

MARYLAND MINIATURE HORSE PULLING CONTEST RULES

1. CONDUCT PULLING CONTESTS THAT ARE ATTRACTIVE TO THE PUBLIC.

- A good field of teams comes first if an attractive contest is to be conducted. The purse offered and the spread of premiums is the most important part in bringing out teams.
- Select a Superintendent and place him in charge of this event. His contacts and special efforts will be a factor in securing teams.
- Advertise these contests.
- Have pulling court so located and roped off that people cannot get on it, yet those in attendance can witness the contest.
- Have public address system available for use.
- Have an announcer who keeps the public informed as to the progress of the contest.

2. MEASURING and HEIGHT CLASS.

- Height Class - 38 inch and under
- Mini horses must be measured, the day of the contest from 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Horses will be measured with their feet set squarely under their body and to the last mane hair. The maximum height for the class will be 39 3/8" WITH SHOES. Unshod horses will be measured with their feet squarely under their body and to the last mane hair with the maximum height being 38".
- Once the measuring stick is laid on the horse's back, they have 40 seconds to record measurement, with three attempts. The maximum time for three attempts will be 2 minutes.

3. PULLING COURT.

- The course on which a contest is conducted should be approximately two hundred (200) feet long and at least twenty (20) feet wide. Failing to pull within this area will constitute a trial but no credit will be given for distance. This pulling field should be fenced or roped off for the exclusive use of the contestants.
- The pulling court should be level and smooth and of such texture as to permit horses to obtain a good firm grip with their shoes.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF ORGANIZATION CONDUCTING CONTESTS.

- Give date and time of each contest.
- Provide teamsters with list of premium awards in each class.
- Secure sufficient entries to afford keen competition.
- Advertise contests to encourage attendance.
- Place local Superintendent in charge. It shall be his responsibility to:
 - a. Measure teams at a definite stated time on designated scales in accordance with rules.
 - b. Provide stabling facilities for such teams that may arrive early and be held over following their respective contest.
 - c. Secure a listing of each team in the contest with the accurate name of the owner and his correct address.
 - d. Get all teams on the pulling field and ready to begin contest at time scheduled.
 - e. Provide the following help: Two chain men; one man to measure distance; two official judges and one man to keep teams coming to the sled promptly and in proper order.
 - f. When using a sled and weights, the organizer shall have equipment and help to load and unload the sled.
 - g. Draw numbers for pulling order or use computer to randomize.

5. JUDGES.

- A minimum of two judges shall be designated by the fair management.
- The judges have full jurisdiction over all questions pertaining to interpretation of rules and their enforcement. They shall determine the winners and shall award prizes in accordance with the rules.
- Failure to comply promptly with the directions of the judges shall result in immediate disqualification of a contestant.
- Horses or driver may be disqualified at any time by the judges, either for the violation of one or more of the rules or because the contesting team's condition is such as to render it cruel or inadvisable to permit the horses to proceed.
- The judges shall not own nor have an interest in any team competing.
- The judges will see that official records are kept and will sign these records at the end of the contest.

6. ENTRY OF TEAMS.

- Any team eligible to compete must be properly entered at such time as specified by the Fair Association.

7. **DOUBLETREES.**
 - Each teamster may use his own doubletrees provided they are sufficiently strong and equipped with hand holds and hook. There will be no measuring of the doubletrees.
8. **HARNESSES.**
 - Breakage of the harness during the pull will be the Drivers choice with distance of the pull or take another trial. HITCHING WITH CROSS TUGS IS PROHIBITED. No open bridles will be permitted.
9. **DISTANCE OF PULL.**
 - The sled must be pulled the full official distance of Ten feet (10') for each weight setting. Partial distance will be counted only in determining the place. In case of a tie, second best pull distance will determine the place.
10. **TRIALS.**
 - Each team will be allowed three (3) trials at each weight. All teams must take all trials in order called. None will be allowed to pass a trial and take it later. Each pass will be recorded as a trial. However, if the team fails to pull the required distance of ten (10') feet on their first trial, they can unhitch for their second trial, but must immediately rehit and still must complete the second trial within the one minute time limit. Each attempt, even though he does not unhitch between attempts, will be counted as a trial.
 - The whistle blown by the head chairman designates the end of a trial. The chairman will designate the end of the full distance pull.
 - If the driver goes to the head or touches the horse this will constitute a trial.
 - If a horse steps over the tug or to prevent a tangle up while you are hooked to the sled and you can't get the horse back in the tug without touching your horse you must unhook.
11. **SLED.**
 - Judges will determine the weight added to the sled for each round.
12. **HELPERS FOR TEAMSTERS.**
 - Each teamster must arrange for his helper and the helper is to be his own employee. A maximum of three (3) people, including the driver, per team, are permitted in the arena. No one is permitted ahead of doubletrees while hitching or while the pull is in progress. One person is allowed to remain at the gate in case of emergency. If a helper steps in front of the doubletree after the pull has started, a whistle will be blown and the trial is counted against the team and no credit for the distance pulled is awarded.
13. **FUSSING AND MILLING.**
 - Fussing the team while hitching will not be tolerated nor will milling after the team has been hitched. A reasonable allowance will be made for time and movement of the team to get them set for an even pull. PENALTY: *The calling of a trial against the team.*
14. **LUNGING INTO THE LEADS.**
 - Pulling the team back against the doubletree and jumping or lunging them into the lead at the start does not help in moving the load and may cause injury to the horses. The harness tugs to the sled must be reasonably tight when the pull starts. PENALTY: *The driver may be disqualified for the rest of the contest, the trial is counted against the team, and no credit is given for the distance.*
15. **DRIVING.**
 - The driver will walk beside the sled while in motion. He cannot whip the team or carry a whip, shake or rattle a chain or a can of pebbles, use a buzzer or any other device to frighten the team, hit the team with the free ends of the lines, swing the lines between the jump off over a slow horse when he is about to give up. Also, shortening tugs so single-trees knock against the legs is prohibited. Driver may talk and shout to the team all they wish, as long as the language is proper. PENALTY: *Driver is disqualified for the rest of the contest, the trial is counted against the team, and no credit is given to the distance.*
 - Owner of each team must have his team in their position and be in position to hitch as the team ahead leaves the sled. Teams should hold their order and hitched promptly as the team ahead is taken from the sled.
 - HELPERS ARE NOT PERMITTED IN ANY WAY to help drive the team. Any assistance given by helper will constitute a trial for that team.
 - Helpers must drop back to at least the middle of the sled.
16. **HANDLING HORSES BETWEEN TRIALS.**
 - Whipping, slapping, jabbing or punishing the animals in any way between trials will not be tolerated. A competent official will be assigned to watch the teams that are not pulling. PENALTY: *Disqualification of driver or handler.*

17. **OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE.**

- Special effort will be made to keep the crowd quiet from the time the team comes up to hitch until the end of the pull, or trial is called. Whether the crowd interferes with the pull or not, will be decided by the officials.
- If another teamster or handler interferes by yelling "whoa" or in any other way, that individual will be removed from the pulling area. When interference is called, the distance is credited to the team and the trials is not counted against them.

18. **LOCATION OF SLED.**

- The officials will be responsible for the position of the sled on all pulls. On third pulls, drivers may pull the sled from its current location or may choose to pull from either direction.

19. **ANY TEAM.**

- Any team is permitted to compete in one class only. Any team after competition in their respective class will not be permitted as a pair to be entered at the same fair in another weight class even though they may qualify by making the required weights.
- No horse that has competed in one division of a contest can be entered in another division of that contest. In the event of very small contests, management may choose to waive this rule.

20. **UNMANAGEABLE AND RUNAWAY TEAMS.**

- If any team becomes unmanageable or difficult to handle, and in the opinion of the judges becomes dangerous to the public, they will be disqualified and ordered to be taken from the field.
- If any team breaks away from the owner or helper or runs away, it will be sent from the ring and eliminated from the contest. If a team runs away it forfeits any premium it might have earned in the contest up to the time it runs away. Any team requiring an unreasonable time to hitch shall be eliminated.
- A team must be hitched to the sled or dynamometer within three minutes after being called or this will be counted as a trial pull. Also, three attempts to hook will constitute a trial pull with no distance.

21. **BRINGING IN TEAMS.**

- Competing teams shall be hitched to the eveners before bringing up to the machine. Two men may carry the eveners while the team is being driven into position and hitched; if evener is dropped and scares the team this may count as a trial. If the eveners are repeatedly dropped and the team goes away from the machine without being hitched, trials will be called or the team may be disqualified.

22. **CHANGING DRIVERS.**

- A change in drivers is permissible only at the discretion of the judges. A change in drivers without permission voids the haul, but the trial is counted.
- A change in drivers will not be granted after the team fails to pull the load the full distance. Not to exceed one change in drivers will be granted.

23. **PASSING TRIALS.**

- A driver may pass any trial but such trial will be counted against the team.
- Trials may be called against teams if they lunge away from the machine while being hitched.
- Teams that jack-knife (turning the yoke) or those, in which one horse throws his head over the other, should be withdrawn. Judges may rule that they be taken from the machine immediately if they are not withdrawn.

24. **BRIDLES.**

- Bridles used in a contest may not be open bridles, and no change therein may be made after the contest starts. Blind on bridle must be up and cannot be dropped at any time.

25. **MISTREATMENT OF HORSES.**

- If any whipping, punching, prodding, or punishing of animals is observed during the contest, the judges and officials may penalize or disqualify the team and contestant from further participating in the contest. Any unethical behavior can result in disqualification.

27. **HORSEMANSHIP**

- Good horsemanship is judged by well broken, good handling teams that are driven into position to be hitched and start and pull together at command of the driver.
- Good horsemanship includes the skill of the driver in holding the lines taut while animals are pulling and keeping the animals even and pulling straight ahead.
- Horsemanship is indicated by a true team that gives a good account of themselves. Their training and handling should be reflected by their willingness to pull and handle when the load gets heavy. A team that refuses to pull when the load gets heavy should be seriously discriminated against, especially if the team is brought back on a second and third trial.
- It shall not be counted against a driver in horsemanship when his team is driven to the sled by helpers to be hitched.
- Proper harnessing, fitting of collars and shoeing are additional factors to be considered in making awards in horsemanship.
- Horsemanship awards, if available, will be made by the regular judges at the close of the contest.

28. **DRUGS, STIMULANTS.**

- No person shall administer a stimulant or narcotic to a horse prior to a pulling contest. If testing facilities are available, samples must be taken from at least two teams competing.
- Any team testing positive for stimulants and narcotics will be disqualified and forfeit all premiums.
- No mechanical stimulant may be used during the pulling contest.

29. **BLOOD TESTING.**

- Two teams, selected at random, will be blood tested to detect the presence of disallowed drugs and medications immediately following the contest. Failure to submit horses for testing will result in disqualification. Equipoise and Lasix are not permitted. All other drugs detected will result in the disqualification of the owner and driver. Premiums will also be forfeited. The owner and driver will be banned from competing for one year. Future violations may result in a ban of up to five (5) years.

30. **DRIVERS OR HELPERS WHO ARE INTOXICATED WILL BE REMOVED** from and barred from entering the pulling court.

31. **MISCELLANEOUS.**

- Blindfolding a horse in a contest is not permitted.
- Horses shall not be tied together by neckyoke, strps, ropes or in any other way. They are to be held together only by the regular lines used in driving.
- Each team will be assigned a place to stand and await their turn to pull. They must stay there until they are called to pull.