

RANCH RIDING RULES, REGULATIONS & SCORING GUIDELINES

Scoring – Basis of 0-100, with 70 denoting an average performance. The individual maneuvers are scored in ½ point increments from a low of -1 ½ to a high of +1 ½ with a score of 0 denoting a maneuver that is correct with no degree of difficulty. Each maneuver will receive a score that should be added or subtracted from 70 and is subject to a penalty that should be subtracted. Maneuver scores are to be determined and assessed independently of penalty points.

The purpose of the ranch riding class is to measure the ability of the horse to be a pleasure to ride while being used as a means of conveyance from performing one ranch task to another. The horse should reflect the versatility, attitude and movement of a working ranch horse riding outside the confines of an arena. The horse should be well trained, relaxed, quiet, soft and cadenced at all gaits. The ideal ranch horse will travel with forward movement and demonstrate an obvious lengthening of stride at extended gaits. The horse can be ridden with light contact or on a relatively loose rein without requiring undue restraint, but not shown on a full drape of reins. The overall manners and responsiveness of the ranch riding horse to make timely transitions in a smooth and correct manner, as well as the quality of the movement, are of primary considerations. The ideal ranch riding horse should have a natural head carriage at each gait.

Any Valley County 4H approved ranch riding patterns may be used and will be selected by the show superintendent and used by all contestants in the class. Each contestant will perform the required pattern individually and separately. All horses will be judged immediately upon entering the arena. Any fault incurred prior to the commencement of a pattern will be scored accordingly. Any movement on the horse's own must be considered a lack of control. All deviations from the exact written pattern must be considered a lack of or temporary loss of control, and therefore faulted according to severity of deviation.

The required gait maneuvers will include the walk, trot, and lope both directions; and the extended trot and extended lope at least one direction; as well as stops, and back. The optional maneuvers may include a side pass, turns of 360 degrees or more, change of lead (simple or flying), walk, trot, or lope over a log(s); or some reasonable combination of maneuvers that would be reasonable for a horse to perform or encounter during ranch work. Patterns will not contain a stop following an extended lope. The overall cadence and performance of the gaits should be as followed with an emphasis on forward movement, free flowing, and ground covering for all gaits. Transitions should be performed where designated, with smoothness and responsiveness. Touching or holding the saddle horn is acceptable.

In all gaits, movement of the ranch riding horse should simulate a horse needing to cover long distances, softly and quietly, like that of a working ranch horse. The following terminology shall apply:

- Walk - The walk is a natural, flat-footed, four-beat gait. The gait is rhythmic and ground covering. As in all gaits, the horse should display a level, or slightly above level topline with a bright, attentive expression.
- Trot - The trot is a natural two-beat gait demonstrating more forward motion than the western jog.
- Extended Trot - The extended trot is an obvious lengthening of the stride with a definite increase in pace. The horse should be moving in a manner as if it were covering a large area on a ranch with an above level topline. Posting at the extended trot is acceptable.
- Lope - The lope is a three-beat gait. The lope should be relaxed and smooth with a natural, forward moving stride.
- Extended Lope - The extended lope is not a run or a race but should be an obvious lengthening of the stride, demonstrating a forward, working speed. The horse should display an above level topline with a bright, attentive expression.

THE FOLLOWING RULES WILL RESULT IN NO SCORE

1. Abuse of an animal in the show arena and/or evidence that an act of abuse has occurred prior to or during the exhibition of a horse in competition
2. Use of illegal equipment, including wire on bits, bosals or curb chains
3. Use of illegal bits, bosals or curb chains; when using a snaffle bit, optional curb strap is acceptable; however, curb chains are not acceptable
4. Use of tack collars, tie downs or nose bands
5. Use of whips or bats

6. Use of any attachment to the tail
7. Failure to provide horse and equipment to the appropriate judge for inspection
8. Disrespect or misconduct by the exhibitor
9. Closed reins are not allowed except as standard romal reins
10. Excess rein may be straightened at any place a horse is allowed to be completely stopped during a pattern; rider's free hand may be used to hold romal in the normal fashion
11. Major disobedience or schooling
12. Spurring in front of cinch
13. Use of either hand to instill fear or praise
14. Blatant disobediences including kicking, biting, bucking, rearing and striking

THE FOLLOWING RULES WILL RESULT IN A SCORE OF ZERO (0)

1. Use of more than index or first finger between reins
2. Use of two hands or changing hands
3. Use of romal other than as outlined in Western Equipment
4. Failure to complete pattern as written
5. Performing the maneuvers other than in specified order
6. Equipment failure that delays completion of pattern; including dropping a rein that contacts the ground while horse is in motion
7. Balking or refusal of command where performance is delayed
8. Running away or failing to guide where it becomes impossible to discern whether the entry is on pattern
9. Fall to the ground by horse or rider

THE FOLLOWING WILL RESULT IN A DEDUCTION OF THREE (3) POINTS

1. Break of gait at walk or trot for more than 2 strides
2. Break of gait at lope
3. Wrong lead or out of lead
4. Draped reins (per maneuver)
5. Out of lead or cross-cantering more than two strides when changing leads
6. Trotting more than three strides when making a simple lead change
7. Severe disturbance of any obstacle

THE FOLLOWING WILL RESULT IN A DEDUCTION OF ONE (1) POINT

1. Too slow/per gait
2. Over-bridled
3. Out of frame
4. Break of gait at walk or trot for 2 strides or less

FAULTS TO BE SCORED ACCORDINGLY, BUT NOT TO CAUSE DISQUALIFICATION (DEDUCTION MAY BE MADE IN MANEUVER SCORE)

1. Excessive jawing, opening mouth or head raising
2. Refusing to change leads
3. Anticipating signals
4. Stumbling
5. Backing sideways
6. Nicks/hits on logs
7. Over/under spins