

13. HORSES SOUNDNESS AND REPLACEMENT:

- 13.1 The Veterinarian (may be on call) must be consulted for evaluation if the soundness or health of a horse are in questioned before/after a rider has competed on said horse.
- 13.2 Reserve horses are only allowed to come into play if a) the horse used sustained an injury, b) declared ill during the competition, and is disqualified by the veterinarian, c) declared unsuitable and unsafe (clause 12).
- 13.3 **SOUNDNESS ON DAY 1 (RAIL AND TEST)**
- If a horse becomes lame **BEFORE** the start of the competition (at least 1 hours) **or AFTER** the day's routine, the horse will be excused from the competition. The rider will then be given the opportunity on his/her backup horse.
- 13.4 If a horse becomes lame **DURING** participation or called in by the competition officials, the horse and rider will be excused from the arena. The rider will then be given the opportunity to continue on his/her backup horse (5-minute time allowance).
- 13.5 **ONLY the Veterinarian will make a FINAL decision on soundness and illness, and the Veterinarian's decision will be final.**

Note:

Because lameness cannot be predicted, SSSA council asks that riders and trainers have a positive understanding of every solution that is offered, so that every rider has a fair chance.

14 SSSA POLICY ON BACKUP HORSES

SSSA acknowledges the reality of a limited number of available backup equitation horses. However, this limitation cannot excuse riders and provinces from having a contingency plan for securing a backup horse when needed. To address this issue and ensure the smooth running of competitions, SSSA has established the following policy:

14.1 Provincial Responsibility:

- Provinces must take proactive measures to assist in securing backup horses. This responsibility can be managed individually by a rider, or by each province or through collaborative efforts with other provinces.
- Provinces should develop and enforce their own criteria for backup horse arrangements, ensuring that these criteria are consistent with SSSA's policy.

14.2 Mandatory Backup Plan:

Although the SSSA cannot compel any rider to enter a HEAT or FINAL with a backup horse, the SSSA is explicit in the rule that participating without a backup horse is done at the rider's own risk.

If a rider is unable to re-enter the arena within the 5-minute time limit, the rider will be disqualified based on the 5-minute timeout rule.

14.3 Each province must ensure that their riders comply with this policy and include provisions for backup horses in their respective competition entry criteria.

SSSA Oversight:

14.4 SSSA is not responsible for providing backup horses. However, in the event that on the start of Day 2 of the HEATS, the selectors encounter issues with the number of suitable horses available to complete the day—whether due to horses being disqualified on welfare or manners—SSSA is calling on all trainers, riders, and parents to collaborate on a suitable plan to ensure the day's success.

14.5 SSSA will adopt a lenient approach towards this scenario (clause 14.4), provided that assistance is offered by trainers and parents. Trainers are particularly encouraged to approach this challenging problem with positive actions.

Enforcement and Consequences:

14.6 If a suitable backup horse is not available after the 5-minute time Allowance on Day 1, the rider will be disqualified from the competition.

14.7 There will be no exceptions or deviations from this rule. It is imperative that all riders adhere strictly to this policy.

SSSA urges all provinces to take immediate action to comply with this policy and to collaborate where necessary to find the best solutions to this challenging problem. Ensuring the availability of backup horses is crucial for the success and continuity of each competition.

15. TRAINERS, PARENTS, AND FAMILY BEHAVIOUR.

It has come to our notice that in past events, there have been instances where trainers or parents associated with riders have displayed behavior that is not in line with the values of fair play, respect for rules, and sportsmanship.

Such behavior not only undermines the integrity of the competition but also creates an unfair environment for other participants. In order to maintain the standards of professionalism and ensure a level playing field for all riders, SSSA propose implementing a strict policy:

If any trainer, parent or family member of a rider in the competition is found to interfere with or show disrespect towards the rules, officials, or SSSA board members in any manner, the rider connected to the said individual(s) will face disciplinary actions.

This measure aims not only to uphold the integrity of our sport but also to

emphasize the importance of sportsmanship and respectful conduct among all participants. It is crucial that we foster an environment where riders can compete fairly and with dignity, free from any undue influence or misconduct from external parties.

SSSA urge your support in implementing and enforcing this policy effectively, as it will contribute significantly to the overall success and reputation of our equestrian events.

16. STANDARD MANOEUVRES

Standard maneuvers include, but not limited to, the following:

1. Stop/Halt
2. Turn/Change Direction
3. Pivot
4. Transitions
5. Serpentine
6. Circles
7. Figure Eight
8. Diagonal Changes
9. Correct and Incorrect Canter Lead Changes
10. Straight/Diagonal Line Manoeuvres

Selectors are urged to follow the judging guidelines set out for these maneuvers in the *Saddle Seat Equitation Judges Scoring Criteria* of the RHJA.

The following are not permitted:

1. Ride without stirrups for a brief period of time
2. Backing

Failure to adhere to the terms and conditions outlined in this document can result in serious consequences for the participating rider, including but not limited to disqualification from SSSA events, or other disciplinary actions as deemed appropriate by the governing body.

Compiled by: SSSA COUNCIL

Approved: JULY 2024 - SSSA Board Meeting