



**NRSHA**  
NATIONAL RANCH AND  
STOCK HORSE ALLIANCE

## 2019 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW RULES

The NRSHA National Championship Show will be conducted under AQHA Versatility Ranch Horse rules, with a few exceptions:

- All Around calculation and eligibility
- Addition of the Novice division (Novice eligibility and class rules have some modifications which are listed below)
- Ranch Conformation is not an NRSHA class
- In all divisions in the Cow Work, including the Open, riders have the option to rope or circle. Those with concurrent runs with AQHA VRH must follow AQHA rules (concurrent runs in the Open must rope).

All equipment and attire rules will follow AQHA VRH, unless otherwise noted (see Novice division equipment rules). Any questions related to specific rules, refer to the AQHA Rule Book if the rule is not addressed in the NRSHA Show Rules.

### ALL-AROUND

The title of All-Around will be named in the Open, Amateur, Limited Amateur, Novice Amateur, Youth, Limited Youth, and Novice Youth divisions. To be eligible for points for the all-around title, one horse/one rider must enter and show in ranch riding, ranch trail, ranch reining and at least one cattle class (ranch cow work and/or ranch cutting). If they enter both cattle classes, points earned from both will count toward the all around. In order to compile all-around points, all horses must be placed in each class.

If there are ties in the final placing for the all-around, they will be broken by the highest placing horse in the ranch cow work class, limited or novice ranch cow work class, whichever is applicable to the division. If this does not break the tie, other classes will be used in the following order: ranch cutting, ranch reining, ranch trail, ranch riding.

No horses less than 3 years of age may be exhibited. No hoof polish. No braided or banded manes/tails or tail extensions, except in any VRH class where roping is involved, the horse's mane may be braided for a distance of 12-16" in front of the saddle pad. No ribbons or other ornamentation will be allowed. Trimming inside ears is discouraged. Trimming bridle path is allowed, also trimming of fetlocks or excessive (long) facial hair.

Equipment with excessive silver should not count over a good working outfit. Excessive silver on bridles and saddles is discouraged.

Holding the saddle horn with either hand will not be penalized in any class. Posting at the extended trot is acceptable.

Romal reins are allowed in all classes, including Ranch Cutting. When riding with a romal, a get down rope may be used. A get down rope is defined as a small rope tied around the neck of the horse with a bowline or other non-slip knot and run back to the rider or tied to the saddle. The get down can be used to lead, ground tie, or tie the horse.



When ground-tying with split reins, one or both reins may be dropped, romal reins may be loosely draped over the horse when used with or without a get-down rope. Hobbles are allowed. The use of two-rein equipment is allowed in all NRSHA classes for one year only. When exhibiting in a snaffle bit or hackamore, an exhibitor may switch between two hands and one hand on the reins at any time.

**SCORING SYSTEM.** The scoring system is designed to be positive, straightforward, and always encourage growth and improvement in both horse and rider. The scoring system is designed to give credit for the work done.

Except for the conformation class, each horse/rider team is scored between 0-100 points and automatically begins the run with a score of 70 points. The horse/rider team is scored on the quality of each maneuver (e.g., -1 1/2 extremely poor, -1 very poor, -1/2 poor, 0 correct, +1/2 Good, +1 very good, +1 1/2 excellent). Plusses and minuses are a reflection of the smoothness, finesse, attitude, quickness and authority of the horse/rider team when performing the various maneuvers. Penalties may be accrued for incorrect maneuver execution.

In each class, the entire class will be scored and placed. All exhibitors in each class will be ranked according to scores, placed from the highest to the lowest scores. In the case of a horse/rider team being off-pattern (OP), or repeated blatant disobedience, the horse/rider team cannot place above other horse/rider teams who have completed the pattern correctly.

No horse/rider team shall be disqualified except for lameness, abuse, illegal equipment, disrespect or misconduct, leaving the working area before the pattern is complete, improper western attire and or fall of horse/rider.

Disqualified horses will count as entries in the class, but will not receive points.

In the case of a fall by a horse or rider, the run shall end when the rider or horse fall to the ground. A horse is considered to have fallen when all four feet are extended in the same direction. A rider is considered to have fallen when the rider is no longer astride.

In the case of equipment failure that delays competition or becomes unsafe, the run is stopped and the horse/rider team will be given credit for what they have accomplished prior to that point but cannot place above other horse/rider teams who have completed the pattern correctly and will be considered off-pattern (OP).

In each class, specific maneuvers will be designated by the judge to be tiebreakers. The tie-breaker maneuvers will be made prior to the start of the class and so noted on score sheets. These maneuvers will be ranked as first tie-breaker, second, third and so forth. Specific maneuvers will be selected by the judge prior to the class as tie-breaking maneuvers. These maneuvers will be ranked as first tie-breaker, second, third etc.

At the option of show management, when using two judges to determine one set of winners, the classes will first be placed under each judge and class placing points awarded and posted. One judge shall be designated as the "tie-breaker judge" before judging begins. The composite results (combined results used to determine an overall winner) shall be determined as follows: All class placing points will be added for each judge to determine an all-around winner. If there is a tie, the tie-breaker judge's class placing will determine the winner. Ties for the all-around winner are broken first using the highest placing in the ranch cow work class, or the limited ranch cow work class, whichever is applicable to the division.

## **RANCH RIDING**

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 ranch horse appearance from head to tail in each maneuver.

Horses shall be shown individually and the class may be conducted inside or outside of an arena. The pattern may be started either to the right or left direction. Show management has the option to set markers to designate gait changes. If the class is held inside an arena, the course shall be set up to make approximately one pass of the arena in each direction. The optional ranch riding pattern may be used or another pattern may be used as long as all elements of the class are fulfilled as follows:

- Horses will be shown individually at three gaits; walk, trot and lope in each direction of the arena.
- Horses will also be asked to reverse, stop and back.
- The judge must ask for an extended trot and extended lope at least one direction of the ring.

Part of the evaluation of this class is on smoothness of transitions. A horse may be collected from the extended trot as the horse moves into the lope. The transition from the extended lope down to the trot is a transition to the seated trot not the extended trot. Therefore, an extra cue to achieve this gait is expected. Horses that complete this total transition within three strides calmly and obediently should be rewarded. Horses that attempt to stop or do stop prior to trotting will be penalized. Judges expect to see horses that have been trained to respond to cues. To see these cues applied discretely and the horse responding correctly could be a credit-earning situation. Penalties will be assessed as follows:

- 1 Point: Over-bridled (per maneuver), out of frame (per maneuver), too slow, gapping mouth, break of gait at walk or trot for two (2) strides or less.
- 3 Point: Wrong lead or out of lead, draped reins, break of gait at lope, break of gait at walk or trot for more than two (2) strides, out of lead or cross-cantering more than two strides when changing leads, trotting more than three strides when making a simple lead change.
- 5 Point: Spurring in front of cinch, blatant disobedience, use of either hand to instill fear/praise, use of two hands per maneuver, 1st or 2nd cumulative refusal.
- 10 point: Unnatural ranch horse appearance (Horse's tail is obvious and consistently carried in an unnatural manner in every maneuver)
- Off-Pattern (OP): Breaking pattern, leaving working area before pattern is complete, repeated disobedience. use of two hands (except junior horses or riders in the Novice divisions shown in a snaffle bit/hackamore), more than one finger between split reins or any fingers between roma reins (except in the two-rein). Cannot place above others who complete pattern correctly.
- Disqualification (DQ): Lameness, abuse, illegal equipment, leaving the working area before the pattern is complete, disrespect or misconduct, improper western attire, fall of horse/rider.

## **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 attitude and mannerisms exhibited by the horse. Judging emphasis is on identifying



the well broke, responsive and well-mannered horse that can correctly navigate and negotiate the course. The ideal ranch trail horse should have a natural ranch horse appearance from head to tail in each maneuver.

The ranch trail course will include no less than six and no more than nine obstacles. It is mandatory that the horse be asked to walk, trot and lope during the course. Walk can be part of obstacle score or be scored with the approaching obstacle. Trot must be at least 35 feet and score with approaching obstacle. Lope must be lead-specific, at least 50 feet and score with approaching obstacle. Care must be exercised to avoid setting up any obstacles that may be hazardous to the horse or rider. When setting courses, management will be mindful that the idea is not to trap a horse/rider team or eliminate it by making an obstacle too difficult. All courses and obstacles are to be constructed with safety in mind so as to reduce the risk for accidents. Show committee shall have the option of setting up the trail course to best fit the arena conditions. An outdoor course is recommended if appropriate terrain is available. Each single-performance event can be time consuming, especially with large classes, so it is imperative that time restrictions are placed on this class. The show committee, either through a pilot run or estimation, shall select a course that has a continuous and positive flow that can be negotiated in four minutes or less.

Judges must walk the course and have the right and duty to alter the course if it is not in keeping with the intent of the class. Judges may remove or change any obstacles they deem unsafe, non-negotiable or unnecessarily difficult. Any time a trail obstacle becomes unsafe during a class, it shall be repaired or removed from the course. If the course cannot be repaired and some horses have completed the course, the score for that obstacle shall be deducted from all previous draws in that class.

The course must be designed using the mandatory obstacles and maneuvers plus optional obstacles. Combining two or more of the obstacles is acceptable.

**PROHIBITED OBSTACLES:** Tarps, water obstacles with slick bottoms, PVC pipe used as a jump or walk over, tires, rocking or moving bridges, logs elevated in a manner that permits such to roll in a dangerous manner.

#### **MANDATORY OBSTACLES AND/OR MANUEVERS.**

1. Ride over obstacles on the ground (usually logs). Walk, trot or lope may be used but only one gait is required.

- Walk-overs: Walk over no more than five logs no more than 10 inches high and spacing between 26 – 30 inches. The formation may be straight, curved, zigzagged or raised.

- Trot-overs: Trot over no more than five logs no more than 10 inches high. The space between logs or poles should be 36-42 inches. The formation can also be straight, curved, zigzagged or raised.

- Lope-overs: Lope over no more than five logs no more than 10 inches high. The space between logs should be 6 to 7 feet. The formation can also be straight, curved, zigzagged or raised.

2. Opening, passing through and closing gate: Use gate that will not endanger horse or rider and requires minimum side-passing.

3. Ride over wooden bridge: Bridge should be sturdy, safe and negotiated at a walk only. Heavy plywood lying flat on the ground is an acceptable simulation of a bridge. Suggested minimum width shall be 36 inches wide and at least 6 feet long.

4. Backing obstacles: Backing obstacles are to be spaced at a minimum of 28 inches. If elevated, 30 inch spacing is required. Back through and around at least three makers. Back through L, V, U or straight or similarly shaped course which may be elevated no more than 24 inches.



5. Side-pass obstacle: Any object which is safe and of any length may be used to demonstrate responsiveness of the horse to leg signals. Raised side pass obstacles should not exceed 12 inches.

6. Drag an object: For open and amateur classes ONLY. **The drag is not to be used in youth, novice amateur or novice youth classes.** Drag may be a complete figure eight and may begin in either direction. The exhibitor must have the rope dallied on the saddle horn (half or full dally) for the duration of the drag.

**OPTIONAL OBSTACLES.** Optional obstacles may be used provided the obstacles can be found in everyday ranch work. Optional obstacles from which selections can be made include, but are not limited to:

- A jump obstacle whose center height is not less than 14 inches high or more than 25 inches high. Holding the saddle horn is permissible for this obstacle.
- Only live or stuffed animals which would normally be encountered in an outdoor setting may be used but not to be used in an attempt to spook a horse.
- Carry object from one part of the arena to another.
- Remove and replace materials from a mailbox.
- Trot through cones spaced a minimum of 6 feet apart.
- Cross natural ditches or ride up embankments.
- Swing rope or throw rope at a dummy steer head.
- Step in and out of obstacle.
- Put on slicker or coat.
- Stand to mount with mounting block.
- Walk through water obstacle.
- Open gate on foot.
- Pick up feet.
- Walk through brush.
- Ground tie. (Hobbles are allowed)
- Lead at the trot.

At show management option the competition trail course may be made available to exhibitors or posted prior to the day of competition. It must be posted at least one hour prior to competition. Printed handouts for exhibitors are helpful and encouraged.

**CREDITS AND PENALTIES.** All runs begin upon entering the pen and any infractions are subject to penalty at that time (such as two hands on the reins, using either hand to instill fear or praise, etc.). The rider has the option of eliminating any obstacle, however this will result in being "off pattern" (OP) and the horse/rider team may not place above others who have completed the pattern correctly. A judge may ask a horse to pass on an obstacle after three refusals or at any time for safety concerns. Credit is given to horse/rider teams who negotiate the obstacles correctly and efficiently. Horses should receive credit for showing attentiveness to obstacles and ability to negotiate through the course when the obstacles



warrant it while willingly responding to rider's cues on more difficult obstacles. Quality of movement and cadence should be considered part of the maneuver score for the obstacle. Penalties are assessed as follows:

- 1 Point Penalties: Over-bridled (per maneuver), out of frame (per maneuver), Each hit, bite or stepping on a log, cone plant or any component of the obstacle, incorrect or break of gait at walk or trot for two (2) strides or less; both front or hind feet in a single-stride slot or space at a walk or trot; skipping over or failing to step into required space; split pole in lope-over; incorrect number of strides, if specified; one to two steps on mount/dismount or ground tie except shifting to balance.
- 3 Point Penalties: Wrong lead or out of lead; draped reins; break of gait at lope; break of gait at walk or trot for more than two (2) strides; three to four steps on mount/dismount on ground tie.
- 5 Point Penalties: Spurring in front of cinch; blatant dis-obedience; use of either hand to instill fear/praise; knocking over, stepping out of or falling off an obstacle; dropping an object required to be carried; 1st or 2nd cumulative refusal; letting go of gate, five or more steps on mount/dismount or ground tie.
- 10 point: Unnatural ranch horse appearance (Horse's tail is obvious and consistently carried in an unnatural manner in every maneuver)
- Off-Pattern (OP): Breaking pattern; 3rd refusal; repeated blatant disobedience, use of two hands (except junior horses or riders in the Novice divisions shown in a snaffle bit/hackamore), more than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except in the two-rein); and failure to dally and remain dallied, failure to open and shut gate, or failure to complete gate. Exhibitors cannot place above others who complete pat-tern correctly.
- Disqualification (DQ): Lameness, abuse, illegal equipment, leaving working area before pattern is complete, disrespect or misconduct, improper western attire; fall of horse/rider.

## RANCH REINING

The ranch reining class measures the ability of the ranch horse to perform basic handling maneuvers with a natural head carriage in a forward looking manner. The ideal ranch reining horse should have a natural ranch horse appearance from head to tail in each maneuver. Patterns may be chosen from any of the ranch reining patterns or approved by the show management and judge.

**CREDITS AND PENALTIES.** All runs begin upon entering the pen and any infractions are subject to penalty at that time such as two hands on the reins, using either hand to instill fear or praise, etc.

To rein a horse is not only to guide him but also to control his every movement. The best reined horse should be willingly guided or controlled with little or no apparent resistance and dictated to completely. Any movement on his 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 a fault that must be marked down according to severity of deviation. The horse/rider team's overall performance should be credited for smoothness, finesse, attitude, quickness and authority of performing various maneuvers while using controlled speed which raises the degree of difficulty and makes the horse/rider team more exciting a pleasing to watch.

### PENALTIES:

- One-half (1/2) Penalties: Starting a circle or exiting a roll-back at a trot for up to two (2) strides; delayed change of lead by one stride where the lead change is required by the pattern description; failure to remain a minimum of twenty feet from the wall or fence when approaching a stop and/or roll-back; over-spin or under-spin up to 1/8 turn.



- 1 Point Penalties: Over-bridled (per maneuver), out of frame (per maneuver), out of lead in the circles, figure eights or around the end of the arena (this penalty is cumulative and will be deducted for each quarter of a circle the horse is out of lead); Over or under spinning 1/8 to 1/4 turn. Slipping rein.
- 2 Point Penalties: Break of gait; freeze up in spins or roll-backs; failure to stop or walk before executing a lope departure on trot-in patterns; failure to be in a lope prior to the first marker on run-in patterns; failure to completely pass the specified marker before initiating a stop position, trotting beyond two strides, but less than 1/2 circle or 1/2 length of the arena.
- 5 Point Penalties: Spurring in front of cinch; blatant dis-obedience; use of either hand to instill fear/praise; use of two hands per maneuver; more than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins per maneuver (except two rein).
- Excess rein may be straightened anytime during the pattern, provided the rider's free hand remains behind the rein hand. Any attempt to alter tension or length of the reins from the bridle to the rein hand is considered use of two hands and a 5 point penalty will be applied.
- 10 point: Unnatural ranch horse appearance (Horse's tail is obvious and consistently carried in an unnatural manner in every maneuver)
- Off-Pattern (OP): breaking pattern; inclusion of maneuver (e.g. over or under-spinning, backing more than two (2) strides, etc.); trotting in excess of 1/2 circle or 1/2 length of the arena; use of two hands (except junior horses or riders in the Novice divisions shown in a snaffle bit/hackamore), more than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except in the two-rein); repeated blatant disobedience; Exhibitors cannot place above others who complete the pattern correctly.
- Disqualification (DQ): Lameness; abuse; illegal equipment; leaving arena before pattern is complete; disrespect or misconduct; improper western attire; fall of horse/rider.

## **RANCH COW WORK**

The ideal ranch horse must also be a cow horse and this class demonstrates and measures the horse's ability to do cow work. In addition the ideal ranch cow horse should have a natural ranch horse appearance from head to tail in each maneuver. Holding the saddle horn is permitted. There is a time limit per horse/rider team to perform the work depending on the division and the time begins when the cow is turned into the arena. If the time has not elapsed and the judge is satisfied that all requirements of the class have been met, the judge should blow the whistle for the exhibitor to cease work. The judge may blow a whistle at any time for the exhibitor to cease work for safety reasons. Judges will give credit for what they have seen. Only the judge may award a new cow to a contestant to replace a cow that will not honor a horse. If the judge awards a new cow, the exhibitor has the option to refuse the new cow by continuing to work. If the exhibitor accepts the new cow, the time for working the cow will start over. If the exhibitor intends to accept the new cow, the exhibitor must pull up immediately. When multiple judges are scoring, any one of the judges may terminate the work or signal for a new cow.

## **OPEN, AMATEUR, YOUTH COW WORK**

**CONTENT.** Exhibitors in the open, amateur and youth divisions are allotted three minutes to complete the work. When there is one minute left, the announcer will announce, one minute remaining. At three minutes, the announcer will call for time. There are three parts to the class: boxing, fence work and roping or circling.



- Part One – Boxing the Cow: The rider shall ride into the arena, face the cattle entry gate and signal for their cow to be turned into the arena. The cow shall be controlled on the entry end of the arena for a sufficient amount of time to demonstrate the horse's ability to hold the cow. If the cow does not immediately challenge the horse, the rider shall aggressively move in on the cow to demonstrate his horse's ability to drive and block the cow on the entry fence.
- Part Two – Fence Work: After the cow has been controlled on the entry end of the arena, the rider shall set the cow up and drive it down either side of the arena. The cow should be turned on the fence at least once in each direction. The first run out for a turn shall be past the half-way mark of the arena. All turns down the side shall be completed before reaching the end fence.
- Part Three – Roping or Circling: The exhibitor has the option of circling the cow in the middle of the arena in both directions in lieu of roping. An exhibitor may circle or rope the cow but cannot combine the two to get credit for this portion of the run. To rope the cow, the exhibitor must be carrying a rope when the run starts. The exhibitor may pull up after the fence work, take down the rope and proceed to rope and stop the cow. In the roping portion of the class, two throws are permitted and the horse will be judged on two maneuvers: tracking/rating and stopping the cow. It is not necessary that the exhibitor catch to receive a score in the roping portion. The catch is legal as long as the cow looks through the loop and the rope pulls tight on any part of the animal's body except the tail. The rope may be tied on or dallied. If the exhibitor does not catch, the horse will be given credit for tracking and rating and will be assessed the appropriate penalty for failure to catch

To circle the cow, the exhibitor will maneuver the cow smoothly at least 360 degrees in each direction without interference from the fence. The circle's size, symmetry, speed and relative balance from right and left show control. Tightening the circles down with fast head-to-head speed will be a credit situation. The circles should be completed before the cow is exhausted. Once an exhibitor has committed to circling a cow, if the cow falls no new cow will be awarded. The exhibitor will complete the run by riding around the fallen cow to fulfill circling requirements. In the circling portion of the judging, one whistle will terminate the work and two whistles will award a new cow.

**CREDITS AND PENALTIES.** All runs begin upon entering the pen; any infractions (such as two hands on the reins, using either hand to instill fear or praise, etc.) are subject to penalty at that time. During "Boxing", credit will be given for the horse's expression and its 'cow sense' (i.e., making moves with little rider assistance); holding, controlling, and turning the cow; the amount of work actually done; and the degree of difficulty of the work. Credit will be given during "Fence Work" for making the first run past the center of the arena; making turns right on the cow; and controlling a difficult cow. If "Roping", credit will be given for rating and following cow to allow rider the optimal roping position; stopping hard; and staying in the ground during the hold. Credits for each element of Roping range from -1 1/2 to +1 1/2 points. If "Circling", credit will be given when the horse works willingly; acknowledges the cow; and gets close enough to the cow to control the circles. Credits for Circling range from -1 1/2 to +1 1/2 points for each direction. Penalties will be assessed as follows:

- 1 Point Penalties: Over-bridled (per maneuver), out of frame (per maneuver), loss of working advantage ; Using the corner or the end of the arena to turn the cow when going down the fence; changing sides of arena to turn cow; for each length horse runs past cow; working out of position; slipping rein; failure to drive cow past middle marker on first turn; two-loop catch in amateur and youth classes.
- 2 Point Penalties: Going around the corner of the arena before turning cow; when working an animal in the open field (at least 20' from the side of arena) and the animal gets within 3 feet from the end fence before being turned; failure to catch if roping in amateur and youth classes.
- 3 Point Penalties: Exhausting or overworking the cow before circling or roping; hanging up on the fence (refus-ing to turn); knocking down the cow without having a working advantage; two-loop catch when roping in open/cowboy class.





- 5 Point Penalties: Failure to turn the cow both directions on the fence; spurring in front of cinch; Blatant disobedience; use of either hand to instill fear/praise; use of two hands (except in snaffle bit or hackamore) per maneuver; more than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except two rein) per maneuver; failure to catch when roping, in open/cowboy class.
- 10 point: Unnatural ranch horse appearance (Horse's tail is obvious and consistently carried in an unnatural manner in every maneuver)
- Off-Pattern (OP): Turning tail; failure to attempt any part of the class; use of two hands (except junior horses or riders in the Novice divisions shown in a snaffle bit/hackamore), more than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except in the two-rein); repeated blatant disobedience; schooling after entering the arena prior to calling for cow; schooling horse between cows if new cow is awarded, or complete loss of rope in open/cowboy class, cannot place above others who complete pattern correctly.
- Disqualification (DQ): lameness, abuse, illegal equipment, leaving arena before run is complete; disrespect or misconduct, bringing the cow straight over backwards landing on its back or head with all four feet in the air, improper western attire; fall of horse/rider

Note: If the open rider runs out of time to rope, there will be no credit for the stop/hold maneuver and a 5 point penalty for failure to catch. Riders may still earn credit for tracking/rating, control/position and speed/degree of difficulty.

#### **LIMITED AMATEUR/YOUTH RANCH COW WORK**

**CONTENT.** Exhibitors in the limited ranch cow work cannot compete in both the ranch cow work and limited cow work class, at the same show with the same horse. Limited ranch cow work exhibitors are allotted one minute and thirty seconds to complete the work. When there is 30 seconds left, the announcer will announce, 30 seconds remaining. At one minute and thirty seconds, the announcer will call for time. Exhibitors are not required to use all of the allotted time, but must ride until the judge whistles the end of the run or time expires, whichever occurs first. There are four parts to the work: boxing the cow; setting up the cow and driving it down the fence to the opposite end of the arena; and boxing it at the opposite end of the arena, and then driving the cow past the middle marker again. There is no expectation that the exhibitor will make a 'fence turn,' rather the drive down the fence demonstrates correct position and control around the corner.

- Part One – Boxing the Cow – The rider shall ride into the arena, face the cattle entry gate, and signal for their cow to be turned into the arena. The cow shall be controlled on the entry end of the arena for a sufficient amount of time to demonstrate the horse's ability to "hold" the cow. If the cow does not immediately challenge the horse, the rider shall aggressively move in on the cow to demonstrate his horse's ability to drive and block the cow.
- Part Two - Set Up Cow and Drive Down Fence to Opposite End of Arena – After the cow has been controlled on the entry end of the arena, the rider shall set the cow up for driving down the side of the arena. When coming out of corner, the horse shall be close enough to cow to demonstrate control with cow against the fence. This distance and control should be maintained for approximately 1/2 to 3/4 the length of arena. Rider will then stop and release the cow and move horse toward center of arena to set the cow up for boxing.
- Part Three – Boxing the Cow at Opposite End of Arena – The exhibitor will regain control or "hold" the cow at end of the arena to demonstrate the horse's ability to "hold" the cow.
- Part Four – Drive the Cow back down the fence past the middle marker and continue until the judge blows the whistle to show completion.

**CREDITS AND PENALTIES.** All runs begin upon entering the pen; any infractions (such as two hands on the reins, using either hand to instill fear or praise, etc.) are subject to penalty at that time. During



“Boxing”, credit will be given for the horse’s expression and its ‘cow sense’ (i.e., making moves with little rider assistance); holding, controlling, and turning the cow; the amount of work actually done; and the degree of difficulty of the work. Credit will be given during “Set Up Cow and Drive Down Fence” for rating the cow; blocking the cow with pressure towards the end of the arena; driving the cow with control down the side of the arena; and controlling a difficult cow. Penalties will be assessed as follows:

- 1 Point Penalties: Over-bridled (per maneuver), out of frame (per maneuver), loss of working advantage; working out of position; slipping rein; in limited cow work, driving cow down the opposite fence (changing sides); failure to drive cow past the middle marker on second drive before time expired.
- 3 Point Penalties: Knocking down the cow without having a working advantage; losing a cow while boxing.
- 5 Point Penalties: Spurring in front of cinch; blatant disobedience; use of either hand to instill fear/praise; use of two hands (except in snaffle bit or hackamore) per maneuver; more than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except two rein) per maneuver.
- 10 point: Unnatural ranch horse appearance (Horse’s tail is obvious and consistently carried in an unnatural manner in every maneuver)
- Off-Pattern (OP): Turning tail; failure to attempt any part of the class; use of two hands (except junior horses or riders in the Novice divisions shown in a snaffle bit/hackamore), more than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except in the two-rein); repeated blatant disobedience; schooling after entering the arena prior to calling for cow; schooling horse between cows (if new cow is awarded); cannot place above others who complete pattern correctly.
- Disqualification (DQ): lameness, abuse, illegal equipment, leaving arena before run is complete; disrespect or misconduct, improper western attire, fall of horse/rider.

## **NOVICE AMATEUR & NOVICE YOUTH COW WORK**

Exhibitors in the Novice Amateur and Novice Youth Divisions are allotted fifty (50) seconds to complete the work. The rider shall ride into the arena, face the cattle entry gate, and signal for their cow to be turned into the arena. The cow shall be controlled on the entry end of the arena for 50 seconds to demonstrate the horse’s ability to “hold” the cow. If the cow does not immediately challenge the horse, the rider shall aggressively move in on the cow to demonstrate his horse’s ability to drive and block the cow on the entry fence.

**CREDITS AND PENALTIES.** All runs begin upon entering the pen; any infractions (such as two hands on the reins, using either hand to instill fear or praise, etc.) are subject to penalty at that time. During “Boxing,” credit will be given for the horse’s expression and its ‘cow sense’ (i.e., making moves with little rider assistance); holding, controlling, and turning the cow; the amount of work actually done; and the degree of difficulty of the work. Penalties will be assessed as follows:

- 1 Point Penalties: Loss of working advantage; Working out of position; Slipping rein; Over-bridled.
- 3 Point Penalties: Knocking down the cow without having a working advantage; Losing a cow while boxing.
- 5 Point Penalties: Spurring in front of cinch; Blatant disobedience; Use of either hand to instill fear/praise; Use of two hands (except in snaffle bit or hackamore) per maneuver; More than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except two rein) per maneuver.
- Off-Pattern (OP): Turning tail; failure to attempt any part of the class; use of two hands (except



junior horses or riders in the Novice divisions shown in a snaffle bit/hackamore), more than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except in the two-rein); repeated blatant disobedience; schooling after entering the arena prior to calling for cow; schooling horse between cows (if new cow is awarded); cannot place above others who complete pattern correctly.

- Disqualification (DQ): Lameness; Abuse; Illegal equipment; leaving arena before run is complete; Disrespect or misconduct; Fall of horse/rider (run ends; scores will be given for work done but the horse/rider team will be disqualified and will not be placed), Improper western attire. Disqualified entries are counted as an entry in the class but can not receive points or credits for that class toward the all around.

## **RANCH CUTTING**

This class is judged on the ability of the horse to work a cow by separating it from the herd and holding it to demonstrate the horse's ability to work the cow. A single cow is cut from the herd and the horse must demonstrate its ability to work the cow. The ideal ranch cutting horse should have a natural ranch horse appearance from head to tail in each maneuver.

Objective will be to cut two cows from the herd and work the cow(s) with the assistance of two turn-back riders and two herd holders. Show management may supply two herd holders and two turn back riders, or exhibitors may supply their own helpers. If an exhibitor is a herd holder or turn back rider, he or she may use the horse that they are competing on, or use a different horse.

There will be a two minute time limit. Each exhibitor must work two head and has the option of ending their run before the two minute limit or working the full two minutes.

Time will begin when a rider crosses a time line just prior to entering the herd. Time should not start until contestant crosses a pre-determined and marked timeline. The rider will then quietly separate his/her cow from the herd.

Unnecessary roughness or disturbing the herd excessively could result in disqualification.

Ultimate credit will be given to the horses demonstrating excellence in the herd work by committing to, driving, set-ting up and working a cow in the center of the arena with minimal disturbance to the herd.

Horses will not be penalized for reining during the cutting portion, but should display natural ability.

Scoring. 100 percent will be judged by the horse's performance and natural ability.

Penalties should be assessed as follows:

- One (1) point Over-bridled (per maneuver), out of frame (per maneuver), losing working advantage; toe, foot, or stirrup on the shoulder; working out of position
- Three (3) points cattle picked up or scattered; spurring on shoulder; pawing or biting cattle; back fence; hot quit
- Five (5) points horse quitting cow; losing cow; changing cattle after a specific commitment; failure to separate a single animal after leaving the herd blatant disobedience
- Ten (10) points Unnatural ranch horse appearance (Horse's tail is obvious and consistently carried in an unnatural manner in every maneuver)



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- Off Pattern (OP) turn tail; failure to cut a cow, use of two hands (except junior horses or riders in the Novice divisions shown in a snaffle bit/hackamore), more than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except in the two-rein); repeated blatant disobedience
- Disqualification (DQ) lameness; abuse; disrespect or misconduct; illegal equipment; excessive disturbance of herd to the point that exhibitor is asked to leave the arena; leaving arena before run is complete, fall of horse/rider; improper western attire



## **NRHSA NOVICE AMATEUR & NOVICE YOUTH DIVISION-SPECIFIC RULES**

***Novice and Novice Youth rider eligibility are determined by the following rules (not novice eligibility in the qualifying organization.) Since each NRSHA member organization has different eligibility requirements for novice, a rider's eligibility at the NRSHA National Championship show will be determined by the following:***

**NOVICE DIVISION ELIGIBILITY AND RESTRICTIONS:** The Novice Division is reserved for individuals with limited riding and showing experience. Eligibility for the Novice division is as follows:

- The rider does not have more than 10 points in any breed association (AQHA, APHA, AQHA VRH All Around, etc.); or \$500 in a national organization (NCHA, NRCHA, NRHA, RHAA, NRSHA, etc.) in any western performance discipline (western pleasure, working cow horse, reining, cutting, trail, etc.)
- The rider must meet other Amateur or Youth eligibility requirements for their respective division per AQHA's definition of an Amateur and a Youth.

**NOVICE EQUIPMENT RULES:** Riders may ride two handed in a snaffle bit on any age horse in the Novice division. This is only allowed in Novice divisions. All other AQHA equipment rules apply.

**RANCH RIDING, RANCH TRAIL, RANCH REINING** -- Exhibitors in the Novice Amateur and Novice Youth will follow the same class rules and class procedures as all other divisions in Ranch Riding, Ranch Reining and Ranch Trail ***with the exception that Novice riders DO NOT drag a log in the Ranch Trail class.***

### **NOVICE AMATEUR & NOVICE YOUTH COW WORK**

Exhibitors in the Novice Amateur and Novice Youth Divisions are allotted fifty (50) seconds to complete the work. The rider shall ride into the arena, face the cattle entry gate, and signal for their cow to be turned into the arena. The cow shall be controlled on the entry end of the arena for 50 seconds to demonstrate the horse's ability to "hold" the cow. If the cow does not immediately challenge the horse, the rider shall aggressively move in on the cow to demonstrate his horse's ability to drive and block the cow on the entry fence.

***Additional rules regarding credits/penalties are available in the Ranch Cow Work section of the NRHSA Championship Show rules.***

### **NOVICE AMATEUR & NOVICE YOUTH RANCH CUTTING**

For Novice Amateur and Novice Youth competition, there will be a two minute time limit. Each exhibitor will work two cows and has the option of ending their run before the two minute time limit or working the full two minutes.

***Additional rules regarding credits/penalties are available in the Ranch Cutting section of the NRHSA Championship Show rules.***