



SPECIAL 25th ANNIVERSARY IEA WESTERN VARSITY OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP CLASS

In celebration of the IEA's 25th Anniversary a special Varsity Open Championship (VOC) class will be offered during the 2027 Western National Finals in Fort Worth, TX.

QUALIFYING FOR THE VOC

To be eligible for a spot to compete in the VOC class at Western National Finals (invited or earned spots) a rider must have competed two or more times during the 2026-27 regular competition season in Class W1 Varsity Open Horsemanship and class W2 Varsity Open Reining.

Ten (10) riders will be invited to compete in the VOC class at the 2027 Western National Finals. An invitation will be issued to the rider from each active western region with the highest combined point total earned during the 2026-27 regular competition season in Class W1 Varsity Open Horsemanship and Class W2 Varsity Open Reining.

If the top point earner in a region is not able to attend Western Nationals Finals, the next rider in line from that region will be invited.

Ties for the VOC rider to be invited from a region will be broken in this order:

- **First Step** - Count total number of points earned during regular season shows in Class W2 Varsity Open Reining.
- **Second Step** - If a tie still exists, count the total number of points earned at region finals in Class W1i Individual Varsity Open Horsemanship and Class W2i Individual Varsity Open Reining.
- **Third Step** - If a tie still exists, it will be broken by the higher placement at region finals in class W2i Varsity Open Reining.
- Only placings/points from individual classes may be counted. Placings/points earned in team classes during region finals do not apply.

Two (2) additional riders can earn a spot to compete in the VOC class at Western National Finals. The two (2) additional riders will be determined by the highest combined placement/point total from class W1i Individual Varsity Open Horsemanship and class W2i Individual Varsity Open Reining earned at the 2027 Western National Finals.

If one of the ten (10) **invited** riders from a region is also one of the two (2) top two point earners at Western National Finals, that additional earned rider spot for the VOC class will be filled by the rider with the next highest combined total.

Ties for an earned spot in the VOC class will be broken in this order:

- **First Step** - Rider with the higher placement/point total in class W2i individual Varsity Open Reining at Western National Finals will advance to compete in the VOC class at Western National Finals.

VOC CLASS PROCEDURE

The VOC class may run using the same mount for all phases of the competition or a separate draw may be done for each phase. Scores from each phase will be added together to determine the overall winner and placing in the VOC class.

- **Phase 1** (mandatory reining pattern) - Riders will be scored on a reining pattern.
- **Phase 2** (mandatory horsemanship) - Riders will be scored on rail work and may be asked to perform any western test(s) 1-16.
- **Phase 3** (optional additional testing) - At the judge's discretion, riders may be asked to perform any western test(s) limited to tests 1-16 or a horsemanship pattern from the IEA Pattern Addendum. If the additional testing is a horsemanship pattern, it may be ridden on the same horse drawn from Phase 2 or on a new mount.

NOTE: This class will **NOT** replace the Myron Leff Leading Western Rider Award. That award will still be tallied based on the overall points won **AT** National Finals between the two Varsity Open Individual classes. The VOC class will **NOT** be determining the Leading Rider Award.

Questions about the IEA Western Varsity Open Championship Class can be directed to: **Tammy Braham** at tammy.braham@rideiea.org.