

**Special Olympics New Jersey  
Fall Games Remote Equestrian Competition  
Saturday October 18, 2025**

**Judging will take place on October 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
Zoom Ribbon Presentation October 23, 2025, 6:30 pm**

|                                 |                    |                           |                            |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Judges:</b>                  |                    | <b>Show Manager:</b>      |                            |
| <b>Equitation:</b>              | Miriam Connell     | <b>Christine Cardinal</b> | 609-439-1605               |
| <b>Obstacles &amp; In-Hand:</b> | Jessica Lange      |                           | 609-730-9059 x 401         |
| <b>Dressage:</b>                | Nicole Norkevicius |                           | ccardinal@mercercounty.org |

**The 2025 SONJ Remote State Competition will run according to USEF and Special Olympics rules.**

**Late entries will not be accepted. Late video submissions will not be accepted.**

**Important Dates:**

**Entry Opening Date: 7/1/25    Entry Closing Date: 9/14/25**

**Video Submission Folders Available to Upload Videos: 9/17/25 - 10/5/25**

**Attention Instructors, Coaches, and Programs**

Please remember, the proper SONJ paperwork needs to be completed in order for programs and riders to be eligible to participate. Registrations will not be accepted for athletes without a current Health History Form and Communicable Diseases Waiver (only once).

Videos may be taped after the athlete is registered.

Questions regarding SONJ forms, eligibility, or LTP issues please contact Susan Mejia at [SM@sonj.org](mailto:SM@sonj.org).

**Equitation Classes:** Athletes will be judged on their riding position, use of aids, and the ability to control their horse. Results as shown by the performance of the horse are not to be considered more important than the method used by the rider (SO rule 13.2.6). The judge will look for the proper riding seat, the proper use of natural and or artificial aids, and the rider's ability to control the horse, and the use of good horsemanship. Show clothing is always welcome but not required to participate in an Equitation Class.

**Obstacle Classes:** The judge will look for the athlete successfully completing each obstacle using good horsemanship and proper equitation, the use of aids, and the rider's ability to control the horse. The rider's proper attempt to complete an obstacle will be considered more important than the horse's performance (SO Rule 13.2.6). Show clothing is always welcome but not required to participate in an Obstacle Class.

**Showmanship-like and Obstacle Course In-Hand Classes:** *Since these are non-riding classes, the Athlete/Riders are called Handlers.* In both In-Hand classes, the judge will look for the Handler's proper horsemanship and knowledge of the designated pattern or course, but the horse is the focus. It is the Handler's job to make the horse look and perform its best. Traditional showmanship clothing is always welcome, but it is not required to participate in an in-hand class.

**Dressage Classes:** Tests may be ridden or driven in a carriage. Athletes will be judged on the performance of each movement, the straightness, suppleness, rhythm (even paces), contact, impulsion, and collection of the horse, as well as communication between the athlete and horse. All tests may be called/read with the caller standing outside of the arena at A, B, or E. If a test is to be called, lateness in calling the movements and errors in reading the test will not relieve the rider from error penalties. Calling the test is limited to reading the movement as it is written only once. Repeating the movement by the caller will constitute assistance. Traditional dressage show clothing is always welcome but not required to participate in a dressage class.

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**Equipment**

- Local Programs are responsible for using appropriate saddles, tack, safety stirrups, rider footwear, and deciding appropriate adaptive equipment for the horse and rider. Riders may use adaptive equipment without penalty. Riders may in no way be attached to the horse or saddle.
- **Lead lines cannot be fastened to a bit.** Halters are required for all on-lead supported classes. If a bridle with a bit is being used, the halter may be over or under the bridle as long as it does not cause discomfort to the horse or interfere with the use of the reins or the bit. ***The rider will be penalized, and possible disqualification at the judge's discretion, if the lead rope is attached to the bit.***
- All riders/drivers/handlers must wear a protective ASTM/SEI approved helmet with full chin harness fastened at all times when the athlete is working with or riding the horse.

**Course Layout**

- The arena should measure 20 meters wide by 40 meters long, or as close as possible depending on your facility.
- The arena must be defined and/or enclosed by low fence, equine fencing, or walls.
- Videographer Placement: The videographer needs to stand and tape from the following locations:
  - Equitation- Center of the ring.
  - Obstacle Course (mounted and in-hand)- Outside of the ring behind letter C.
  - Dressage Classes- Outside of the ring behind letter C.
  - Showmanship-like- Please follow instructions on class sheet.

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## **Equitation, Obstacle, and Dressage On-Lead Divisions**

### **Walk Only Divisions:**

**A Leader is required, and one or two side-walkers may be used. The horse will be on the lead at all times.**

- 1. Walk Only Equitation** - Judged at the walk only in both directions. May be asked to halt, circle, or reverse direction.
- 12. Walk Only Obstacles** - Course will consist of a minimum of four obstacles and a halt.
- 19. Walk Only Dressage** – Special Olympics CI Dressage (Walk) Test #2

### **Novice Walk/Trot Divisions:**

**A Leader is required, and one or two side-walkers may be used. The horse will be on the lead at all times.**

- 2. Novice Walk/Trot Equitation** - Riders may be asked to halt, circle or reverse direction at the walk, and to trot (posting or sitting) a short distance in each direction.
- 13. Novice Walk/Trot Obstacles** - Course will consist of a minimum of four obstacles, a halt, and trotting in each direction.
- 20. Novice Walk/Trot Dressage** – Special Olympics EQ Level BI Dressage (Walk-Trot) Test #2

### **Intermediate Walk/Trot Divisions:**

**A Leader is required, and one or two side-walkers may be used. The horse will be off lead at the walk and on lead at the trot.**

- 3. Intermediate Walk/Trot Equitation** - Riders may be asked to halt, circle or reverse direction at the walk, and to trot (posting or sitting) a short distance in each direction.
- 14. Intermediate Walk/Trot Obstacles** - Course will consist of a minimum of four obstacles, a halt, and trotting in each direction.
- 21. Intermediate Walk/Trot Dressage** – Special Olympics EQ Level BI Dressage (Walk-Trot) Test #2

## **Equitation, Obstacle, and Dressage Off-Lead Divisions**

### **Walk Only Divisions:**

**Rider will have a spotter in the ring who will remain close to the horse's head. The horse will be off lead at all times. Any assistance from the spotter will be penalized.**

- 4. Independent Walk Only Equitation** - Judged at the walk only in both directions. May be asked to halt, circle, or reverse direction.
- 15. Independent Walk Only Obstacles** - Course will consist of a minimum of four obstacles and a halt.
- 22. Walk Only Dressage** - Special Olympics CI Dressage (Walk) Test #2

### **Independent Walk/Trot Divisions:**

**Rider will have a spotter in the ring who will remain close to the horse's head. The horse will be off lead at all times. Any assistance from the spotter will be penalized.**

- 6. Independent Walk/Trot Equitation** - Riders may be asked to halt, circle or reverse direction at the walk, and to trot (posting or sitting) a short distance in each direction.
- 16. Independent Walk/Trot Obstacles** - Course will consist of a minimum of four obstacles, a halt, and trotting in each direction.
- 23. Independent Walk/Trot Dressage** – Special Olympics EQ Level BI Dressage (Walk-Trot) Test #2

### **Advanced Walk/Trot Divisions:**

**Riders will ride independently at the walk and trot. Riders must have a spotter who, at their discretion, will remain in the center of the ring or just outside of the course area. Any assistance from the spotter will be penalized.**

- 8. Advanced Walk/Trot Equitation** - Riders may be asked to halt, circle, and/or reverse direction at the walk and/or trot (posting or sitting).
- 17. Advanced Walk/Trot Obstacles** - Course will consist of a minimum of four obstacles, a halt, and trotting in each direction.
- 24. Advanced Walk/Trot Dressage** – Special Olympics EQ Level BI Dressage (Walk-Trot) Test #2

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**Advanced Walk/Trot/Canter Divisions:**

**Riders will ride independently at the walk, trot, and canter. Riders must have a spotter who, at their discretion, will remain in the center of the ring or just outside of the course area. Any assistance from the spotter will be penalized.**

**10. Advanced Walk/Trot/Canter Equitation**

Riders may be asked to halt, circle, and/or reverse direction at the walk and/or trot (posting or sitting). Riders will be asked to canter in both directions for a short distance.

**18. Advanced Walk/Trot/Canter Obstacles**

Course will consist of a minimum of five obstacles, a halt, trotting and a cantering in both directions. Riders must ride the course independently and their spotter will remain just outside of the course area. OPTIONAL cross rail where noted.

**25. Advanced Walk/Trot/Canter Dressage – Special Olympics Level A Dressage (Walk-Trot-Canter) Test #2**

**In-Hand Classes**

**At the Program/Coach's discretion, either a halter with lead rope or bridle with reins may be used in the In-Hand classes.**

**26. In-Hand Walk Only Obstacles-** At the Program/Coach's discretion, an assistant may be present and used to the capacity deemed appropriate. Points will not be deducted if an assistant is present but will be deducted if the assistant overtly controls the horse. The course will consist of a minimum of four obstacles and a halt.

**27. In-Hand Walk/Trot Obstacles-** At the Program/Coach's discretion, an assistant may be present and used to the capacity deemed appropriate. Points will not be deducted if an assistant is present but will be deducted if the assistant overtly controls the horse. The course will consist of a minimum of four obstacles, trotting, and a halt.

**28. Non-Independent Showmanship-like With Pattern and Inspection-** At the Program/Coach's discretion, an assistant may be present and used to the capacity deemed appropriate. Points will not be deducted if an assistant is present but will be deducted if the assistant overtly controls the horse. One pattern and set-up with inspection. Half system crossover during inspection. The judge may ask the handler questions about their horse.

**29. Independent Showmanship-like With Pattern and Inspection-** Athlete can have an assistant who will remain in the center of the ring (or nearby out of camera view). Any assistance from the assistant will be penalized. One pattern and set-up with inspection. Quartering system crossover during inspection. The judge may ask the handler questions about their horse.

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## **Entry Information and Important Dates**

- Programs entering SONJ athletes must complete and submit their annual LTP form with athletes having a Communicable Diseases Waiver on file along with a current Health History Form prior to their first practice.
- Entry Opening date: July 1, 2025. Registrations will not be accepted for athletes without current certifications.
- SONJ will validate an athlete's participation for the SO ribbons and medals. The Horse Show Manager/Committee will not have any influence over SO participation.
- Entry Closing date: September 14, 2025 (11:59 pm). Late entries will not be accepted.
- Video submission folder available to upload videos: September 17, 2025 – October 5, 2025.
- Judging will take place on October 11-12, 2025.
- Late videos will not be accepted.
- Each rider may enter one equitation class, one obstacle class, one in-hand class, and one dressage test of the same skill level.

## **Video Submission Information**

- You do not need a special camera to record videos. A cell phone video will work!
- Videographer Placement: The videographer needs to stand and tape from the following locations-
  - Equitation- Center of the ring
  - Obstacle Course (mounted and in-hand)- Outside of the ring behind letter C
  - Dressage Classes- Outside of the ring behind letter C
  - Showmanship-like- Please follow instructions on class sheet.
- **Step 3.** For best results, the phone/camera should be held horizontally and not be facing into the sun. An indoor or covered arena may be used if the lighting is good. The better the lighting conditions, the better the video will look. Make sure the sound is turned ON.
- **Step 3.** Prior to entering the ring, your videographer must show a cell phone displaying the date and time. Without stopping the video, speak into the camera stating the rider's name and the horse's name, the class or the level and test you are riding and then continue, without editing (no stopping and starting) into the arena. Announce "you are being judged".
- **Step 3.** As soon as the class/test is finished, the camera must approach the horse for a close-up view of the horse and rider.
- **Step 4.** Follow SONJ's video submission instructions.