WSCA Adaptive Riding Program Guide
2026

The Western Saddle Clubs Association Adaptive Riding Program Guide was created based upon the following rule books: Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI), Special Olympics Minnesota, Minnesota 4H Challenged Rider Program, and Western Saddle Clubs Association.

Competitor Eligibility

All competitors must be members in good standing of a Western Saddle Clubs Association saddle club. Published deadlines must be met to qualify for competition. Divisions are created according to ability level and not age or gender. It is required that all competitors have at least ten riding training sessions within the six months prior to the WSCA Championship Show Showcase, with a minimum of ten hours of training between the dates of 8/11/25-8/10/26. Riders must not cross-enter into other WSCA Championship Show classes. Western Saddle Club Association membership information, rule book, and Championship Show materials can be found online at **wsca.org**.

Spotters

Spotters approved by the Show Management will remain in strategic places within the arena to act in case of emergency for unassisted riders. Other attendants are not allowed in the competition ring except at the request of judge(s) or when specified by the event requirements (horse leaders and rider assistants are required in all Assisted Classes, and one assistant is required to remain inside the arena during Unassisted Classes). Coaches may request the ability to act as a spotter for exhibitors in advance of events. Final approval resides with Show Management.

Assistance

Unauthorized and unnecessary assistance from horse leaders or rider assistants will result in penalties to the rider in Assisted Classes. Horse handler volunteers must lead from behind the horse's nose and are meant to keep the horse in the pattern and not to lead them through a pattern. Service dogs must be approved by Show Management and confined to a 6 (six) foot leash. Service dogs are not allowed inside the arena and must maintain a 10 (ten) foot distance from any arena wall.

Horses

Competitors or their guardians are responsible for supplying an appropriate horse to pair with rider's needs, and horse handlers/ rider assistants. Safety and matching of horse to rider is of the utmost importance. Also important are knowledgeable and practiced handlers and assistants.

Tack, Attire and Equipment

Competitors will follow WSCA rules for tack and attire, with the exception that riders must wear ASTM/SEI approved protective headgear. Riders must wear a boot with a heel, but can wear other footwear as a result of physical disability. If modified footwear is required by a competitor, Show Management should be made aware prior to class. Any lead lines used must be attached to the halter and not the bridle. The halter may be over or under the bridle so long as it does not interfere with the use of the bit or reins. Handlers and assistants follow WSCA western attire rules, though are not required to wear a western hat. Helmets are encouraged.

Adaptive Equipment

Riders may use adaptive equipment without penalty in both Assisted and Unassisted classes. A mounting block/ ramp shall be made available by Show Management. Any additional adaptive equipment needed by an individual rider must be supplied by that rider.