



## RANCH HORSE COMPETITIONS RULES AND GUIDELINES

**1. Entry Fees and Eligibility:** This is an open to the world competition meaning any person and horse(s) may enter to compete. Entry forms with \$100 per horse entry fee must be received by March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010. Late entry fees will be accepted with a \$25 per horse late fee. Any entries paid after March 2<sup>nd</sup> must be paid in cash and will only be accepted at check in time (8:00 a.m.) Friday, March 12th. Entries may be limited. If this is the case entries will be accepted on a first received, first entered basis.

**a.** There is no age restriction on contestants although eighteen years or older is encouraged for liability reasons. All contestants will be required to sign a written release before competition. Liability releases for minors must be signed by a parent or legal guardian.

**b.** There will be two divisions: Open and Women's. Women may compete both in the Women's division and Open division. Women who wish to compete in both divisions will only have one run.

**2. Class Description:** This contest consists of three (3) divisions all performed as one event, or competition, within a five (5) minute time span. The normal flow of the event for the contestant is that he/she enters the arena and performs the reined work portion, then moves straight into the cow-working segment (at this time contestant signals for only one animal to be turned out into the arena for the contestant to work and rope), and then straight into the roping segment.

**A. DRY WORK OR REINING - 60 points:** Horses are to be judged on their ability to perform four basic sets of maneuvers- rollbacks, circles and lead changes, stopping and backing, and spins. Each of these parts will receive equal credit of fifteen points.

**Rollbacks (15 points):** At the end of the stop, the rollback should be a 180-degree turn, where the horse turns and leaves in one motion. Short, choppy rundowns will be penalized, as will bouncy, forced stops and rollbacks that come out at less than 180 degrees.

**Circles and lead changes (15 points):** To be judged on the horse's ability to be willingly guided without pulling to the inside or to the outside of the circle, and on his ability to demonstrate his willingness to increase or decrease speed, and on his ability to change leads, front and back, smoothly with a minimum of cueing from the rider. In the circle segment of the dry work, the rider can increase his score by making his circles come together at the "same midpoint of the arena", making large circles the same size on each side, small circles the same size on each side and lead changes at the center of the arena. This will demonstrate control to the judges.

**Stopping and backing (15 points):** To receive maximum credit, a horse should approach the stop loping or galloping freely, willingly moving forward in a straight line, and gradually increasing his speed. The stop should be straight and square, and give the appearance of stopping because he is trained to stop, not because he is forced to stop. As in the rollback maneuver, maximum credit will be given to the horse that approaches the stop running straight, gradually increasing speed, stops straight and square, hesitates momentarily. Short, choppy, checky-looking rundowns, bouncy stops, head throwing, excessive open mouth and resistance on the part of the horse will be penalized. Maximum credit will be given to the horse that backs straight and then backs willingly in a straight line for at least fifteen feet. If the horse backs crooked, throws head, opens mouth excessively and shows resistance, the horse will be penalized.

**Spins (15 points):** In order to receive maximum credit, a horse should do at least two spins in each direction. Credit will be given to the horse that spins flat and smooth, showing no indication of being forced, and demonstrates a willing attitude. Forced speed should not score higher than moderate willing speed. Horses will be penalized for elevated hoppy, forced, or extremely slow spins. The horse that spins smoothly, with moderate speed, keeping his hind quarters in the same general area, and demonstrating good footwork in front should receive the greatest amount of credit.

**B. COW WORK - 60 points:** Cow work will consist of two segments, boxing or holding a cow at the end of the arena, and turning a cow down the fence in both directions. Each of these segments will be worth thirty

points each. . At any point in time when a horse turns tail to the cow, the maneuver will be zeroed by the judge.

Throughout the cow work, it must be remembered that the name of the game is controlling the cow. Judges must take into consideration what kind of cow each contestant draws in order to accurately judge the degree of difficulty in each credit-earning situation. When a contestant is holding a cow at the end of the arena, maximum credit will be given to the horse that is obviously watching a cow and making counter moves to hold the cow at the end of the arena without the help of the rider. The more a horse is trying to do on his own, the more credit he should receive. Maximum credit should only be given when the horse is in control of the cow when the cow is allowed to go down the fence. Contestant needs to deliberately stop or pull up on his horse to show the judge that he is now ready to let the cow go down the fence. Again, the difficulty of the cow should always be considered when deducting from maximum credit. When the cow is allowed to go down the fence, maximum credit will be given to the horse that turns the cow at least once each way on the same fence that the cow originally went down. . At any point in time when a horse turns tail to the cow, the maneuver will be zeroed by the judge.

Horses will be penalized for losing control while boxing the cow at the end of the arena, getting outrun down the fence, for running more than one horse length past the cow on the turn, hanging up on the fence, refusing to turn, running over the cow, biting cattle, hanging back and not running past the cow to turn the cow and for generally losing control. Cattle are to be worked on the end of the arena that they are called for from. If a contestant calls for their animal and lets the animal go past the contestant to the other end of the arena to work this should be penalized heavily. Giving ground down the arena to gain control and working the animal back to the end of the arena that it was called for on should be given appropriate credit.

**C. ROPING - 60 points** The roping work will consist of three segments, each to receive twenty points.

**Speed, rate and tracking - 30 points:** Maximum credit will be given to the horse that shows ample speed going to cattle, rates off so the rider can rope, tracks a cow that circles, ducks right or left and stays in position to allow the rider to rope. The loop has to go over the animal's head, i.e., the animal has to look through the loop. The animal may end up being caught by the neck, body or a hind leg. If the animal is not roped within two loops, the scoring will cease at this point. The roper may only carry one rope and, if that rope is lost, time will stop and the run is considered completed. Contestants may not receive any ropes from outside the arena to complete their run. Contestants may not retrieve their rope from the animal if it comes loose from the horn. If a contestant drops their rope prior to the roping the animal they may dismount and retrieve the rope to complete the run if time allows.

**Stop - 30 points:** Maximum credit will be given to the horse that stops square and hard in a straight line with the cow, hindquarters underneath him, alert and paying attention, holding the stop when the rope comes tight and leans back slightly to absorb the jerk. The loop has to go over the animal's head and, therefore, any part of the body that is caught may be used to stop the animal. The contestant may tie their ropes on or dally.

Horses will be penalized if they are slow going to the cattle, run over cattle, lose position tracking, or generally appear hard to manage. Horses that stop crooked, sideways, duck off or appear that they might be bulled down by big cattle will be penalized.

The rider will be disqualified for intentionally choking, dragging by the neck while on the ground, or tripping the cow during the roping segment. Any unnecessary roughness or abuse to livestock will disqualify the contestant. When roping, reins may be held as romal reins. One judge should be designated to be able to disqualify a contestant for these reasons. This judge should be provided with some way to signal for the disqualification. A whistle or flag will be used as a signal.

**3. Time:** This is a timed event. Each rider's time will begin when he/she enters the arena and the contestant will have five (5) minutes to complete his/her task in an average size arena. The announcer for the event will call out a 2 minute warning ("2 minutes remaining") when the contestant reaches this point in his/her run. It is also called out again when he/she reaches only 1 minute left ("1 minute remaining"). When the contestants time has been exhausted, the announcer will call "Time" and the run will be over. The contestant is judged on the segments of his/her run that was completed prior to the calling of "Time". No abuse of horses or abuse of cattle will be tolerated during the competition. In the event, the rider deviates from any judged segment of the

competition and displays unsportsmanlike training of horse or cow, he will be asked to leave the arena and shall be disqualified from the class.

**4. Ties:** In the event of a tie, the judges will use the scores on the judges' score card from the first portion of the cow work and proceed from that point to break the tie. Dry work will be the last segment utilized to break any ties. This will save time and prevent contestants from having to show their horses again.

**5. Reruns:** The awarding of a contestant's rerun is the sole decision of the Judge. This will be decided upon prior to the start of competition. The Judge will call for a rerun to the secretary and the clock will stop. A whistle or white flag will be used to signal a rerun. A new animal will be turned out to the contestant, thirty (30) seconds will be added to his time and he will complete his competition from where he left off in the original time-frame allotted, i.e. (the clock was stopped when the judge called for a rerun, now the contestant will start from that point and go forward until he reaches the 5 minute limit). A rerun animal is only given if he is unworkable or leaves the arena working floor. Unworkable is defined as an animal that, for any reason, does not let the contestant exhibit his/her horse at all. Examples of this are animals that immediately fight the contestant's horse or enter the arena and simply refuse to move. Awarding a contestant a new animal is the sole discretion of the designated judge and is only intended in the event of an unworkable animal. Under no circumstances will a rerun be awarded if it is the contestant's fault that the animal is tired, out of air, run down, or overworked to the point he doesn't care to move, etc. Judges please keep this in mind - we are also judging the cowboy's ability to recognize these things and adjust his run accordingly. This is a ranch horse and cowboy event designed to replicate how they work together out on the range.

A judge will stop any run which shows excessive danger, including any abuse to horse or cow. Equipment failure that poses danger to the horse or rider will terminate the run. Separation of horse and rider due to the horse falling or the rider falling off the horse will terminate a run.

#### **6. Contestant's Equipment**

a. Dress Code: Boots, hat and long sleeves are required, anything beyond that such as leggings, chinks, etc., is optional

b. Saddles: The horse must be ridden with a western or stock saddle.

c. Horse Shoes: Any shoes are legal.

d. Two handed bridles, such as ring snaffles and hackamores, may be ridden two handed in the Junior division, only. A horse may be ridden in a two rein and the bosal may be of any size with no iron or metal of any kind. A two rein horse must be ridden one handed. Reins on a shanked bit must be held in one hand with no more than one finger between the reins. Romal reins must be held full fisted.

e. Bridles and Bits: Any bit is legal provided nothing extends below the bars of the bit. A bridle is defined as curbed, shanked bit. Chain bits are legal provided there is no gag or slide. Contestants will not be allowed to use any device that gives him/her undue control over the horse such as:

- Tie Downs
- Mechanical Hackamores, Quick Stops, etc.
- Martingales
- Nothing may be around the horse's nose
- Gag Bits
- Wire on the Curb Device or any part of the Bit or Headstall.
- Bits must be free of mechanical device
- Nothing extending below the bars of the bits

**7. Judges Inspection:** A judge may ask any contestant to drop a bridle after a run is completed. Judges may also check one bridle at random from each class of competition. Any horse observed with a pink or bloody mouth will be disqualified.