

NRHA Youth May Work for NRHA Professionals while Maintaining Non Pro Status

Rule Change – Effective January 1, 2022

Youth riders can make use of new rules to learn more about the training side of reining – without having to fill out paperwork often associated with the well-established NRHA Apprentice Program for members 18 and older.

In Short

- Youth Non Pro members are allowed to reside and work for an NRHA Professional in a manner similar to an Apprentice, be compensated, and ride / show any horses while maintaining Non Pro status.
- Those Youth Non Pro riders are allowed to compete in the Youth and Non Pro based on current NRHA rules.
 - Meaning they can show horses that ARE owned by them/immediate family in any NRHA class they are eligible for.
 - AND, they can show horses NOT owned by them/immediate family in classes that don't have ownership restrictions (*see below*).
- The youth could do all of this without going through the Apprentice process.
 - Once he/she is out of youth, then he/she can decide to do the Apprentice Program, maintain with a Non Pro or become an NRHA Professional. (*The January after a member turns 19 years old is when he/she is no longer considered a "Youth".*)
- Youth members should consider that any earnings the youth gained while taking advantage of this allowance will impact his/her eligibility.

Youth Riders May Work for NRHA Professionals – The Background

The Non Pro Committee recommended allowing youth riders to work for professional trainers. The Committee felt relaxing the restriction will serve several purposes of providing a pathway for young riders who are interested in honing their horsemanship skills, working for an NRHA Professional to offset the financial obstacles of showing, or pursuing a career in training, while learning more about the industry and not having to sacrifice their Non Pro status. When the Youth turns 19 years old, the following January, he/she will no longer be considered a Youth – and will be able to make the decision to retain their Non Pro status or become an NRHA Professional.

“There are a few problems we wanted to address, and we are excited that this new change will accomplish that,” NRHA Non Pro Committee Chair Ginger Schmersal shared. “First, we all know horses and horse shows are expensive right now, and that means that reining might not be an option for many youth. By relaxing the restrictions on our young members, we have the opportunity to welcome even more youth into the industry. Now kids who want to ride or learn to ride can go work for a trainer without having to worry about losing their Non Pro status.”

The new rule reads:

- **Any youth rider 18 years of age or younger who is a current member of NRHA is eligible to reside and/or work for any NRHA Professional in good standing. Remuneration can include housing and food. Youth riders are allowed to have their personal horse or horses with the trainer, and details of board and training shall be decided between those parties. Youth riders are allowed to ride any horses both at home and at horse shows while working for the trainer. Youth riders are allowed to compete in the youth and non pro based on current NRHA ownership rules.**

It is important to note that the following section regarding Youth riders and horse ownership remains unchanged from previous years.

- **In classes that do not have ownership restrictions (Rookie 1 & 2, Green Reiner 1 & 2, Youth Rookie, Unrestricted Youth, and all open classes, except Rookie Professional), youth riders may compete on any horse regardless of ownership.**

FAQ

Q: Can an NRHA Youth Member work for an NRHA Professional and be paid to ride and train horses?

A: Yes, with NRHA they are allowed to do this while they are a Youth member and can retain their Non Pro status while learning more about this side of the industry and improving their horsemanship skills. If the Youth shows in other associations, they'll need to consult their rules related to non pro or amateur status before beginning work.

Q: Can a Youth Member ride and train NRHA Professional client horses and receive remuneration/pay?

A: Yes, with NRHA they are allowed to do this while they are a Youth Non Pro member and can retain their Non Pro status. They can only show horses not owned by themselves or immediate family in classes that do not have ownership restrictions (Rookie 1 & 2, Green Reiner 1 & 2, Youth Rookie, Unrestricted Youth, and all open classes, except Rookie Professional).

Q: Does a Youth Member have to submit an application to do this?

A: No.