2026 Ski-Joring Rules per the Red Lodge Ski-Joring Association (RLSJA)

Pro - Open – Sport – Novice – Snowboard - Youth Divisions

1. The Ski-Joring Races will have 2 go-rounds. Competitors compete for day payouts and overall.
2. The course length will be a minimum of 600 feet, 12 gates and 3 jumps.
3. In an effort to allow riders to develop up and coming horses for Ski-Joring, riders will be permitted to compete in more than one division. However, no horse or skier will be allowed to compete in more than one division. Exceptions apply for Snowboard and Switcharoo divisions.
4. 4. A rider is limited to four (4) entries for the entire event (a 5th entry is allowable for Switcharoo division). A skier is limited to four (4) entries in the Pro and Open Divisions but in all other divisions skiers are limited to three (3) entries, and may only compete in one division (an additional entry is allowable for Switcharoo division).
5. Each horse is limited to two (2) entries and may only compete in one division with the exception of Snowboard, Youth, and Switcharoo divisions. A horse may run a third time if the third run is in the Snowboard, Youth, or Switcharoo divisions.
6. A Rider/Horse/Skier team may only enter once in that combination. Exceptions apply for Snowboard and Switcharoo divisions, where an additional run is permitted. A snowboarder is limited to three entries in the Snowboard division.
7. If a horse, rider or skier has won two or more times overall in a division they must bump up a division. The organization rules state "All entries are subject to RLSJA Board Approval and competitors will be urged to compete in the appropriate division." If your team is subject to the bump rule and you wish to appeal, you may make the request in writing in advance of registration night or by emailing registration@redlodgeskijoring.com . The appeal should provide reasons for justification as to why Rule #5 is inappropriate for your team.
8. Time starts and stops when the Skier crosses the start and finish gates.
9. The skier must be in an upright position and on at least one ski with rope in hand when crossing the finish gate. Both skier's boots must cross the finish gate.
10. A "DNF" will be issued to a skier/boarder who is dragged into the horse racing track. A DNF will be issued if a rider falls off of the horse before the skier/snowboarder has crossed the finish gate.
11. There is a five (5) second penalty for each gate or jump missed. Both tips of skis and both boots must go around the gate, otherwise the gate is considered missed.
12. If the horse or rope displaces a gate prior to skier negotiating it, the gate is considered missed.
13. Exhibition runs are prohibited.
14. Written parental consent is required for participants under 18 years of age. Parent must be present at registration.
15. Prior to race time, participants will be allowed to examine the course from inside perimeter of the track only.
16. Rope length shall not exceed 50 feet. A single knot is permitted at the end of the rope, but no loops or handles are permitted.
17. Skiers and snowboarders will be required to wear snow sport approved helmets. Eye protection is recommended. Helmets are required for all competitors under the age of 18.
18. Any protests from a competitor must be made verbally to the Chief of Race prior to the commencement of the next competitors run.

19. Unsportsmanlike behavior is grounds for immediate disqualification. Furthermore, good sportsmanship is important to the success of the event and the image of the community of Red Lodge. Your registration signature pledges your word to the humane treatment of your horse and respectful relationships to all fellow competitors and volunteers hosting this exciting competition. Failure to comply with the spirit of friendly competition at any of the scheduled events may result in the disqualification of your team or your banishment from future events.
20. Competitors under the age of 14 are required to compete in the Youth division. Exceptions to this rule can be made, with parental consent and proof of prior race experience within the current season. This is subject to RLSJA Board approval.
21. All entries are subject to RLSJA Board Approval and competitors will be urged to compete in the appropriate division.
22. The decision of the Judges is final.

Switcharoo Division

The Switcharoo division is a unique division where the skier and rider must trade places for one go round. Times are collected daily and combined for overall. A horse that has entered in Snowboard, Novice, Sport, Open, and Pro timed divisions is eligible to run a third run in the Switcharoo Division. All applicable rules from the prior section apply. A Rider/Horse/Skier team may only enter once in any combination.

1. If the rider, skier, or horse is unable to complete their second run, they may not find a replacement. They are disqualified from the combined (Saturday, Sunday) competition.
2. Skiers will be required to wear snow sport approved helmets. Eye protection is recommended.
3. The decision of the Judges is final.

Additionally:

1. All horses must exit through the gate located immediately to the right of the timing shack.
2. Competitors will have the opportunity to walk the course prior to the start of the first day's competition. Teams choosing not to participate and advising an RLSJA committee member or the event organizer, prior to the start of any competition, will be given a full refund of fees. Once the first competitor starts a run no further refunds will be given.
3. Money will be added to the purse. Purse amounts for each division will be announced at the event. Payouts include 100% of entry fees plus added money.
4. There will be a veterinarian on site who has the authority to disqualify an animal for medical reasons.
5. Judges reserve the right to invoke THE SPARBY RULE, WHEREIN: Competitors will be allowed 2 minutes from the time they enter the arena to stage their horse for a start. The first occurrence of exceeding 2 minutes will result in that team being moved back in the start order. In the event they are unable to start their horse a second time, within the 2-minute time frame, that team will be disqualified for that go-around.
6. Alcohol consumption prior to competition is grounds for disqualification for that competitor, and ultimately that team! (Including Horses)

7. No refunds of entry fees or Calcutta monies will be given if horse, rider or skier is not able to compete due to injury or other reasons. This also applies to later runs on same day.
8. Calcutta monies are paid to the top 3 finishing “Purchased” teams.
9. A DNF will be issued if a skier or snowboarder drops the rope AND the horse is required to stop forward motion in order for the skier or boarder to regain control of the rope
10. Completing an online registration form does not guarantee a would-be competitor’s entry. RLSJA reserves the right to review and approve or disapprove registrations at its discretion, and further reserves the right to refuse entry to the competition to any person who has registered at any point in time, for any reason RLSJA determines proper. If registrants are denied entry in the competition, RLSJA will refund the entry fee within 10 business days.
11. RLSJA reserves the right to amend these rules at any point, for any reason RLSJA determines proper in its sole discretion. Any additions or changes to existing rules will be made available during registration and competitor meeting.
12. RLSJA offers several divisions, some of which are subject to age restrictions. RLSJA reserves the right to waive the age restrictions for any division on a case-by-case basis as it determines proper, in its sole discretion.
13. RLSJA needs to be able to run the race as efficiently as possible to accommodate all divisions and teams. In effort to do so, horse saddle changes in the Youth division are prohibited. Example. A Youth division rider who may be riding two horses is not permitted to change saddles during the race. The two horses will need to be outfitted with individual tack as to not slow down the event proceedings.