

Rules for Ranch Horse Division

Tack and Attire:

Plain, neat, western clothing that is comfortable for ranch work, trail riding, or cattle work is appropriate. Long sleeved shirt, heeled boots, and western hat or riding helmet are required. Helmets are required for riders 18 years and under.

Western saddles only are permitted. Saddles are to be clean, in good repair, and fit the horse properly. Silver on tack is discouraged and will not be taken into consideration when judging the horse. It is suggested that competitors use a breast collar and rear cinch.

Halters and leads must be plain leather, rope or nylon. Leads may have chains. Chains can be placed under the chin, or over the nose. No lip chains or chains that run through the mouth are permitted.

Romal and mecate reins with snaffle are permitted in all classes. A rope or riata may be attached to the saddle.

Horses of any age can be ridden two handed in a snaffle or approved bosal. Horses ridden with shanked bits must be ridden one handed.

All other bits and equipment will follow rules outlined in the ARHA (American Ranch Horse Assoc.) handbook.

Appearance of horse:

Horses are to be shown with natural manes and tails. Hooves are not to be polished.

Pulling and banding of the mane is discouraged, no tail extensions.

Trimming inside the ears is discouraged. Trimming a bridle path, fetlocks, and excessive facial hair is acceptable.

There are no penalties for scars or blemishes provided they are not caused by a conformation defect.

Gaits of the Ranch Horse:

In all gaits movement of the ranch horse should simulate a horse needing to cover long distances softly and quietly, like that of a working ranch horse. Horses should display a level, or slightly above level topline with a bright, alert expression.

Walk: A 4 Beat ground covering gait, with a marked change of speed for the extended walk.

Trot: A natural 2 beat gait demonstrating more forward motion than the western jog.

Extended Trot: An obvious lengthening in stride with a definite change in pace. Horse should be moving in a manner as if it were covering a large area on a ranch with an above level topline.

Lope: 3 beat gait, should be relaxed and smooth with natural forward moving stride.

Extended Lope: Not a run or race, but should be obvious lengthening stride demonstrating working speed. Horse should have an above level topline, with a bright attentive expression.

Ranch Horse Rail Class

Horses will be shown both ways of the ring at all three gaits. They will be asked to reverse away from the rail, to stop, and to back. The judge may ask for extended walk or trot. Extended trot may be ridden by sitting, posting or standing in the stirrups. Touching or holding the saddle horn is acceptable.

Passing is permissible and should not be penalized as long as the horse maintains a proper and even cadence and rhythm.

Horses are to be shown on a reasonably loose rein without undue restraint.

Faults:

- Excessive speed at any gait
- Wrong lead
- Break of gait
- Excessive slowness at any gait, loss of forward motion resulting in an animated or artificial gait at the lope,
- Head carriage to high or too low (in keeping with horse's conformation)
- Over flexing so that nose is behind the vertical
- Quick, choppy, strided
- Over-canted at the lope (haunches toward the center of the ring)
- Excessive head bobbing

Ranch Horse Pattern Class

Horses work individually performing both required and optional maneuvers. Class is scored on a basis from 0 -100 with 70 denoting and average performance. Required include walk, trot, lope both directions, extended trot and extended lope at least one direction as well as stop and back. Optional maneuvers include side pass, turns of 360 degrees or more, change of leads (simple or flying), walk trot or lope over pole(s).

Overall cadence and performance of the gaits should be as those described in Gaits. Transitions should be performed where designated, with smoothness and responsiveness.

No time limit

Use of natural logs is encouraged

Posting extended trot is acceptable, touching or holding the saddle horn is acceptable

Penalties:

1 point:

- Too slow
- Over bridled
- Out of frame
- Break of gait at walk or jog 2 strides or less

3 point:

- Break of gait at walk or jog more than 2 strides
- Break of gait at lope
- Wrong lead, out of lead
- Draped reins
- Out of lead or cross cantering more than 2 strides when changing leads, trotting more than 3 strides when making simple change

- Severe disturbance of any obstacle

5 point: Blatant disobedience (kick, bite, buck, rear, etc.) for each refusal

Must place below horses performing all maneuvers: Eliminate maneuver, incomplete maneuver

Zero Score: Illegal equipment, willful abuse, major disobedience or schooling

No penalties for hit/nick logs, over or under spin, but deduction may be made in maneuver score

Green Reiner

Riders may use two hands on the reins with any legal bit, simple changes are permitted, no more than two spins are required. All other reining penalties apply.

Ranch Reining

Scoring will be 0 - infinity with 70 denoting average. Points will be added or subtracted from maneuvers on the following basis: -1 ½ extremely poor, -1 very poor, -1/2 poor, 0 average, +1/2 good, +1 very good, +1 1/2 excellent

Penalty points are independent of maneuver score.

No Score

- Illegal equipment, disrespect or misconduct by exhibitor, abuse of animal in arena, or evidence that abuse has occurred.

Zero Score

- Use of more than index finger between reins
- Use of two hands (other than snaffle or hackamore), changing hands
- Failure to complete pattern as written
- Performing maneuvers other than specified order
- Inclusion of maneuvers not specified including: backing more than 2 strides, turning more than 90 degrees
- Equipment failure including dropping a rein
- Balk or refusal of command where pattern is delayed
- Running away or failing to guide where it becomes impossible to discern if entry is on pattern
- Jogging in excess of ½ circle or ½ length of arena
- Fall to ground by horse or rider
- Over spin more than ¼ turn
- Improper use of romal

5 point

- Spurring in front of the cinch
- Use of either hand to instill fear or praise
- Holding saddle with either hand
- Blatant disobedience

2 point

- Break of gait
- Freeze up in spin or rollbacks
- Jogging beyond 2 strides, but less than ½ arena length or ½ circle
- On walk in patterns, failure to stop or walk before canter departure
- On run in patterns, failure to be canter prior to the 1st marker

- When rounding the end of the arena, failure to be on the correct lead for more than a ½ turn.
- If horse does not completely pass specified marker before initiating stop

1 point

- Each time the horse is out of lead, judge is required to deduct one point. The penalty is cumulative and the judge will deduct 1 pt. for each quarter circle the horse is out of lead.
- Over or under spinning 1/8 to ¼ turn
- When rounding the end of the arena failure to be in the correct lead for ½ turn or less

½ point

- Delayed change of lead by 1 stride
- Starting a circle or exiting a rollback at a jog up to 2 strides
- Over or under spinning up to 1/8 turn
- Failure to remain 20 feet from wall or fence when approaching stops or roll backs.

Ranch Trail

The Ranch Trail class should test the horse's ability to cope with situations encountered while being ridden through a pattern of obstacles generally found during the course of everyday ranch work. The horse/rider team is judged on the correctness, efficiency and pattern accuracy with which the obstacles are negotiated, and the mannerisms and attitude exhibited by the horse.

Horses will be penalized for any unnecessary delay while approaching or negotiating obstacles. Horses with an artificial appearance over obstacles should be penalized. Judging emphasis is on identifying the well broke, responsive horse that can correctly navigate the course.

When setting courses, management will be mindful that the idea is not to trap a horse/rider team, or eliminate it by making the course too difficult. Judges should walk the course and have the right to alter the course in any manner. The judge may remove or change any obstacle they deem unsafe. If disrupted, the course must be reset. In the case that the obstacle is used in a combination, it cannot be reset until the entire course is finished. If an obstacle becomes damaged and cannot be repaired and some horses have already completed the course, the score for that obstacle shall be removed from all riders scores.

Scoring will be on a basis from 0-infinity, with 70 denoting an average performance. Each obstacle will receive an obstacle score that should be added or subtracted from 70, and be subject to a penalty that will be subtracted from 70.

Each obstacle will be scored on the following basis ranging from +1 ½ to -1 ½

-1 ½ extremely poor, -1 very poor -1/2 poor, 0 correct, +1/2 good, +1 very good, +1 ½ excellent.

Obstacle scores are determined independently of penalty points. Penalties will be as follows:

½ Point

Each tick of log, pole, cone, or obstacle.

1 Point

- Hit or step on log, pole, obstacle.
- Break of gait at walk or jog 2 strides or less
- Both feet in a single stride space at walk or jog, split pole in lope over.

- Skipping over or failing to step into required space.
- Incorrect number of strides, if specified

3 Point

- Incorrect or break of gait at walk or jog for more than 2 strides
- Out of lead or break of gait at lope
- Knocking down or severely disturbing an obstacle
- Falling off or jumping off bridge or water box with one foot once the horse has entered obstacle.
- Stepping outside the confines of an obstacle with boundaries (360 box) with one foot
- Missing or evading a pole that part of a series

5 Point

- Dropping an object required to be carried on course.
- Each cumulative refusal, balk or attempt to evade obstacle. A refusal is addressing an obstacle and taking two or more steps backwards. **Riders are asked to move on to next obstacle after third refusal.**
- Letting go or dropping the rope gate.
- Second rein not touching the ground in ground tie.
- Stepping outside the confines of, falling off or out of an obstacle with more than one foot once entered the obstacle. Including missing one element of an obstacle on a line of travel with two feet.
- Use of free hand to instill fear or praise
- Blatant disobedience (kicking, bucking, rearing)
- Holding on to the saddle with either hand
- Failure to demonstrate correct gait between line of travel

Faults – Which occur on the line of travel between obstacles, are to be scored according to severity.

- Head too high or low
- Over flexing or behind the vertical
- Excessive nosing out
- Open mouth excessively

Disqualifications

- Use of more than one finger between reins (when riding one handed)
- Use of two hands (except when using snaffle bit or bosal)
- Performing obstacle incorrectly or other than specified order, or no attempt to perform an obstacle.
- Equipment failure that delays completion of pattern.
- Fall to ground by horse or rider.
- Failure to exit or work obstacle from the correct direction.
- Failure to follow the correct line of travel or work obstacles in any manner other than outline in the course.
- Failure to enter arena
- Riding outside designated boundary markers.

No penalty for switching hands to complete an obstacle.

A minimum of six obstacles must be used three of which must be from the mandatory list, and three from optional list.

Mandatory

- **Gate-** a rider must open rider through, and close the gate.
- **Stationary Steer-** the obstacle is use to demonstrate the willingness of the horse to have a rope thrown from its back. The judge shall give credit to the horse that stands quietly while the rider makes a swing and throws at the steer.

The contestant shall not be penalized for a miss but will receive credit for the horse being in correct position and standing quietly. Shying from the rope will be penalized.

The competitor has the option of bringing their own rope, or be handed a coiled rope. Each exhibitor is required to build their own loop. Fast and efficient loop build and put away will be rewarded. Only one loop to be thrown.

- **Log Drag- (Adult divisions only) rider** shall pick up rope and drag a log according to pattern posted showing the horses willingness and ability to pull. Once circle is complete, the rider will drop rope and continue to the next obstacle.

Optional Obstacles

- Mail box
- Sicker
- Bridge
- "L" shaped back through made of logs or poles minimum space between poles is 28 inches.
- **Ground tie or Hobble-** The horse shall remain in place while rider dismounts and performs a normal ranch task. **Split reins:** both reins must touch the ground. **Romal reins:** horse must be hobbled or use a neck rope to ground tie.
- **Side pass-** logs or pole minimum of 6 feet long. Horses may be required to move both directions.
- **Obstacle containing 4 logs -** each 5 to 6 feet long laid in a square to execute a 180 or 360 degree turn and leave the box or lope through the square. Pattern will specify.
- **Logs:** Three logs will be placed on the ground for the rider to cross. Walk over 15-24". Trot over 2'6"-3'6". Lope over 6'-7'
- **Cones or pylons:** trot through a set pattern with markers spaced at least three feet apart.
- **Any other safe obstacle that could reasonably be encountered on a trail ride and meets the approval of the judge.**

Unacceptable: tires, animals other than cattle, hides, PVC pipe, rocking or moving bridges, slick bottom water hazards, jumps, or fire.

Gaited Horse Division

This is a division designed to showcase the movement and abilities of the working gaited horse. Natural movement and head carriage are of most importance, with artificial movement to be penalized. All the qualities described in the ranch gaits apply, except that horses will not trot or canter. Instead, the gaits called for will be walk, extended walk, ranch gait, and extended gait at the discretion of the judge. Gaited classes will use the same patterns as the walk trot division substituting the appropriate gaits, unless specified by the judge.

Pee Wee Division

This division is designed to give young riders a safe place to develop their ranch skills. Spotters are permitted and encouraged in all Pee Wee classes. One or two hands are permitted on the reins regardless of style of bit, closed reins are allowed. Riders can be lead, by an adult, with more credit given to independent riders. Patterns will be safe and simple, to encourage developing riders.

Long Ear Division

This division is for mules or donkeys to participate in a ranch style competition. All qualities described in the ranch gaits apply, as well as tack and attire requirements. The long ear division is walk trot only, but they may cross enter into lope classes that are pattern only such as reining, trail, ranch pattern. They may not enter a rail class that is designated for horses.