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# 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Saratoga Skijoring Races

## Skijoring, nothing new

*Skijoring was around for a long time before coming to Saratoga*

**By Virginia Parker**  
Skijoring first came to the Platte River Valley in March, 2017. A new event that replaced Chariot Races has caught on quickly and is going strong into its 7th year of competition.

Skijoring is held at the Bucks Spring arena east of Saratoga, with races on Saturday and Sunday. Registration online is recommended. Friday evening the party and registration and Calcutta will begin at the Hotel Wolf. Saturday and Sunday's races begin at 9:30 and continue throughout the morning, with awards given at the

Hotel Wolf in the afternoon. Information and registration can be found on the website at [saratogaskijoring.com](http://saratogaskijoring.com).

The skijoring track is dirt where the horse runs with snow down the sides, and jumps. Skiers and horses safety is foremost to the organizers. Skiers are required to wear helmets, and protective gear and no participant is allowed to drink alcohol immediately before or during the races.

Skijoring is nothing new. It's been around for hundreds of years and is a Scandinavian brainchild. When the weather changed to winter and the snow piled up, Scandinavians would strap on some long skis, attach a rope to a reindeer and go "joring".

Many used this as a means of transportation when faced with deep snow and no road.

In 1928, skijoring was introduced at the Olympics in St. Moritz, Switzerland, as a demonstration sport. The event, using horses, was held the second day of the games and was held on a frozen lake with not jumps. It hasn't been seen at the Olympics since, but it didn't disappear. In the 1940s a horse owner in Leadville, Colorado teamed up with a skier and showed off their skijoring expertise, creating an exciting new winter sport.

Skijoring has not caught on in many parts of the northern United States and in some parts of Canada.

Given Wyoming's cowboy culture, abundant snowfall

and love of outdoor winter sports, it isn't surprising that skijoring has become popular in the state.

Initially, Skijoring's main mode of locomotion wasn't horses, but dogs. A skier would strap on cross country skis and wear a harness with a rope attached to a dog or team of dogs who also wore a harness(es) to pull the rider. The rider would also use ski poles to propel himself and verbal commands to steer the team.

The current day event is fast moving, fun-to-watch and there are concession stands with food and beverage.

Organizers remind everyone to dress warm as this is entirely outdoors and the wind can be a challenge.

## Schedule of events

The Seventh Annual Saratoga Skijoring Races will be held at the Buck Springs Arena in Saratoga, Wyoming February 4th & 5th, 2023. Racer registration is Friday the 3rd, with races on Saturday and Sunday (February 4 & 5).

General Admission to the races is \$5.00 per person, kids 12 and under are free. Buy your tickets at the gate. Registration gathering at the Hotel Wolf will begin beginning at 5pm at the Hotel Wolf in downtown Saratoga.

### Registration Fees by Class

Race Fees Due via online invoice

- Open & Sport- \$25 per participant (\$50 per Team)
- Amateur/Novice - \$20 per participant (\$40 per Team)
- Youth - Under 18 FREE

### 2023 Race Schedule and Times

#### Friday - Feb 3rd

- 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM Competitor Welcome Party and Registration - Back Room of the Hotel Wolf
- 7:30 PM Calcutta - Back Room of the Hotel Wolf

#### Saturday - Feb 4th\*

\*Subject to change based on weather conditions. Check Saratoga Skijoring Races website and Facebook page for updates.

- 9:30 AM Race Volunteer Safety and Rule Meeting - Buck Springs Race Track (meet at the timing booth)
- 10:00 AM Competitor Meeting - Buck Springs Race Track (meet near starting gate)
- 10:15 AM Competitor Course Inspection
- 10:30 AM Races Begin - Buck Springs Race Track (Junior Division will run first, then Novice, 3-D )

#### Sunday - Feb 5th

- 9:30 AM Race Volunteer Safety Meeting - Buck Springs Race Track (meet at the timing booth)
- 10:00 AM Competitor Meeting - Buck Springs Race Track (meet at starting gate)
- 10:15 AM Competitor Course Inspection
- 10:30 AM Races Begin - Buck Springs Race Track (Novice Division will run first)Following the Conclusion of the Races on Sunday Afternoon - Awards Party Hotel Wolf Back Room Winners announced and prize money will be paid out at the Awards Ceremony Party following the races.

#### Winner Payout

With the support of the Carbon County Visitors Council and local sponsors, \$6,000 was raised to be used as money added participant prizes. Winnings will be split between rider and skier!

The winning teams will receive an envelope with two checks (proceeds split 50/50), one made out to the Skier, the other made out to the rider. All racer registration fees and money added will be paid back to competitors. Payouts may change as event finances dictate.

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### Course Design

The designing of the course is focused on providing a safe venue for horses, riders, skiers and spectators. There will be a straight track approximately 700' in length. The track designers work with what mother nature gives and typically includes 3 jumps, Leadville style ring, and multiple ski gates. The hope is to run a crossover track with multiple features.

### Horse Boarding

Thanks to local supporters and ranchers there is have on-site horse boarding at the race venue. All boarding facilities have water available. Bring your own feed. Boarding is at no extra cost for participants and reservations are made when registering for the event.




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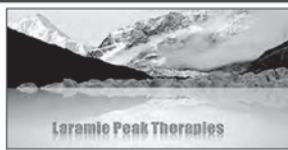
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REFLECTIONS FROM THE SARATOGA SUN

Chariot races set this weekend in valley

*From the February 19, 1981 edition of the Saratoga Sun*

Some 60-90 chariot teams are expected in the Platte Valley this weekend for the first annual Donald Erickson Memorial Chariot Races.

The chariot races Saturday and Sunday at 1 p.m. are part of the annual Snowstation activities.

Chariot racing will be held at the track adjacent to the Saratoga airport runway. To reach the race track go west on Elm Street past the Saratoga High School to 11th Street, then left toward the airport. The gate at the airport grounds on 11th Street will be the only entrance to the races, a spokesman from the committee said.

Admission to the races is \$2 per person in advance or \$2.50 at the gate. Tickets are available at the chamber office, at Eaton's Western Wear and at Donelan Pharmacy. Children under 12 will be admitted for free.

Activities get underway Friday with an informal get together at the Hotel Wolf. Saturday's events kick off with a pancake breakfast at the IOOF Hall in Saratoga starting a 7 a.m. The hall is located on South River Street adjacent to the town hall. Proceeds will go for Odd Fellow programs.

Saturday at 9 a.m. snowmobile drag races will be held in the Ryan Park area. A chamber spokesman said the races will be held on the meadow just past the chain which blocks traffic on WYO 130.

The drag races have a \$2 entry fee and racers will be tested against a radar gun.

Ice skating activities for children begin at 9 a.m. Saturday at the Saratoga Inn ponds. Races will be held starting at 10 a.m. and there will be adult supervision at the ponds until 11:30 a.m. so parents can leave their children to skate. Ribbons will be awarded to the winners of the races.

Saturday night a buffet will be served at the Saratoga Inn. Cost is \$7.50 and tickets

are available in advance or at the door. Proceeds go to the chamber.

Ice fishermen can try their luck to catch the biggest one at the Saratoga Lake or Platte River. Fishermen can take their fish to the Hotel Wolf for weighing and measuring anytime during the weekend. Prizes will be awarded in the contest.

Sunday cross country ski races will begin at 9 a.m. at the Saratoga Inn golf course providing there is snow on the course. A spokesman said if there is no snow by then the races will be canceled. Entry fee is \$2 for adults and \$1 for children.

Trophies and prizes for the chariot races and snowmobile races have been donated by Livestock Exchange of Brush, Colo., and Neal and Carole Kirk at Rawlins Distributing Company.

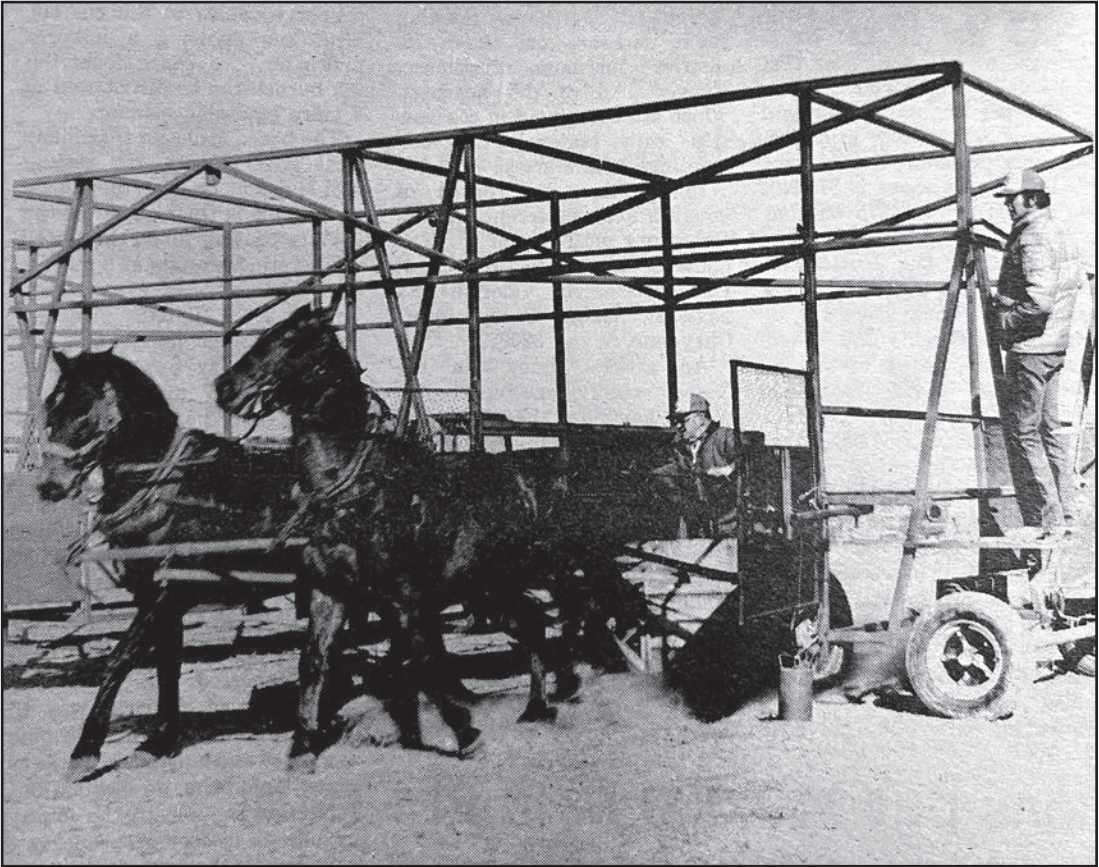
Sloppy Joes, chips, coffee, pop, candy bars and beer will be sold at the chariot race site. The Saratoga Optimists are manning the food booth with all proceeds

to go to the chamber of commerce.

Winners in the chamber poster contest were chosen by the Snowstation committee members Monday. Kristy Austin had the first place poster, Pam Gerrard had the second place poster and Jerry Fluty had the third place poster. Receiving honorable

mention were Lori Nichelson, Ty Brinar and Mike Seahorn.

Don Gilman is chairman of the Snowstation committee and Patty Lufkin is chairman of the chariot race committee.



Bill Fitzgerald breaks out the gates in preparation for the chariot races to take place here Saturday and Sunday. Also pictured is Jack Williams, who owns one of the horses. Ron Garretson is the owner of the other horse. Chariot racing begins at 1 p.m. both days

-Photo by Tammy Brock

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# 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Saratoga Skijoring Races

## Skijoring makes the jump

**A look back at the inaugural skijoring event in Saratoga from the March 8, 2017 edition**

**By Fred Broschart**

Saratoga's inaugural skijoring event, intended to replace perennial favorite chariot races, was a success that organizers hope will lead to big things for the event in the future.

Richard Raymer of the Lion's Club, one of the organizers of the event, said in skijoring's first year, attendance surpassed the attendance of chariot races, despite the fact the event was organized only during the last 45 days after a lack of competitors for chariot races forced organizers to abandon that event.

"There's a new winter event in Saratoga," Raymer said. "That's skijoring."

"I thought first off it went really well," said Rob Streeter, a member of the Platte Valley Jaycees, the other civic club that co-sponsored the event. "We had some growing pains if you will, but I think even by Sunday morning those were figured out."

"I think it was an awesome success."

The chariot races were popular, Raymer said, but a lack of participants meant that just about 45 days ago, the organizers at the Lion's Club had to make the decision to cancel the popular event. Members of the Jaycees approached the Lions about trying skijoring, an event that blends horse riding and skiing.

Originally, many in the clubs were talking about holding the inaugural skijoring event next year, giving organizers over a year to plan. But members of the Lions saw an opportunity to try something new without delaying a year, saying

it was important to draw crowds into the Valley to help local businesses.

Jimmy Campbell, bartender at the Wolf Hotel said in that regard, he thought the event was a success. Even though Campbell said he was not on duty at the Wolf for much of the event, there was a marked increase in business at the bar and restaurant, with Friday night being particularly busy, as well as lunch Saturday.

Campbell said he had also heard that other bars and restaurants in Saratoga had been "slammed."

Anthony Gonzales, bartender at Duke's, said the weekend was very busy, estimating that the crowds at Dukes were 2-3 times larger than last year's crowds during the chariot races.

Gonzales said that he worked at Duke's during chariot races for the last three years. During that time, he said, he noticed the crowds being drawn into the bar decreased each year.

"The crowds this weekend topped what I've seen for the last three years here (during chariot races)," he said.

On Saturday, evening shift bartenders who usually start at 5 p.m. were called in at 2 p.m. to help the day staff because things were so busy at the bar, he said.

The effects on lodging in Saratoga were not as clear, however. Judy Hodges, a desk clerk at the Hacienda Motel, said there was a slight increase in the number of rooms rented Friday at the motel.

During the chariot races and other winter events such as the ice fishing derby, the motel generally was booked solid, she said. Hodges said that in her opinion, it was because the event was put together

on such a short timetable with less time to publicize the event.

Raymer, echoing Gonzales, said estimated attendance Saturday eclipsed that of the chariot races with about 600 people in attendance. The number of competitors was also capped by organizers to prevent the event from becoming too big to be managed, especially in the first year.

"We were a little scared of getting in over our heads," Streeter said. "We figured it was better to have a well-done event with fewer people than to try and satisfy a bunch more people and deliver a bad event."

Streeter is confident that next year the organizers will be ready to host more competitors and visitors. Streeter said officials from Skijoring USA, a body that sanctions skijoring events, told him they were very impressed with Saratoga's event, saying it was one of the best organized and attended first year events they had seen.

"They (Skijoring USA officials) loved our track, they loved our crowd and they loved our announcers," Raymer said. "It was a pretty good pat on the back to everybody involved to have professionals come to town and say we did a good job."

For the inaugural event, Streeter and Raymer said the decision was made to keep skijoring on the same date as the chariot races would have been held. Future events will likely be held earlier in the winter when snowfall is more predictable. Warm temperatures over the weekend saw lots of melting snow and mud, and severe winds Sunday probably limited attendance on that day.

According to Streeter, the

goal of organizers should be to find a date when there is likely to be more snow and which fits in well to the schedule for other skijoring events in other places.

Raymer said that organizers of the event must also consider other events happening across the Valley such as the Saratoga Ice Fishing Derby and the Encampment Winter Carnival.

"The last thing anybody wants to do is getting into competing events," Raymer said. "It just doesn't work because we have such great local support for all of those events."

Future skijoring events will also try to add new elements that were missing from the inaugural event, Raymer said. Chief among them is Calcutta betting. Next year, organizers would like to find a way to integrate the Calcutta into the event as was done for chariot racing.

"We didn't do one (a Calcutta) this year because we just wanted to give everyone a chance to see the event."

Monday, Raymer said there was not an accounting of how much was raised by the skijoring event. Money brought in during the event will be divided up among the Lion's Club and the Jaycees, he said.

Raymer said the event would not have been successful as is was without the support of local volunteers, of which there were about 50-60 he said. Volunteers helped construct the track, haul snow in and even take tickets at the gate.

"I just want to thank everybody in the community who took the time out of the weekend to come out and hang out and watch races, and everyone who helped," Streeter said. "We did it, we made it happen."

## Welcome Skijorers!

Registration is Friday at 5 pm.  
Calcutta is Friday at 7:30 pm  
and Saturday at 8 pm.  
Awards will be Sunday after the races.



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Welcome Skijorers!



## Massage by Ruth Brungardt

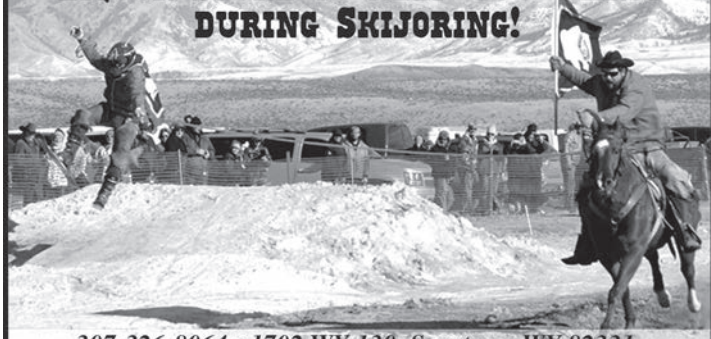
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Be safe and have fun.



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## Ski Trivia

Where and when was the first national Championship of Exhibition Skiing held, with the formation of the International Freestyle Skiers Association?  
ANS: 1971 Waterville Valley, New Hampshire.

What local city was selected by the National Olympic Committee to hold the 1976, Winter Olympics games and was voted down?  
ANS: Denver, Colorado., due to a drought--the site that would have been set for the Olympic downhill had less than one inch of snow cover.

What year was the first monoski demonstrated?  
ANS: 1970 by Hans Schmid, a 23 year old electrician, his creation was inspired by watching skiing amputees.

Who demonstrated the first double aerial flip?  
ANS: Hermann Goellner in 1966.

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**32nd Annual**

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**CARBON COUNTY**  
GET YOUR BEST ON

**GOOD LUCK TO ALL THOSE PARTICIPATING IN THE 2023 ANNUAL SARATOGA SKIJORING RACES!**



# 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Saratoga Skijoring Races

## Rules and Regulations

### RULES AND REGULATIONS

Rules are solely for the safety of the competitors, both horse and human and to ensure fair competition at the Saratoga Skijoring Races. All rules are required to be followed by Saratoga Skijoring Race competitors.

The Starting Gate Judge has the ultimate say in determining participant and equine safety. We reserve the right to disqualify any individual, team or competitor in the event unsafe actions are observed. We also reserve the right to cancel or postpone the entire event should unsafe conditions arise. Final authority in such matters lies solely with the Starting Gate Judge.

### GENERAL RACE DESCRIPTION DIVISION AND COMPETITION CRITERIA

A team consists of a horse, rider and skier and will get 1 run each day. i.e. a skier can not ski behind the same horse more than one time per day, a horse may only run 2 times per day and a skier can only run a maximum of 4 times per day\*\*\*

### OPEN - 3D More experienced riders and skiers.

**NOVICE/EXHIBITION CLASS** (Beginners) Teams are considered to be new to the sport, beginning level competitors riding horses that may not have speed enough to be competitive in the Open or Sport. Youth - Non competitive fun run, one participant must be under the age of 14.

### SKIER –OPEN/SPORT/ NOVICE RULES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Rules:

- A skier can choose their division of competition.
- A skier may compete in only one Division, unless assisting with the youth division.
- A skier may compete up to four times in a day.
- All skiers must wear approved snow sport helmets, protective Eyewear is recommended.

- Any Skiers under 18, must have a parent/guardian sign parental consent forms.
- Proof of insurance for minors is mandatory.
- A Parentor/Guardian must be present during the competition.
- Protective Eyewear and helmet must be worn during competition.

#### Recommendations:

It is strongly suggested that bindings be tested by a professional prior to skiing.

#### TIMING

In Novice divisions, time plus penalties will be ranked accordingly. Fastest times win, day one will be averaged with day two to arrive at the team's weekend overall time. Buckles will be awarded to the fastest overall weekend time.

In the Open 3-D division we utilize a 1.5 second split. The split will be based on raw times to set divisions. Penalties are then assessed, overall times with penalties assessed will determine rank. Team day one raw time is averaged with day two raw time, division split set, then total penalties added to get the weekend overall time. Buckles will be awarded to the fastest overall weekend time for each division.

Prize \$ - Day money will be paid to the top 4 teams of each division.

Electronic timing via kick boards will determine the official time, if a skier fails to trigger the kick board, i.e. jumps the board, the result will be a no time. In the event of timing system failure, we have backup timing place, both hand and electronic. The timing judge's and starting judge's call is final.

### RIDER –OPEN/SPORT/ NOVICE RULES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Rules:

- A rider may compete in more than one division, but must compete on a different horse in each Division entered. i.e. if a

rider has 2 horses they may be entered in the same or different divisions, a horse may not cross divisions.

- All riders must be on time for their runs. Any rider that cannot be ready on time due to running too many horses or horse difficulty will be moved to the back of the order. Second failure to be ready on time will result in a DQ for that run.
- Riders can only enter 2 horses per division -
- Helmets and protective vests are recommended for all riders.
- Any Riders under 18, must have a parent/guardian sign parental consent forms.
- Proof of insurance for minors is mandatory.
- A Parentor/Guardian must be present during the competition.
- Helmet and protective vests must be worn during competition.

### HORSE – OPEN/SPORT/ NOVICE RULES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Rules:

- A Horse can compete in only one Division.
- A horse may not run more than two times in a day. Unless competing in the youth division, which is non-competitive by nature and design, race organizers have final say here.

#### Recommendations:

- Leg protection (boots or polo wraps) and bell boots are recommended.
- Horses are encouraged to have a shoe that will increase traction (borium, calks, etc) but not required.

### RULES OF COMPETITION – GENERAL

#### Rules:

- Timing, each team gets one run per day. The team's day one time will be averaged with the day two time, and ranked. A DNF on any one day will be ranked lower than a team with two daily qualifying times.
- All participants must sign a liability waiver prior to competition. These will be

available at the race registration prior to race day.

- Rope length cannot exceed 33 feet in length. No extensions or tethers from the saddle longer than 6 inches will be allowed. They will be required to be removed before your race can start. Handles are prohibited. Overhand knots on skiers end of rope is acceptable, a loop on the skier end of rope is also acceptable, teams may use their own ropes, so long as they have been inspected by the starting gate judge.

- No dogs are allowed outside of vehicles at the race venue. Pets must remain inside the cab of vehicles.

- A missed ring, including rider ring, will result in a 2 second time penalty, a missed gate / jump will result in a 5 second penalty.

- No aerial drone(s) are allowed.
- Races need to be vigilant about starting on time. Each team has a maximum of 3 minutes to start their run once called up. If a team goes beyond the 3 minute mark they will be rolled. If two no-starts occur, that team will receive a DNF.

- Rules should be clearly posted and accessible to all competitors two weeks prior to the race.

- If a horse, rider, or equipment are deemed unsafe the rider and horse can be asked to leave at any time by the starting gate judge or other Saratoga Skijoring official. This includes intoxicated / under-the-influence participants.

- If the Skier drops the rope BEFORE crossing the start line, he/she will be allowed a restart immediately after the team's fault start. The three-minute rule restarts upon the Arena Judge's determination of a clear course. If a delay or the skier drops the rope on the second attempt to start, that team is disqualified for that run. If the Horse runs the course, the team may be dropped down (In the order at the official's discretion) a few racers to allow for reasonable recovery time. If it is the last of the division, they should be scheduled to run 1st prior to the start of the next division.

- The skier must finish in an upright position and on at least one ski, with rope in hand when crossing the finish line. Both skier boots must cross between the finish line gate.

- Both ski tips and both boots must go around a gate, or the gate is considered missed.

- Participants may use batons for ring spearing, batons are not required, thus no penalty will be assessed for a dropped baton.

- All competitors must be informed of their time at the end of their run prior to the start of the competitive run. Times will be announced over the PA system.

- If a racer wants to protest, s/ he will contact the nearest race official (Horse Gate Official, Timing Judge, Flag Judge or Saratoga Skijoring Race Organizer) and let them know they want to protest. Via radio course and starting gate judges will examine the situation, with consultation with the timing judge. After consultation with this three person committee the ultimate decision rests with the Horse Gate Judge and will be final. Races must be protested immediately following the run, the race will stop until the protest is settled. Once the next race rolls, you cannot protest the results

- Wyoming is windy, so deal with it! If a ring falls off of the ring standard due to wind or other forces caused by mother nature or caldera eruption, a deduction will NOT be taken, the judgment of the presiding gate judge will be final. If the wind forecast is above 40 MPH we will not set up ringstands. We have replaced magnets in 2022 to ensure the wind will not be a factor.

- All performance-enhancing drugs are prohibited and will not be tolerated. The Starting Gate Judge and the event organizers have the final say in related matters.

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