

GUIDELINES FOR
MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS RE
VETERINARIAN CHECK AT USEF VAULTING COMPETITIONS

Note: Vet Checks are currently only required at our USEF/AVA National Championships. This document may be expanded to include any USEF Recognized Vaulting Competition, if the membership so decides. That language is in brackets.

USEF Rule VA 113.3 reads: “At National Championships there will be a vet check. The veterinarian, accompanied by at least two members of the ground jury will inspect the horses.”

Clarification Language

To clarify the vet check process, it is proposed that the following language be included in all premiums for USEF Vaulting Competitions:

“The purpose of the veterinary inspection at USEF/AVA National Championships [USEF-recognized vaulting events] is to protect and defend the best interests of the horse. Any horse deemed to be unfit or unsound for vaulting service by the Official Veterinarian and/or Ground Jury will not pass the inspection. Reasons for failing the inspection may include, but are not limited to: Obvious unsoundness (uneven and/or un-level), poor physical condition, illness, wounds in the mouth, saddle galls, signs of discomfort or fatigue.”

Protocol

The Ground Jury is defined in USEF Rule VA113 as “the invited judges.” These judges must be selected from the current roster of Federation Licensed Vaulting Judges.

For USEF/AVA National Championships, the AVA Vice President of Competitions shall be responsible for locating, hiring and verifying the credentials of the Official Vet Check Veterinarian. [At USEF Recognized Competitions, Competition Management would be the person responsible for hiring, etc.]

- Only a licensed, practicing equine veterinarian may be hired as the Official Vet Check Veterinarian.
- The Official Vet Check Veterinarian must be a member of the AAEP (American Association of Equine Practitioners).
- The Official Vet Check Veterinarian should be free of conflicts of interest, i.e., should not be the regular veterinarian for any of the horse’s entered in the competition
- The VP Competitions [Competition Management] shall verify the Official Vet Check Veterinarian’s credentials.

The vet check shall consist of an inspection of each horse and a trot/walk exam. This trot/walk exam shall be conducted on ground which is smooth, firm and level. (Horse Inspection Procedures and Diagram attached).

- The Official Vet Check Veterinarian will inspect each horse for physical condition and will identify the horse by his number.
- Horses shall be presented in hand with a bridle and reins.
- The horse's USEF/AVA number shall be attached to the right side of the bridle.
- The horse and handler shall be in showmanship attire: Clean, neat, and professionally turned-out.
- The Ground Jury will stand 10 feet off to the side of the horse during this inspection and during the trot.
- All spectators, owners, coaches, longeurs, vaulters, etc. shall be allowed to stand a minimum of 40 feet away from the inspection track
- The horse shall be trotted and walked, per the official diagram for the vet check. No other exercise shall be required, i.e., no longeing.
- A horse that does not immediately pass this inspection will be sent to a holding area adjacent to the official vet check area. This horse will be re-examined before the end of the Official Vet Check.
- The Official Vet Check Veterinarian, in conference with the Ground Jury, shall have the complete authority regarding the failure of any horse.
- In case of disagreement between the Official Vet Check Veterinarian and the Ground Jury regarding the pass of a horse, the Ground Jury may overrule the decision to pass, if the Ground Jury unanimously deems the horse unable to perform to the standard and/or requirements of the vaulting sport.
- Any horse that does not pass the Official Vet Check inspection and/or re-check, may be presented on the following day, before competition begins, only if specified in the show premium. The same Official Vet Check Veterinarian must preside over any re-check.

The criteria which shall be used for evaluating the soundness of the horses shall be the AAEP Soundness Scale:

- 1) Lameness is very subtle, with no head bobbing. Indications are a difference in the range of motion or weighting of a particular limb
- 2) There is relatively slight head bobbing
- 3) There is noticeable head bobbing
- 4) The horse has difficulty moving
- 5) The affected leg is non-weight bearing.

When using the scale to evaluate soundness, veterinarians may make use of decimals, i.e., 1.5, 2.5, etc.

