

STRAIGHT FROM THE SOURCE

There is a definite line between Open and Non Pro riders, and the NRCHA divides the groups based on remuneration.

From the NRCHA

For some, the world is viewed in shades of gray, but to divide Open and Non Pro level riders in the National Reined Cow Horse Association, the rules are black and white. To be paid for a service can mean a member is no longer considered a “non-professional” in the industry.

Membership Coordinator Barbara Nahlik and Non Pro Committee Chair Diane Edwards field scenarios from the membership regularly, helping determine what constitutes remuneration for a service.

“I field a lot of phone calls from people new to reined cow horse,” Nahlik said. “There are a number of common misconceptions newbies have as to what constitutes a ‘Non Pro.’ We at the NRCHA are not trying to make it difficult for

members to achieve and maintain Non Pro status, but we are trying to ensure all Non Pros are on a level playing field. In fact, the association has one of the most lenient or forgiving policies for members to regain or achieve Non Pro status.”

But the best way to maintain a Non Pro status is to understand the rules from the onset. Edwards said she often refers members with questions to the rulebook to ensure they are reading the official language.



“Many of their questions could be answered if they would crack open that cover,” said Edwards. “Remuneration is defined by the NRCHA Rulebook as ‘to receive pay or financial gain from work completed’ or to be ‘reimburse, compensate, make fair return for an action’ and those compensations refer to our equine-related activities.”

Obtaining a Non Pro member application is simple to do and filling it out, honestly, is easy. The application—located on

the NRCHA website—asks applicants to certify they haven’t been paid for services like giving lessons, training a friend’s Mustang for a Mustang event and then showing it at the event, or cleaning your own stalls in return for a lesson. All of these activities are examples of remuneration in some way, shape or form.

Here, these scenarios are laid out to aid members in making the right decisions for their Non Pro status.

DEFINE REMUNERATION

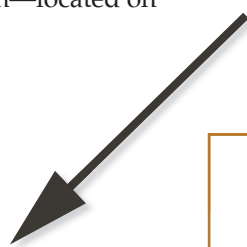
Money paid for work or a service; pay or other compensation provided in exchange for services performed.

WHAT IF ...

Though some try to slide under the radar, providing services and earning remuneration for that, it will eventually come to the attention of the NRCHA. Whether boasting on social media or through a protest from another member, the Non Pro Committee and NRCHA Board of Directors annually deals with multiple infractions of the Non Pro rules.

“The current Board of Directors knows what an important group the Non Pros are to the health, growth and well-being of the organization,” said Edwards. “Many, many wonderful changes have taken place during the years I have been on the Board that are 100-percent for the benefit of Non Pro exhibitors. But we also have to play by the rules. We all want the same level playing field at our competitions.”

The rules are there to aid competitors, not to hinder them. That said, here are some examples of actual questions received regarding what does and does not constitute remuneration.



“... I received a free pair of boots and saddle pad in exchange for a photoshoot.”
—NOT a Non Pro

“... I’ve shown horses not owned by myself but I’ve never won any money.”
—NOT a Non Pro

“... I train [insert any discipline] but have never worked or shown cow horse before.” —NOT a Non Pro

“... I only started two colts last year.” —NOT a Non Pro

“... I train a horse to ride that I don’t own and instead of money I get a new pickup truck in trade?” —NOT a Non Pro

“... I haven’t shown reined cow horses for many years, but I still give lessons.”
—NOT a Non Pro

“... I entered a Mustang at a Mustang show and I do not own the Mustang, but I got bucked off, so didn’t win a prize, do I qualify as Non Pro?” —NOT a Non Pro



BUT, CAN ...

The answer to questions on remuneration for equine activities is not always that Non Pro status is revoked. In fact, the NRCHA is happy that some Non Pro members seek opportunities such as obtaining a judge's card.

"Many Non Pros would like to know if they will have to give up their Non Pro status if they become an NRCHA judge," Nahlik said. "A Non Pro can judge and receive remuneration for judging, but I always warn them that they need to check with other associations like [the American Quarter Horse Association], since I believe Amateurs can't hold judges' cards there."

There are other "yes" scenarios, too.



YOUTH RIDER REMUNERATION


NRCHA Youth exhibitors may accept product and/or receive remuneration while showing in Youth classes ONLY. If a Youth rider decides to apply for Non Pro status, then they must abide by all Non Pro rules—any sponsorship and/or remuneration ends.

Additionally, Youth riders may wear shirts with patches on them while showing in Youth classes, but again, if they show in Non Pro classes at any or the same show, patched shirts are not allowed. Additionally, Youth riders are also not required to own the horse they show in Youth classes. However, an NRCHA member in good standing must own the horse. If a Youth shows in a Non Pro class, they must abide by those ownership rules (see rule 2.4.5).

Although we have said the rules are black and white there are a few areas of gray, especially when it comes to collegiate activities and training internships. The current NRCHA Rulebook has gray area in the area related to internships (see 2.2.1.6); however, Edwards said that more definitive rules are in the works.

If you are a Non Pro that is in college or is considering doing an internship, you should critically review the rules of the internship with a critical eye.

"We are working to line out some more specific guidelines that will hopefully be in place for 2021," Edwards said. "I would recommend that anyone that is an intern contact the NRCHA office and provide some details regarding their internship prior to [applying for] NRCHA Non Pro status."

The goal of competition divisions is to create a fair playing field for as many levels of riders as possible. Working with the NRCHA and the Non Pro committee will help ensure that all NRCHA Non Pro members' eligibility is correctly assigned so everyone can show and work according to their status. 



"... Will my wife still be a Non Pro if she won \$78 last weekend? My wife and I are new to reined cow horse." —**YES, you're a Non Pro**

"... I halter break and taught a horse that I do not own to lead for money, but I do not ride horses for money. Do I qualify as an NRCHA Non Pro?" —**YES, you're a Non Pro**

"... Can I show my friend's horse in the \$5K Non Pro Limited and not lose my Non Pro status?" —**YES, you're a Non Pro**

"... I'm a trail guide for hunting and fishing trips." —**YES, you're a Non Pro**

"... I cool out horses I don't own for my trainer to be helpful." —**YES, you're a Non Pro**

"... I sit on my friend's horse while I watch them work their other horse?"
—**YES, you're a Non Pro**



**QUESTIONS?
CALL!**

Reach out to the
NRCHA at
940-488-1500.