



# 2026 RULE BOOK

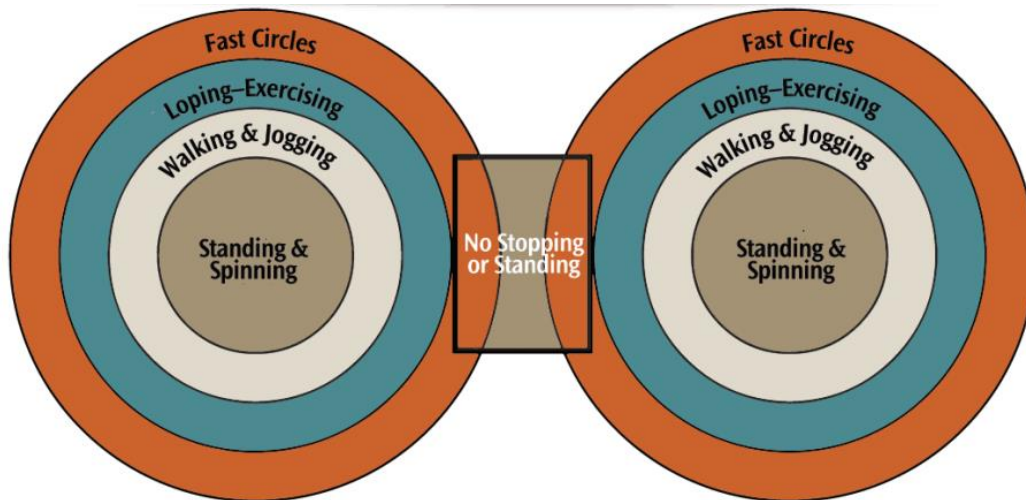
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## WARM-UP PEN ETIQUETTE

- Always go with the flow of traffic. If the arena is large enough for two sets of circles, follow the diagram with a set of circles going each direction.
- NEVER stop your horse in traffic, and ALWAYS look behind you before you stop or slow down.
- Always look where you are going and watch out for other riders.
- Don't tie horses in the warm up arena.
- No cell phones, headphones or ear buds in arenas.



## Promoting Versatility Ranch Horse in Arizona since 2008

Our competitions celebrate the versatile ranch horse, capable of excelling in a variety of events. Our classes include Ranch Cutting, Ranch Reined Work, Ranch Cow Work, Ranch Riding, and Ranch Trail. We offer divisions for riders of all skill levels, from Novice to Open.

## I. ASSOCIATION GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

### A. MISSION STATEMENT:

The Arizona Versatility Ranch Horse Association's (AZVRHA) mission is to promote Versatility Ranch Horse in Arizona and to provide educational and fun opportunities to improve horsemanship. The AZVRHA also aims to preserve American Ranch Horse traditions through competitions and clinics.

### B. MEMBERSHIP:

The Membership year will run from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>.

New AZVRHA Memberships that are purchased at the last sanctioned show will be in good standing through next year's show season.

### C. EVENT YEAR:

The Event Year will run from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup> each year.

### D. RELEASE OF LIABILITY:

The Association and co-sponsoring organizations, if any, and their officers, directors, employees, members and agents shall not be responsible for any personal injury, for injury to animals, or for loss or damage to property occurring at any Association activity. Each owner, exhibitor, handler, trainer, participant, member or consignor shall indemnify and hold harmless the Association, its officers, directors and employees from and against all claims, demands, causes of actions, and expenses of every kind, including attorney's fees, arising out of or related in any manner to the acts or omissions of an owner, exhibitor, handler, or consignor, to the actions of any animal under the care, custody or control of the owner, exhibitor, handler or consignor, or as a result of participation in or attendance at a show or event or on the grounds thereof. Presentation of signed entry or consignment forms shall be deemed acceptance of the conditions of this rule. In the event an entry or consignment form is not signed or presented, appearance on the grounds or at the sale ring of any Association activity as an exhibitor, handler, owner, trainer, participant, member or consignor shall be deemed to be acceptance of the conditions of this rule.

1. Without assuming the affirmative duty to monitor possible physical or mental handicaps of exhibitors, if condition of exhibitors' physical or mental disability comes to the attention of the Association, the individual may be denied participation privileges in Association-approved events until such time as he or she provides the Association with sufficient information to conclusively establish physical or mental capability to participate, without posing a significant risk to the health or safety of the individual and/or the other exhibitors of the class in which he or she desires to participate. At Association's sole discretion, the individual may be authorized to use special equipment to enhance physical ability to safely exhibit in Association-approved or sponsored shows/events.

### E. RULE CHANGE PROCEDURES:

A standing member, a standing committee, a special committee, the Board of Directors, or the Association staff may propose a rule change. A rule change is any change to the General Rules.

Rule changes shall be submitted on the rule change proposal form in the specified format. This format will make each submission uniform and cause the person proposing the rule change to think through the proposal and help identify pros and cons involved in changing a rule. All blanks must be completed and a justification for the proposed change cited. Forms which are incomplete, lacking justification, or failing to cite the specific change requested will be returned to the originator. The Board of Directors

will provide notice that rule change proposals are being accepted in advance of the deadline. Rule change proposals can be submitted at any time; the Board will file them for consideration. The Board of Directors will vote on the proposed change but may refer the matter to any committee or group for study, review, and recommendation prior to voting. Rule change proposals must be received in the office by December 1st of each year.

Two thirds (2/3) of the Board members at a specified Board meeting having the required quorum attendance must vote in the affirmative for a rule change to be adopted.

#### **F. EMERGENCY RULE CHANGE:**

If a proposed rule change is deemed of such extreme importance by the Board of Directors that it must be acted upon immediately, such proposed change must be presented to the Board of Directors and is subject to amendment. The Board of Directors should then put the Emergency Status of the proposed change to a vote. The Emergency Status must first be approved and requires a motion and two-thirds (2/3) majority vote in favor.

If the Board of Directors approves the Emergency Status, the proposed change with any amendments attached shall then be put to a vote by the Board of Directors for immediate action and/or implementation. If approved, the change can become effective immediately. If the Emergency Status of the proposed change is rejected by the Board of Directors, the proposed change itself cannot be put to vote at this time but can still be presented for a vote by the regular rule change procedure.

#### **G. GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE:**

- Committee will be made up of three members appointed by the President with concurrence of the Board.
- All grievances will be in written form and signed. They will be forwarded to the Chairperson. After reviewing the grievance, the committee will respond in writing.
- Should there be a conflict of interest with a committee member, a replacement will be appointed from the Board by the President.
- A review of the various grievances will be provided to the Board at its next meeting.
- Parties may appeal against the committee's decision of the grievance to the Board.

## **II. ELIGIBILITY**

#### **A. BREED ELIGIBILITY:**

Any horse/mule of any breed may be used. All horses/mules must be three years of age or older.

#### **B. HORSE IDENTIFICATION RECORD:**

Each horse ridden in approved AZVRHA events must be assigned a permanent AZVRHA Identification Number. This number will be lifetime identification and remain with the horse regardless of ownership.

Prior to participation in an approved AZVRHA event, a completed Horse Identification Number Application Form must be provided to AZVRHA (either to the office prior to the event or to show management at the event). The Horse Identification Number will be assigned to the horse by AZVRHA. The rider will be responsible for providing the Horse ID Number at all following approved events.

### **C. OWNERSHIP REQUIREMENTS:**

To be eligible for "placings, awards, and program points," a Youth and Amateur rider must own or lease his/her horse or be an immediate relative of the person owning the horse (spouse, son, son-in-law, daughter, daughter-in-law, parents, siblings, and grandparents).

Amateurs and youth may also show leased horses subject to the following:

- The Owner (Lessee) must be a member in good standing of AZVRHA.
- Prior to the lessee (Amateur or Youth) showing the leased horse, AZVRHA must have received and recorded a showing lease form, and an AZVRHA Horse ID Application must be on file.
- The lessee must be responsible for expenses associated with the care of the horse: boarding, feeding, routine farrier services and routine veterinary services.
- During the term of the showing lease, only the lessee and lessee's IMMEDIATE FAMILY may show the horse. The lessee's trainer may also show the horse in Open Division classes. During the term of the lease, the horse may be shown by other eligible exhibitors in Open Division including the lessee.
- The term of the lease must be for a minimum one-year period, and the lease must be to an individual only. If the lease is terminated for any reason before the minimum one-year period, the horse can only be shown in the Open Division, until one year has passed since the original start date of the lease.
- Only one showing lease at a time per horse will be recognized.
- During the term of a showing lease, subsequent changes in ownership will not be recorded until the showing lease is terminated.
- If a lessee qualifies the horse for and intends to exhibit the horse at an AZVRHA Championship Show, a showing lease must be in effect and on file with AZVRHA at the time the lessee (a) enters the horse into the Championship Show and (b) exhibits the horse at the Championship Show. Should a showing lease expire prior to the above times, a new showing lease will be required.

In the Open division, any horse can be ridden by any rider. There are no ownership requirements. Both the owner of the horse and the rider must be members in good standing.

An Amateur rider who does not own or lease his/her own horse may participate in a competition (except Regional or Year-End Championships) and be the sole rider in all five classes, but neither rider nor horse is eligible for placement points, awards, or AZVRHA Champion points. However, the rider/horse team will be acknowledged at the awards presentation.

A rider is not required to own the horse he/she rides in a clinic.

### **D. AMATEUR ELIGIBILITY:**

- The rider has not received payment directly or indirectly for riding, training, assisting in training, or showing horse(s) at any time during the past three years.
- The rider has not received payment directly or indirectly for instructing another person or conducting a seminar in riding, training, driving, or showing a horse any time during the past three years.
- The rider has not had any expenses (including lodging, transportation, mileage, etc.) paid by someone other than family members. Youth members may accept assistance from someone other than a family member.
- Premium money won is not considered remuneration.
- An Amateur rider may show in the Open division without losing Amateur eligibility if eligibility requirements for an Amateur are still met.

### III. DIVISIONS

#### A. GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS:

AZVRHA divisions are designed to be a progressive program, based on rider skills and limitations, which will allow a Novice rider to start from the beginning and as the horse and rider gain and develop horsemanship skills, be able to advance to the next level. The general progression through divisions will be from Novice to Limited to Intermediate to Advanced Amateur. Any Amateur is eligible to ride in the Limited and Intermediate Division for any reason.

All new riders will complete the Division Eligibility Form and any rider that is ineligible for the division and believes they should be in the Novice division will have the opportunity to request further evaluation – See Novice Eligibility Requirements. Each year upon renewal of membership all riders must complete the eligibility form.

AZVRHA's priority is FUN and education; however, we are a competitive association and have eligibility requirements and restrictions for each division based on skills and achievement. It is the Member's responsibility to know his or her correct division eligibility and exhibit in the correct division. Horse/rider teams exhibiting in the incorrect division will not be eligible for placement points or awards.

Riders may choose to move to a higher division but must notify the Event Manager prior to the event. Once a rider chooses to ride in a higher division, he/she may not move back to the lower division in that event year. To move to a lower division, the rider must meet all eligibility requirements of the lower division and be reviewed and approved by the AZVRHA Board of Directors. Any points earned will remain in the division they were earned. This decision must be communicated to the AZVRHA office.

#### 1. OPEN DIVISION:

The Open Division is open to any professional or non-professional member in good standing with any horse regardless of past winnings. Open riders may ride an UNLIMITED number of different horses in any given show. In the Open Division, the points are assigned to the horse only, not a horse/rider combination. The year-end open championship will go to a horse, and that horse could have been ridden by more than one rider.

##### a) LIMITED OPEN SUBDIVISION:

Limited Open is a subdivision of the Open for individuals with moderate to no showing experience. A horse of any age may be ridden, and there are no horse ownership restrictions.

- Earnings Restrictions for Level 1 Open: No more than \$3,500 with any equine organization or association reported by Q Data, EquiStat and other verifiable resources in any judged western performance discipline (western pleasure, working cow horse, reining, cutting, trail, etc.). If a member loses Level 1 eligibility through competition, he or she may finish that year as a Level 1 Open rider. Thereafter, the member is eligible only for Open Division.
- Class Format: The Level 1 Open Division will be run concurrent with the Open Division, but placed separately from Open entries. A high point within the subdivision can be offered at competition's end, at the show manager's discretion. The Limited Open is only for all-around competitors entering all classes. Limited Open competitors have the same competitive requirements as Open competitors.

## **2. ADVANCED AMATEUR DIVISION:**

This division is open to any member in good standing that qualifies as an Amateur regardless of earnings with any horse. In addition to the normal entry fee, this division may collect and offer jackpot payback. (See Jackpot guidelines). In the Ranch Cow Work, this division requires going down the fence and roping or circling the cow.

## **3. INTERMEDIATE AMATEUR DIVISION:**

Intermediate Amateur is open to a member in good standing that qualifies as an Amateur. In addition to the normal entry fee, this division may collect and offer jackpot payback (See Jackpot guidelines).

Intermediate Amateurs are riders that choose to begin the challenge of learning skills leading to going down the fence and roping. The intermediate rider may stay in this division until they feel ready to step up to the Advanced Division.

The Ranch Cow Work will consist of the following elements: box/drive/box/drive/roping skills. The roping skill portion is performed after the second drive is completed past the middle marker. The contestant will demonstrate the ability to track the cow, swing and throw a rope, and simulate the stop/hold maneuver. All contestants will demonstrate roping skill by using a breakaway Honda; there will not be a penalty applied for a “no-catch.” There is no expectation of turning the cow on the fence.

## **4. LIMITED AMATEUR DIVISION:**

Exhibitors who qualify as Amateur riders are eligible to ride in this division. The Limited Division is designed for riders that due to personal preference, limitations or life events do not want to ride in a division that requires turning on the fence or roping a cow.

The contestant will box/drive/box/drive with no expectation of turning the cow on the fence or roping.

The purpose of this division is

- To provide a place for the continued education and skill development of the Novice rider who is no longer eligible for the Novice Amateur Division but still does not want to turn a cow on the fence or rope.
- To provide a place for advanced riders experiencing life events necessitating changes to their riding activities (age, injury, illness, etc.)
- To provide a place for Amateur riders that wish to maintain their “box only” eligibility in another organization.
- To provide a place for Amateurs riders that do not feel safe going down the fence or roping on a particular horse.

In addition to the normal entry fee, this division may collect and offer jackpot payback (See Jackpot guidelines).

## **5. NOVICE AMATEUR DIVISION:**

The Novice Division is reserved for individuals with **novice riding and showing experience** who wish to learn more about showing in AZVRHA at a beginner’s pace. New members in AZVRHA do not necessarily need to ride in the Novice Division. Advanced skills may be better suited for one of the other divisions.

The Novice Division includes a “box only” version of Ranch Cow Work that will not involve turning down the fence or roping. In addition, the trail course may be modified to appropriately challenge

these riders without requiring completion of elements that may be deemed dangerous for Novice riders.

**Eligibility for the Novice and Novice Youth divisions are as follows:**

- a) The Novice Amateur rider meets all amateur eligibility requirements as listed above and has *NOT* won any combination of **FIVE** of the following.
  - Any Over-All High Point or Championship title at any AZVRHA, SHTX, ASHA, NRSHA, NVRHA, or any VRH association and or similar event(s), with or without cattle classes with five or more participants in the Division.
  - Any Reserve High Point or Reserve Championship titles at any AZVRHA, SHTX, ASHA, NRSHA, NVRHA, or any VRH association and similar event(s), with or without cattle classes with five or more participants in the Division.
  - Any Division Year-End High Point award or Year-End Championship Event title in AZVRHA, SHOT, ASHA, NRSHA, NVRHA, or any VRH association and or similar event(s), with or without cattle classes with five or more participants in the Division.
- b) The Novice Amateur or Novice Youth rider has not earned any of the following on any horse.
  - Ten (10) lifetime points in any association (including but not limited to AQHA, APHA, NCHA, NRCHA, NRHA, RHAA, etc.) in any western performance discipline – VRH or Stock Horse All Around, roping, working cow horse, reining, cutting, ranch horse pleasure, etc. (or)  
\$500 in a national organization (including but not limited to NCHA, NRCHA, NRSHA, NRHA, RHAA, etc.) in any western performance discipline – VRH or Stock Horse All Around, roping, working cow horse, reining, cutting, trail, etc.

If a member loses Novice eligibility through competition, he or she may finish that year as a Novice rider. Thereafter, the members are eligible only for Youth, Limited Amateur, Intermediate Amateur, Advanced Amateur or Open Divisions.

All Amateur riders will complete the *Division Eligibility Form* and any rider that believes they should be in the Novice Division and is NOT eligible to participate based on the application criteria may request an evaluation at the clinic prior to their FIRST competition to further determine eligibility. This evaluation is available to the rider for their first division placement only. The rider must be evaluated by a certified AZVRHA clinician.

**6. YOUTH DIVISION:**

Exhibitors in the Youth Divisions must be aged 8 through 18 as of January 1 of the current *event* year. The Youth Ranch Cow Work classes will be Amateur rules based on the Youth's determined Youth division. AZVRHA Youth year-end points will be combined in one division regardless of the Youth Division in Cow Work. The different Youth Divisions are Youth, Intermediate, Limited, and Novice.

All Youth that are unsure of their ability and division placement will be evaluated prior to their first competition at the clinic to determine initial division placement. They will be placed in their correct division by consensus of the clinicians, coaches, and parents. Novice Youth must meet Novice requirements.

- Youth will follow Amateur Rules for Ranch Cow Work.
- Intermediate Youth will follow Intermediate Amateur rules for Ranch Cow York.
- Limited Youth will follow Limited Amateur Rules for Ranch Cow Work.
- Novice Youth will follow Novice Amateur Rules for Ranch Cow Work. (See novice eligibility requirements).

- Youth may ride a leased or borrowed horse.
- The horse/rider team accumulates year-end points.
- Stallions are prohibited in this division.
- There will be no jackpot in this division.

## **7. WALK/TROT DIVISION:**

This division of ranch horse competition is for adult or youth riders who wish to experience showing their ranch horses at an introductory level. This division was created for beginner riders to have a place to start and will be governed by the general rules of the AZVRHA Handbook EXCEPT as noted in the Walk/Trot Section.

### **Eligibility for the Walk/Trot division is as follows:**

- a) Any adult or youth rider in their first year of showing is eligible provided they have **not** shown in ANY competition where loping, cow work, cutting, sorting, fence work, or roping has been involved. If a rider has previous experience, they may request to be evaluated for the Walk/Trot Division at an AZVRHA clinic.
- b) Riders may enter this introductory Walk/Trot division for as many show seasons as needed, however...
- c) When a rider wins the year-end overall award, it is recommended that the rider move to the appropriate division above Walk/Trot. (An evaluation may be requested to determine if the rider should stay in the Walk/Trot division for another season).
- d) The rider may not cross over into any other division while in the Walk/Trot division.
- e) Riders may enter all or individual classes as described in the Walk/Trot section.

## **8. SELECT RIDER SUB-DIVISION:**

All Amateur riders who are 60 years of age or older as of January 1 of the current event year are eligible for this subdivision. This subdivision is a “class within a class.” Amateur riders will show only one time, and the scores will count for both their standard division and for the Select Subdivision. Placement points will be tracked for Year-End Overall High Point. Event management may choose to require an entry fee and offer recognition and awards at each weekend event at the event manager’s discretion.

## **9. JUNIOR HORSE SUB-DIVISION:**

Junior horses can be five years of age but not younger than three years of age as of January 1 of the current event year will be tracked in the Junior Horse Subdivision “class within a class”. A horse’s age is calculated from January 1st of year of foaling. For example, a horse foaled anytime in 2022 is one year old on January 1, 2023, and two years old on January 1, 2024.

All riders with eligible horses must indicate at the beginning of the year that they wish a horse to be tracked in the Junior Horse Subdivision. The rider will show only one time, and the score will count for both the standard division and the Junior Horse Subdivision.

Additionally, a junior horse may be shown by both Open and Amateur Riders. All placement points from all riders will be combined for Year-End Overall High Point. Event management may choose to require an entry fee and offer recognition and awards at each weekend event at management discretion.

## **B. DIVISION ELIGIBILITY EXCEPTIONS:**

A member may petition, in writing, the Association Grievance Committee for a change in Division eligibility. The written petition will be reviewed, and the members notified of the ruling. See Grievance Guidelines.

Eligibility status may be revoked at any time for violations of any AZVRHA rule or regulation. A person who loses eligibility status must relinquish their membership.

## IV. CLINICIANS AND JUDGES

### A. GENERAL:

Clinicians and Judges for all events must be approved by AZVRHA. Clinicians and Judges must consistently meet the spirit and intent of the AZVRHA's principal goals which place exhibitor's education and fun as a priority while adhering to the rules of the association. They are selected based upon knowledge, professionalism, integrity, ability to teach, and enthusiastic support of AZVRHA's goals and objectives.

Clinician and Judge oversight and selection is administered by the AZVRHA Clinician/Judges Committee, who will also maintain a current list of approved clinicians and judges.

Experienced Judges holding an AQHA Versatility Ranch Horse or other applicable judges card may be approved to judge AZVRHA events provided they have a complete understanding of our divisions and classes that differ from AQHA and upon acknowledging an understanding of our judging philosophy.

### B. CLINICIAN/JUDGE TENURE:

All AZVRHA clinicians and judges perform services at the pleasure of the AZVRHA. The AZVRHA clinician/judges committee may discontinue such services based upon their sole evaluation of the clinician/judge's performance.

### C. ETHICS:

AZVRHA judges shall always represent themselves in a professional manner, including when acting as a clinician. Judges should dress appropriately and be courteous to exhibitors, show managers, and spectators. AZVRHA is a very friendly and educational association which encourages competitors at all levels to enjoy their horses and other riders in a relaxed, fun atmosphere. Judges are to keep this in mind while they base their judgment on AZVRHA rules and place horses accordingly. On show day judges should feel free to answer questions from exhibitors prior to the show in a friendly, educational manner. Judges shall refrain from any kind of coaching during competition. All questions should be answered in the context of the competition, not in reference to individual riders, horses, or their individual needs. A rider meeting prior to each class may encourage all competitors to feel comfortable with what is required in each class and clarify any questions concerning the rules. Judges should be available for a period at the conclusion of each show to clarify competitors' questions on score sheets.

- Judges may not judge members of their immediate family (spouse, significant other, son, daughter, parents, and grandparent) for awards or points. Family members may participate and be scored on score sheets provided to the participant; however, they will not be eligible for points or awards.
- In accordance with the spirit and intent of AZVRHA, horsemanship education of the rider and horse is the highest priority. To this end, there shall be no time separation required between rider instruction or horse training from a "Certified Professional" judging a Competition.
- Alleged clinician/judge professional misconduct may be presented to the Grievance Committee for action. Such grievances must be in writing and signed by at least two participants who observed the alleged misconduct.

## V. GENERAL RULES FOR ASSOCIATION EVENTS

### A. SELECTING JUDGES:

Judges must be selected from the list of AZVRHA approved Clinicians and Judges . (See Judges and Clinicians Section)

### B. CLINICS:

In keeping with the AZVRHA mission statement, where education is a priority, clinics should be offered throughout the year. These clinics can be part of a competition weekend, or they can be free-standing. Clinics can specialize in classes of ranch horse topics, or they can cover all five ranch horse classes. As the number of competitors and clinic participants grows, AZVRHA will make every effort to offer clinics that are accessible to riders of all levels. These educational opportunities should be equal in number to the competitive opportunities.

### C. BACK-TO-BACK & DOUBLE JUDGED COMPETITIONS:

If the same two Judges are used for both days, they must be flip-flopped. Judge #1 judges cutting, Ranch Reined Work and Ranch Cow Work during the first competition and Ranch Trail and Ranch Riding classes during second competition. Judge #2 the opposite. AZVRHA shows may also be double judged.

### D. CO-SANCTIONED EVENTS:

AZVRHA will approve competitions held in conjunction with other Associations provided AZVRHA rules and ideals are followed. In the case of AZVRHA and AQHA Co-Sanctioned events, managers should make every attempt to follow AZVRHA rules where they are different but compatible with AQHA. For example, AZVRHA requires a “roping element” in the trail course design, AQHA does not. Event managers should work with the trail designer to try to include this element in the trail course. AZVRHA will defer to AQHA when rules or scoring are different and cannot be made compatible. AQHA score sheets will be accepted for scoring purposes.

### E. EVENT AWARDS:

Event awards will be determined by event management. It is recommended that High Point and Reserve High Point awards in each Division be provided. Other awards may be presented at the sole discretion of the Event Manager. For a horse/rider team to be eligible for the division All-Around Award, the team must have participated in all five classes.

### F. JACKPOT PAYBACK:

In addition to the normal entry fee Limited, Intermediate, Advanced and Open Divisions may collect and offer jackpot payback at event management discretion, which will be paid back to high point winners according to the payout schedule below. Jackpot is NOT offered in Novice and Youth Divisions.

Amateurs may pay an additional jackpot fee (one fee for the Amateur and one fee for the Open) and be entered in both division jackpots.

Jackpot Table:	Number of Horses	Payback
	1- 3	1st - 100%
	4 - 7	1st - 60%, 2nd - 40%
	8 - 12	1st - 50%, 2nd - 30%, 3rd - 20%
	13 or more	1st - 40%, 2nd - 30%, 3rd - 20%, 4th - 10%

## **G. YEAR END AWARDS:**

You must participate in four shows to be eligible for year-end awards. An entrant's five best all-around show placings will count for year-end points.

### **Year End Awards consist of:**

- All Around High Point Versatility Ranch Horse - High Point, Reserve High Point and Third High Point in All Divisions
- 1st place award in each class in each Division. For example, High Point Novice Cutter.
- High Point Junior Horse – All points this horse earns in any division with any rider (Horse is age five or under). There is a one-time annual fee, and entrant must indicate “Junior Horse” on each entry form (Rider is responsible for designating the Junior Horse entry.)
- High Point Select Rider – Rider over 60 years of age with the most points at the end of the year on one horse. There is a one-time annual fee, and entrant must indicate “Select Rider” on each entry form. (Rider is responsible for designation of the Select Rider entry.)
- Additional Awards and Recognition – AZVRHA reserves the right to add awards throughout the year as the association sees the opportunity to recognize outstanding participation and achievement or chooses to do a special give away without prior notice.

## **H. EQUIPMENT FAILURE:**

If at any time during a performance a piece of equipment breaks, the rider may continue provided the broken equipment does not pose a hazard to the rider/horse and/or is not cruel to the horse.

When two classes are run back-to-back, and equipment failure occurs during the first class and the rider is unable to continue because of the broken equipment, the rider will receive a score of zero for the first class. The rider will not leave the working area before the second class but may have a “2-minute tack repair allowance” between classes. Outside help is allowed, the rider can dismount and pick up lost equipment or attire. A zero score in the second class for equipment failure will apply if the repair of equipment should exceed two minutes.

In the event a new cow is awarded during the cow work, broken equipment may be repaired within a one-minute time limit. The rider may not leave the arena and may not receive physical assistance or equipment from outside the arena. If the rider is unable to continue because of the broken equipment, the rider will be excused with a score of zero.

## **I. LAMENESS OR INCAPACITY:**

The judge may ask to view the horse at the trot either under saddle or in hand any time he/she has concerns regarding lameness. The judge has authority to excuse any horse from the class, due to lameness at any time while being judged and apply the appropriate penalties. Obvious lameness may result in a Disqualification and zero score for the class.

Obvious lameness is:

1. Consistently observed at a trot under all circumstances
2. Marked nodding, hitching, or shortened stride
3. Minimal weight bearing in motion and/or at rest and inability to move

A judge may permit a horse with minor lameness to continue to exhibit without penalty if, in the judge's opinion, there is no risk of injury to either the horse or the rider by continuing to exhibit.

If at any time the horse is physically incapacitated the judge has the authority to blow a whistle and stop or excuse the exhibitor.

#### **J. INHUMANE TREATMENT:**

Inhumane treatment of horses or cattle will not be tolerated. A rider displaying any form of inhumane treatment to his/her horse or entering the arena with illegal equipment will be immediately corrected by the judge, a penalty will be assessed, and the problem will be resolved before continuing.

Judges will have the authority to blow a whistle at any time to stop or excuse any exhibitor if there is concern about the safety or welfare of the cow, horse, or rider.

#### **K. FALL OF HORSE OR RIDER:**

In the event of a fall by a horse or rider, the run shall end when the rider or horse falls to the ground. A horse is considered to have fallen to the ground when the hip and shoulder are touching the ground, and all four feet are extended in the same direction. A rider falls when he or she is no longer astride the horse. A horse/rider team will be disqualified and receive a zero score for the class.

#### **L. COMPETING WITH MULTIPLE HORSES:**

An amateur rider may compete on more than one horse in a competition. Each horse will be a separate entry, and points will be earned based on each horse and rider combination.

The following rules apply.

- Novice, Intermediate, Limited, and Advanced Amateur riders may ride more than one horse in their respective divisions.
- Intermediate Amateur riders may ride in two divisions, Intermediate and Limited.
- Advanced Amateur riders may ride in four divisions, Advanced, Intermediate, Limited, and Open.
- An individual horse may only be shown in one Amateur Division per rider per event.
- Placement Points are recorded based on one horse and one rider and are recorded in the Division earned, except for Open and Junior horses.
- A rider must enter all five classes in the same division on the same horse to be eligible for High Point All Around points.
- Open Division is open to any horse and any rider. Exception: Novice and Intermediate riders may not enter Open Cow Work and remain eligible for their respective divisions.
- Youth Riders may ride more than one horse in the Youth Division; however, all-around points will only be awarded to one horse/rider team.

#### **M. CLOSED ARENAS:**

No rider is allowed to work or warm up his/her horse in any arena or course competition area on the day of the schooling or competition until the Event Manager allows horses into the arena/trail course. Once the trail course is set on competition day the course will be closed; no riding allowed on the course. Riders may dismount and walk the course on foot.

#### **N. DISRUPTIVE HORSES:**

Any disruptive horse and or horse/rider team that poses a threat to the safety of others or the safety of the rider, in the judgment of the Clinician, Judge, or Event Manager, may be asked to leave the event. No refund of class or event will be given.

**O. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT:**

Conduct by Association members, non-members, exhibitors, trainers, owners, owner's representatives, spectators, and all other persons present on the Association event grounds shall be orderly, responsible, sportsmanlike, and humane in the treatment of horses. Any of these violations will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

**P. FINANCIAL VIOLATIONS:**

Any member may be suspended and denied privileges of the Association, or any non-member may be denied the privilege of the Association by the Executive Committee of the Association, for the failure to pay, when due, any obligation owed to the Association. Upon receipt of a fraudulent payment, a member or non-member will be notified in writing and given a reasonable amount of time to make the payment good. Repeat offenders will be put on a cash only basis. Failure to pay the amount owed to the Association will result in the suspension of membership and all privileges.

**Q. PROPER WESTERN ATTIRE:**

Exhibitors participating in Ranch Horse classes and turn-back riders in Ranch Cutting must wear a collared, long-sleeved shirt, jeans, a cowboy hat or helmet and western style boots. Chaps or Chinks are optional. Attire is casual for the day of the clinic. Penalty for competing in Improper Western Attire will be a disqualification and zero score.

**R. TACK AND EQUIPMENT:**

In all Ranch Horse classes, horses will be shown in a western saddle and appropriate bridle, snaffle bit or hackamore for the duration of a class. A horse may be shown in different legal equipment (bridle, snaffle, or hackamore) in each class as desired. EXCEPTION: When classes run concurrently no change of equipment is allowed between classes. Silver equipment will not count over a good working outfit.

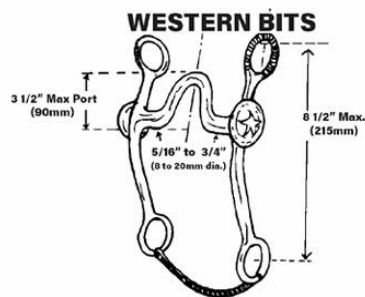
Horses of all ages may be shown in a snaffle, bosal, or curb bit. Use of hands must be appropriate to the type of headgear. Absolutely no iron will be permitted under the jaws. Judges may perform a bit inspection and disqualify violators at any time. The judge, steward or show management may prohibit the use of any bit or equipment they consider inhumane or would tend to give a horse/rider an unfair advantage. An example of prohibited equipment giving an unfair advantage includes use of an electronic device or earbud, a magnetic device, etc. Communication devices are prohibited while showing. The AZVRHA Board will evaluate individual requests from challenged riders with documented disabilities regarding the use of aids when exhibiting. Use of illegal equipment is prohibited anywhere on the event grounds. Hobbles may be carried and used as appropriate. Protective boots, leg wraps, etc. are permitted in any AZVRHA class but are prohibited in the AQHA Ranch Riding and Ranch Trail classes (if classes are running concurrent with AZVRHA classes then leg protection will need to be removed before competing). If the horse is shown in the two-rein or bridle/curb bit, the mouthpiece must be at least 5/16 inch and not more than 3/4 inch in diameter measured 1 inch from the cheek and must be smooth (no chain bits). Nothing may protrude below the mouthpiece such as extensions or prongs including upward prongs.

1. Split reins or romal reins shall be used with bridle/curb bits.
2. Curb straps are required and may be leather or flat chain, must be at least 1/2 inch in width, and must lie flat against the horse's chin. No wire curbs are permitted, regardless of the amount of padding or tape.

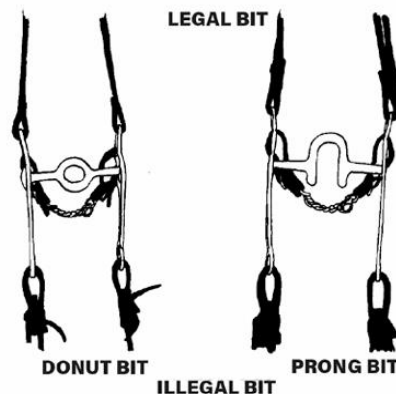
#### ACCEPTABLE CHAIN CURB STRAPS



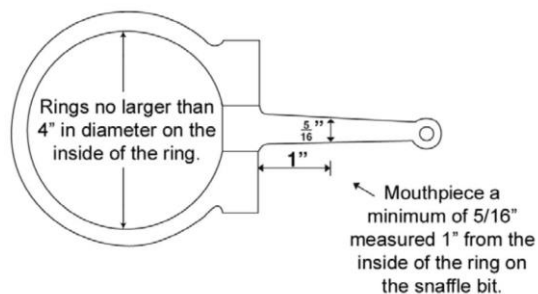
3. Horses shown in the bridle/curb bit must be exhibited one-handed. Using two hands on a bridle/curb bit or using more than one finger between split reins or any finger between romal reins (except in the two-rein where any number of fingers are allowed between the romal and hackamore reins) will result in an Off Pattern (OP). In all classes, when using a romal, the free hand may be used to adjust the rider's length of rein.



4. A get-down rope is allowed. 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 will be used to lead, ground tie, or tie the horse. The get-down rope may also be run through a bosalita, as long as the bosalita is not tight enough to function as a cavesson. If a bosalita is used, it must allow approximately two fingers (1 inch) to pass freely between the nose and the bosalita. The bosalita must be constructed of a flexible braided raw hide, leather or rope, the core of which must be flexible. Absolutely no rigid material will be permitted under the jaws, regardless of how padded or covered.



5. Hobbles are allowed.
6. Use of the two-rein is legal per NRCHA rules.
7. If the horse is shown in a snaffle bit, it shall be "D" or "O" ring type, no larger than 4 inches and no smaller than 2 inches in diameter on inside of the ring. It must have a broken, two- or three-piece mouthpiece, a minimum of 5/16 inch in diameter, measured 1 inch from the inside of the ring, with a gradual decrease to the center of the snaffle. The mouthpiece should be round, oval or egg-shaped and made of smooth, unwrapped metal. No twisted-wire mouthpieces may be used. A leather or fabric woven chinstrap may be used. No iron, chain or other metal may be used. Horses ridden in a snaffle must use either split reins or mecate reins.



8. If the horse is shown in a hackamore, hackamores shall be round in shape and constructed of uniform, smooth, braided rawhide or leather and have a non-metal flexible core. There must be at least 5 1/2 inches on the underside of the noseband before any braided buttons. A hackamore must use a complete mecate rein, which must include a tie-rein. Absolutely no rigid material will be permitted under the jaws, regardless of how padded or covered. Horsehair bosals are prohibited.

9. Mechanical hackamores, cavessons, tie downs, gag bits, twisted-wire mouth pieces, and running martingales are prohibited. A judge may prohibit the use of any equipment deemed to be inhumane.

**If you have a question, approach the Judge/Clinician prior to the event to review tack.**

#### **S. UNFORSEEN SITUATIONS:**

Rules are designed to be followed and should be the first choice in every circumstance, however, not all circumstances can be foreseen. Decisions or situations not covered by this Rule Book shall be decided by the Event Manager, with consultation from a Board Member and/or the Judges/Clinicians.

These decisions are to be made using common sense and vetted through the following criteria:

1. Is this a safety issue? Always err on the side of safety.
2. What is the intent of the decision? The intent must meet the primary objective of our Mission Statement, which is Fun and Education and to serve the greater good, keeping the membership's best interest in mind.
3. Does this uphold the integrity of the Association with members, volunteers, sponsors, suppliers, vendors, and bystanders?
4. To protect the integrity of the organization any rule decision made with mal intent to inappropriately advance or hinder any member or participant shall be dealt with severely.

## **VI. SCORING**

#### **A. SCORING SYSTEM:**

Arizona Versatility Ranch Horse Association Scoring System uses a 70-basis scoring system that is designed to give credit to each rider for the work completed. The system is designed to provide the most possible feedback, record of the rider's work, to be positive and straight forward, and to encourage growth and improvement in both horse and rider.

#### **B. JUDGES SCORE SHEET:**

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. In the event of a tie in individual classes, these rankings will determine the placings. Each Horse and Rider team begins the run with a score of 70 points. The judge evaluates the quality of each maneuver and records a judge's score of one of the following on the score sheet; +1 ½ Excellent, +1 Very Good, + ½ Good, 0 Correct, -½ Needs Improvement, -1 Poor, -1 ½ Very Poor. Penalties are also recorded and deducted from the total judge's score. The entire class will be scored and placed (i.e., 20 horse/rider teams will result in 20 placings).

In the case of a horse/rider team incurring ANY Major Penalty they will be scored with the notation "OP," the horse/rider team may not place above others who have completed the pattern or requirements of the class correctly. While this term was originally derived from "Off Pattern," it is now a designation you will see that indicates you have received any kind of Major Penalty listed below.

#### **Major Penalties – (OP) Off Pattern**

- Roping in cow work - Complete loss of rope (falls completely to the ground) once rider has committed to roping their cow
- Failure to dally and remain dallied during log drag
- Failure to attempt any part of the class
- Repeated blatant disobedience

- Schooling after entering the arena prior to calling for the cow
- Schooling horse between cows if a new cow is awarded
- Turning tail
- Breaking pattern
- Inclusion of a maneuver (i.e., over or under spinning, backing more than two strides)
- Third refusal
- No attempt to perform obstacle
- Failure to attempt to cut two cows (cutting or working begins when entering the herd)
- Two hands on the reins except in a snaffle or hackamore
- More than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except for the two rein)

**Horse and Rider teams will be disqualified for the following reasons in all classes:**

**DQ -0- SCORE**

- Inhumane treatment/abuse
- Lameness or incapacity
- Illegal or failed equipment
- Fall of horse or rider
- Improper western attire
- Disrespect or misconduct
- Leave area before pattern complete
- Out of control, endangering horse or rider (judge blows whistle and ends the work)
- Out of control, dangerous, or excessive schooling

Disqualified entries with a zero score will count as an entry in the class but will not receive placement points or credits for that class toward the all around. For example, in a class with 10 horses where one horse/rider team is disqualified, the first-place horse/rider team gets 10 placement points, the ninth-place horse/rider team gets two points, and the disqualified horse/rider team gets 0 points. The last point is not given because the disqualified horse/rider team gets no points. This system will be used for any size class and may include more than one disqualification or zero score.

**C. PLACEMENT POINTS FOR ALL AROUNDS AND YEAR END:**

Horse/rider teams are awarded one point for each horse/rider team they beat, plus one point. Points will be awarded to all horse/rider teams in the class, except for a DQ score. For example, if there are eight riders in a class the first-place horse/rider team will be awarded eight placement points and the eighth-place team will be awarded one placement point. If there are 20 riders in a class, the first-place team will be awarded 20 placement points, the twelfth-place team will be awarded 12 points and so forth.

Only horses entered in All Around will receive points toward the all-around division. For example, if there are 20 horses in a class and only nine are in the all-around, there will only be nine points awards/available from that class towards the All-Around Division.

Placement points earned at the AZVRHA Year-End Championship will be included when determining Year-End High Point and Individual Class Awards. All participants (rider/horse teams, Open and Junior Horses) will begin the new event year with zero placement points.

#### **D. BREAKING TIES:**

All-around ties for competition and year-end awards will be decided by the highest placing in the Ranch Cow Work class in the applicable division. If a tie still exists, the tie breakers will be in this order: Cutting, Ranch Rein Work, Ranch Trail, and Ranch Riding. In individual classes, 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 tiebreaker, second, third and so forth.

## **VII. CLASS RULES & REGULATIONS**

AZVRHA offers five classes in each division: Ranch Riding, Ranch Trail, Ranch Reined Work, Ranch Cow Work and Ranch Cutting. Exhibitors may enter any one or all of the classes in the Division in which they are qualified to participate under the following conditions.

- An exhibitor must enter all five classes in one division to be eligible to earn points toward ANY All- Around High Point award, whether it be the Event High Point or the Year End High Point.
- Amateur exhibitors may ride two horses in two different divisions if they are eligible in both divisions.
- An individual horse may only be shown in one Amateur division per rider.
- Open Division is open to any horse and any rider. Exception: Novice and Intermediate riders may not enter Open Cow Work and remain eligible for their respective divisions.
- Classes may only be entered one time per horse per division.
- Placement points are recorded based on one horse/rider team in the Division earned, except for Open and Junior horses.
- Year-End High Point horse and rider teams in each Division in each class will be recognized.

#### **A. RANCH RIDING:**

Ranch Riding patterns will be designed to evaluate the horse and rider's ability to execute a set of maneuvers with precision and smoothness that should simulate that of a working ranch horse being ridden out in big country, outside the confines of an arena.

A good Versatility Ranch Horse has a free-flowing stride of reasonable length in keeping with his conformation. He should be able to smoothly cover ground with little effort at a working speed while under control. Light contact should be rewarded, and the horse shall not be shown on a full drape of reins. When asked to extend, he should move out with the same flowing motion. Maximum credit should be given to the balanced, and willing horse that gives the appearance of being a pleasure to ride.

The horse's head and neck should be in a relaxed natural position, his poll level with or slightly above his withers. He should not be overly flexed at the poll in an unnatural position or be excessively nosed out in a resistant stance. He should have a bright attentive expression with his ears alert.

#### **Patterns**

One of AQHA's Ranch Riding patterns may be used or the judge or show management may design a pattern. The pattern MUST include the following.

- Horses will be shown individually at three gaits; walk, trot and lope in each direction of the arena.
- Horse is to perform an extended trot and an extended lope in at least one direction each.
- Horses will also be asked to stop, back up and reverse in the pattern. The reverse may be from

a stop or at any gait. Reverse can be either direction as designated in the pattern. If the reverse is on the rail, it should be performed turning away from the rail.

- Distances between transitions should be great enough to allow the horse to transition into gait, adequately display the gait and begin collection for the next transition. Suggested distances of gaits can be found in the gait descriptions below but should take into consideration arena size and space.
- The sequence of transitions should be practical and simulate those that would be made riding in the pasture. i.e., Why would a pasture rider go from an extended gait to a walk without first collecting?
- Both simple and flying lead changes are allowed, to be judged on the quality of the maneuver.
- Multiple sharp turns and lead changes are discouraged and are better placed in the Ranch Trail.
- Management may post the pattern at any time, and it must be posted at least one hour prior to competition.

The horse/rider team will be judged on the form and quality of the following elements of the pattern and for performing the patterns in the correct working order with precision. Credit will also be given for making a smooth transition between the gaits, for keeping the correct lead and for maintaining the gait in the pattern.

- 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.
- Horses shall be shown individually and will consist of pattern work that may be laid out either inside an arena or outside on natural terrain.
- Markers or signs may be used to designate gait change location.
- All runs begin upon entering the pen; any infractions (such as two hands on the reins, etc.) are subject to penalty at that time.
- When AZVRHA runs concurrent with AQHA an AQHA pattern will be approved for that event See [www.AZVRHA.com](http://www.AZVRHA.com) for patterns and score sheets.

## Gaits

**Walk** - Is straight, square, flat-footed, relaxed. The horse moves freely with no anticipation of moving to the next gait. The walk is a natural, flat-footed, four-beat gait. The horse must move straight and true at the walk. The walk must be alert with a stride of reasonable length in keeping with the size of the horse. A suggested walking distance would be approximately 100'.

**Extended Walk** - The extended walk is an obvious lengthening of the stride, which will naturally increase the pace. The horse moves in a natural manner (not a running walk) as if it were moving across an open pasture.

**Trot** - The trot should be a square, balanced and straight, ground covering, two-beat diagonal gait with forward movement of the feet. A suggested distance for the trot would be approximately 150' and is to be ridden with rider sitting the trot.

**Extended Trot** - When extending the trot, the horse moves out with the same smooth way of going. This gait is level, flat, and steady. The extended trot shows lengthening of stride from the regular trot with the same cadence that will cause an increase in speed. Sitting, posting, or standing and holding the saddle horn will be acceptable riding techniques. Extended trot would be approximately 175'.

**Lope** - The lope is a three-beat gait that is cadenced, straight and steady. The horse should lope with a natural stride and appear relaxed and smooth. A four-beat gait is to be penalized. The head should be carried in a natural position suitable to the horse's conformation. The lope would be approximately 200'.

**Extended Lope** - When extending the lope, the horse moves out with the same smooth way of going. The extended lope shows lengthening of stride from the regular lope with the same cadence that will

cause an increase in speed. The horse holds a steady gait and increased speed while being under control. An extended lope would be approximately 200'.

**Stop** - From both the lope and the trot, the horse should be in the correct stopping position (i.e., both hocks engaged and stopping on the hindquarters). All four feet stop moving before the next maneuver is attempted. The quality of the stop is judged; a long slide is not credit earning.

**Reverse** - The horse turns briskly and flat with front feet on the ground and holding an inside rear pivot foot. The reverse may be performed in either direction as designated by the pattern. The reverse is not intended to be a "roll back."

**Gaited Horse Provision** - In the case of gaited horses, there are a variety of cadences that will not be recognized as a four-beat walk or a three-beat lope. We will refer to this as the "intermediate" gait, and it will serve as the "trot" in those portions of Trail, Ranch Riding and Reined Work where a trot is called for. Horses performing an intermediate gait will not be penalized or receive an off-pattern for failing to execute a two-beat trot. However, that gait must be consistent and cadenced throughout the maneuver. This intermediate gait will be subject to the usual break of gait penalty and the usual maneuver score variation. The extended trot should exhibit a visible lengthening of the stride in an intermediate gait.

### Scoring

Each maneuver will receive a judge's score that will be added or subtracted from 70 and will be scored on the following basis, ranging from +1 1/2 Excellent, +1 Very Good, +1/2 Good, 0 Correct, -1/2 Needs Improvement, -1 Poor, -1 1/2 Very Poor.

Each maneuver is subject to penalties. Penalties should be assessed per occurrence as follows:

#### 1 POINT PENALTY

- A. Too slow at any gait per maneuver
- B. Over bridled (per maneuver)
- F. Out of frame (per maneuver)
- H. Break of gait at walk or trot for two strides or less
- T. Wrong lead or out of lead for two strides or less

#### 3 POINT PENALTY

- B. Break of gait at lope, except when correcting an incorrect lead
- G. Break of gait at walk or trot for more than two strides
- L. Wrong lead or out of lead for more than two strides
- R. Draped Reins per maneuver
- S. Out of lead or cross cantering more than two strides when changing leads
- T. Trotting more than three strides when making a simple lead change
- V. Trotting more than three strides in lope departures or when exiting a rollback
- Z. Severe disturbance of any obstacle

#### 5 POINT PENALTY

- B. Spurring or hitting in front of the cinch at any time
- D. Blatant disobedience for each refusal
- F. Use of either hand to instill fear

#### MAJOR PENALTY - "OP": Cannot place above others who complete pattern correctly

- A. Eliminate or add maneuver
- B. Incomplete maneuver or breaking pattern
- D. Repeated blatant disobedience
- H. Use of two hands (except in snaffle bit or hackamore)
- C. More than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except for the two rein)

**DISQUALIFIED – DQ (score -0-)** See page 18

A. Inhumane treatment/abuse

B. Lameness

G. Illegal equipment including hoof black, braided, or banded manes, or tail extensions

H. Leaving arena before pattern is complete

N. Improper western attire

D. Disrespect or misconduct

F. Fall of horse/rider

O. Out of control, dangerous, or excessive schooling

### **Judging Ranch Riding and Trail Concurrently:**

The Ranch Riding and Ranch Trail classes may be run concurrently with one draw to save time and simplify the schedule at the discretion of the Event Manager. Each class will be judged separately using a separate score sheet for each class. When judging concurrently, the requirement for the walk, trot, and lope must be included in the trail course. When Ranch Trail and Ranch Riding are run concurrently no change of equipment is allowed between classes.

### **B. RANCH TRAIL:**

#### **General**

Ranch Trail consists of a course with no more than nine and no less than six obstacles including three gaits and a “rope handling” element that is designed to show a horse's ability and willingness to perform tasks that might be asked of him during a normal day's ranch work. The horse will be judged on his performance over the obstacles with emphasis on manners, response to the rider and quality of movement. Credit will be given to horses negotiating the obstacles smoothly, with style and without delay and for showing attentiveness to the obstacles with the capability of picking their own way through the course. Light contact should be rewarded, and the horse shall not be shown on a full drape of reins. Horses with artificial appearance over obstacles should be penalized.

While on the line of travel between obstacles the horse's head and neck should be in a relaxed, natural position. His poll level with or slightly above his withers and not be overly flexed at the poll, giving an unnatural appearance, or be excessively nosed out in a resistant stance. He should have a bright attentive expression with his ears alert.

**Gaited Horse Provision** - In the case of gaited horses, there are a variety of cadences that will not be recognized as a four-beat walk or a three-beat lope. We will refer to this as the “intermediate” gait, and it will serve as the “trot” in those portions of Trail, Ranch Riding and Reined Work where a trot is called for. Horses performing an intermediate gait will not be penalized or receive an off-pattern for failing to execute a two-beat trot. However, that gait must be consistent and cadenced throughout the maneuver. This intermediate gait will be subject to the usual break of gait penalty and the usual maneuver score variation. The extended trot should exhibit a visible lengthening of the stride in an intermediate gait.

#### **Trail Course**

To further promote ranch work, the feel of this class is desirable to use realistic or natural obstacles such as natural logs for walking, trot, and lope overs. Traditional painted trail poles and pots of artificial flowers are discouraged, natural limbs, brush and plants are preferred. Ranch Trail decorations should continue the ranch theme with use of natural or realistic items or elements found outside or on a ranch. In addition, it is desirable for the course to be set outside of an arena using the natural terrain of the land whenever possible.

- Horses are to be shown at three gaits: a ground-covering walk, working trot and lope.
- A distance of at least 30 feet or more is mandatory between obstacles to evaluate the horse's way of go at each gait.

- A combination of two or more obstacles is permissible.
- During the clinic, the riders may practice the actual elements of the trail course but may not set the pattern.
- Management may post the pattern at any time, and it must be posted at least one hour prior to competition. Printed trail patterns for riders are helpful, encouraged and may be handed out prior to competition day.

### **Competition Day**

- The competition trail course will not be set prior to the day of competition.
- On competition day the riders may walk the course on foot or observe from outside of the course on horseback, but no horse/rider teams are allowed on the actual course after it has been set until the horse/rider team's run begins.

### **Trail Safety**

Common sense and safety considerations should be exercised in all maneuvers. The judge will walk the course and has the right and duty to alter the course if the design is unsafe or unreasonable. If at any time during competition a trail obstacle is deemed unsafe by the judge, it shall be repaired or removed from the course. If it cannot be repaired and horses have completed the course, the score for that obstacle shall be deducted from all previous works for that class. The judge may ask a rider to move on to the next obstacle if the horse/rider is unable to complete the maneuver in a reasonable amount of time or if the judge deems that the rider is or will be in an unsafe situation. Appropriate penalties will apply.

### **Prohibited Obstacles**

Tarps, water obstacles with slick bottoms, tires, rocking or teeter totter bridges, rope gates, logs or poles elevated in a manner that permits such to roll in a dangerous manner.

### **Mandatory Obstacles**

**Work a gate:** Open, pass through and close the gate per the instructions provided on the trail course pattern. Management will use a gate that will not endanger horse or rider and must be a hinged swinging gate (not a rope gate). The rein hand may be changed to work the gate without penalty.

**Rope Handling:** There will be a designated element on the course where the judge will dedicate the score to rope handling. This must include building and throwing a loop while mounted. Rope handling may be required while in motion. Recoiling and re-fastening the rope could be included at management's discretion. This element could be in addition to the log drag (such as rope a dummy), or somehow incorporated into the log drag. For example, the same log could be roped, dragged, and scored as two separate elements.

**Drag:** Horse must be willing to drag an object for a short distance either in a straight line or around a set pattern. Rope should be dallied around the saddle horn and not tied hard and fast. Rope handling and management are crucial and will be included in the evaluation.

### **Optional Obstacles**

Management is not limited to the following obstacles but when setting courses, be mindful that the idea is not to trap a horse/rider team or eliminate it by making an obstacle too difficult or "spooky." Only elements which would normally be encountered in an outdoor setting, and which are not used to "spook" a horse may be used. Management may offer alternative obstacles to be used by the Novice Amateur riders.

**Dismounts unbridle and bridle:** The horse shall remain quiet while the rider dismounts, (hobbles and legal get downs are permitted), and removes the bit completely from the horse's mouth and re-bridles. The horse should remain still and quiet as the rider remounts, leaving a loose rein. Exhibitors have the option of using a mounting block to remount. Reins and romal may be left over the horse's neck providing the reins are slack. NOTE: The horse may shift his weight during the process of dismounting and remounting.

**Water hazard:** The horse should show willingness to cross a small ditch or shallow pond (or simulated water obstacle if it does not have a slick bottom).

**Pick up feet:** Demonstrate horse's willingness to stand quietly and willingly allow the rider to pick up one, two, three or all four feet.

**Ground Tying:** The horse shall remain in place while the rider dismounts and performs a normal ranch task such as moving a rail or bucket etc. The exhibitor may drop split reins to ground or leave one rein draped on the saddle horn. If rider is using reins and romal he/she may unsnap one rein and drop to the ground or loop the romal over the saddle horn with slack in the reins without penalty. If a get down rope is used, uncoil, and drop to the ground with the romal looped over the saddle horn with slack in the reins. Hobbles may be used without penalty

**Put on and remove a slicker:** Rider approaches slicker, removes slicker from holder, puts on slicker and replaces slicker to the holder.

**Remove, carry, and replace item:** Requires the exhibitor to carry or remove an item that is used every day on horseback such as mail from a mailbox, sack, rope, etc.

**Wooden Bridge:** Horse shows willingness to walk across obstacles designed to simulate a bridge.

**Ride over obstacles on the ground:** obstacles are typically logs or poles.

- **Walk-overs:** Walk over no more than five logs or poles. The space between logs or poles should be 26-30 inches. The formation may be straight, curved, zigzagged, or raised.
- **Trot-overs:** Trot over no more than five logs or poles no more than 10 inches high. The space between logs or poles should be 30 to 42 inches. The formation can also be straight, curved, zigzagged, or raised.
- **Lope-overs:** Lope over no more than five logs or poles no more than 10 inches high. The space between logs or poles should be 6 to 7 feet. The formation can also be straight, curved, zigzagged, or raised.

**Stationary steer:** This obstacle is used to show the willingness of the horse to have a rope thrown from its back. The judge will give credit to the horse that stands quietly while the contestant makes the swing and throws at the stationary steer. Shying from the rope will be penalized. Credit will be given for good rope handling and a catch. Only one loop will be allowed. Fast and efficient loop build and put away after roping will be rewarded.

**Back, backing through an obstacle:** Obstacles may include poles on the ground in some form of chute, cones in a pattern such as a figure "8" or other objects like trees or natural landscape elements.

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

**Crossing unevenly placed brush or logs:** Obstacle will be judged on willingness to cross with additional credit for picking way through. Minor ticks will not be penalized.

## Course Maintenance

Care should be taken by event management that the course be reset after each run to ensure each exhibitor is presented with an identical course. (i.e., log/brush spacing, rope coil and log location for log drag, etc.)

- All runs begin upon entering the pen; any infractions (such as two hands on the reins, etc.) are subject to penalty at that time.
- It is permissible to prepare to work, or to work, an obstacle by changing hands on the reins, adjusting the romal to the opposite side or holding both reins and romal in the same hand even while in motion.
- The rider has the option of skipping any obstacle; however, this will result in a major penalty and will be scored as "OP" 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. A refusal includes but is not limited to taking a step backward, turning away more than 90 degrees or exceeding a reasonable amount of time without performing the maneuver.

## Scoring

Each maneuver will receive a judge's score that will be added to or subtracted from 70 and will be scored on the following basis, ranging from +1 1/2 Excellent, +1 Very Good, +1/2 Good, 0 Correct, -1/2 Needs Improvement, -1 Poor, -1 1/2 Very Poor.

Each maneuver is subject to penalties. Penalties should be assessed per occurrence as follows:

### 1 POINT PENALTY

- B. Over bridled (per maneuver)
- F. Out of frame (per maneuver)
- G. Break of gait at walk or trot for two strides or less
- H. Each hit, bite, push or stepping on a log, cone, plant, gate, or any component of the obstacle.  
*(Ticks through brush piles or jumbles will not be penalized)*
- K. Skipping over or failing to step into required space
- P. Split pole in lope over
- S. 1 or 2 steps on dismount/ground tie except shifting to balance
- T. Both front and hind feet in a singled stride slot or space at a walk or trot
- V. Wrong lead or out of lead for two strides or less

### 3 POINT PENALTY

- B. Break of gait at walk or trot for more than two strides
- F. Break of gait at lope, except when correcting an incorrect lead
- G. Wrong lead or out of lead for more than 2 strides
- H. Draped reins (per maneuver)
- K. 3 or 4 steps on mount/dismount or ground tie
- S. Trotting more than three strides in lope departure or exiting a rollback
- T. Knocking over or severely disturbing an obstacle
- V. Stepping out of or falling off an obstacle with one foot
- Z. Missing or evading a part of log/obstacle with one foot

### 5 POINT PENALTY

- B. Spurring or hitting in front of the cinch at any time

- C. Blatant disobedience for each refusal
- E. Use of either hand to instill fear
- K. Stepping out or falling off an obstacle with more than one foot
- L. Letting go of gate
- O. Dropping an object required to be carried, slicker, rope etc.
- R. 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> refusal cumulative
- S. 5 or more steps on dismount or ground tie

**MAJOR PENALTY - “OP”:** Cannot place above others who complete pattern correctly

- P. Eliminate or add maneuver
- Q. Incomplete maneuver
- R. 3<sup>rd</sup> refusal
- E. Repeated blatant disobedience
- D. Failure to dally and remain dallied during log drag
- H. Use of two hands (except in snaffle bit or hackamore)
- C. More than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except for the two rein)
- N. Failure to open and shut gate or failure to complete gate

**DISQUALIFIED – DQ (score -0-)** See page 18

- A. Inhumane treatment/abuse
- B. Lameness
- G. Illegal equipment
- H. Leaving arena before pattern is complete
- N. Improper western attire
- D. Disrespect or misconduct
- F. Fall of horse/rider
- G. Out of control, endangering the horse or rider (judge blows whistle and ends the work)
- O. Out of control, dangerous, or excessive schooling

**C. RANCH CUTTING:**

Ranch Cutting classes are judged on the ability of the horse to cut a single cow by separating it from the herd and holding it to demonstrate the horse’s ability to work the cow. Credit will be given to those horses who demonstrate excellence in their herd work, control of the cow and degree of difficulty of the cow drawn within the time allowed. Control of the cow is demonstrated by driving and setting the cow up to cut and working in the center of the arena.

**General Rules and Regulations**

The cattle will be located at one end of the arena. The cow boss or other designated rider will settle the herd and make the call as to when the herd is properly settled for cutting. Herd settlers and turnback riders do not have to be exhibitors. The judge should oversee the herd settling process and should intervene if the settling process is not being done in an adequate manner to allow for a reasonable herd for the cutting class. The judge has the authority to ask another rider to settle the herd.

**All Riders** will demonstrate the horse/rider ability by cutting two cows in two minutes. The rider will drive the first cow from the herd, holding it in the middle of the arena. When satisfied that the horse has proven its cutting ability, the rider will then quit the cow and return to the herd to select a second cow. Horses will not be penalized for reining during the cutting portion but should display natural ability. A rider may hold the horn at any time during the ranch cutting without penalty.

- There will be two cows per contestant in each herd.
- The minimum number of cattle in the herd will be 10.
- Each exhibitor must work two head of cattle within the 2-minute time limit allowed, working, or cutting begins when the horse enters the herd.
- The 2-minute time limit will begin when a rider crosses a predetermined and marked timeline. The rider will be given a 1-minute warning.
- Riders may legally quit the second cow before the two-minute time limit has expired.
- Once a rider has made a specific move on one cow and the cow is lost back to the herd it is considered one of your two cows.
- The cutter may quit the cow he is working on when that cow is obviously turned away from the horse or when the cow comes to a dead stop in the arena. If the rider quits at any other time, he is penalized three points for a hot quit.
- Unnecessary roughness or disturbing the herd excessively will result in the judge terminating the run and a score of zero will result. In the event of excessive disturbance of the herd during competition, the herd may be re-settled before the next rider begins his/her work at the discretion of the judge.
- If the rider heads back toward the herd after he/she has completed cutting two cows, the judge may blow the whistle to end the run. No penalty applies.

### **Herd Holders and Turnback Riders**

Show management may supply two herd holders and two turnback riders, or exhibitors may supply their own helpers. If an exhibitor is a herd holder or turnback rider, he or she may use the horse that they are competing on or use a different horse. Herd help must be wearing appropriate western attire.

### **Scoring**

Each maneuver will receive a judge's score that will be added to or subtracted from 70 and will be scored on the following basis, ranging from +1 1/2 Excellent, +1 Very Good, +1/2 Good, 0 Correct, -1/2 Needs Improvement, -1 Poor, -1 1/2 Very Poor.

Each maneuver is subject to penalties. Penalties should be assessed per occurrence as follows:

#### **1 POINT PENALTY**

- A. Loss of working advantage
- C. Working out of position
- D. Toe, foot, or stirrup on the shoulder
- V. Over bridled (per maneuver)
- W. Out of frame (per maneuver)

#### **3 POINT PENALTY**

- A. Hot quit
- B. Cattle picked up or scattered
- D. Back fence
- E. Biting or striking the cow
- F. Spurring on shoulder

#### **5 POINT PENALTY**

- A. Horse quitting the cow
- B. Losing the cow back to the herd
- C. Changing cattle after a specific commitment
- D. Failure to separate a single cow after leaving the herd
- E. Blatant disobedience

**MAJOR PENALTY - “OP”:** Cannot place above others who complete pattern correctly

- A. Turn tail
- B. Use of two hands (except in snaffle bit or hackamore)
- C. More than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except for the two rein)
- E. Repeated blatant disobedience
- T. Failure to cut two cows (cutting begins when the rider enters the herd)

**DISQUALIFIED – DQ (score -0-)** See page 18

- A. Inhumane treatment/abuse
- B. Lameness
- D. Disrespect or misconduct
- E. Excessive disturbance of the herd to the point that exhibitor is asked to leave the arena
- F. Fall of horse/rider
- G. Illegal equipment
- H. Leaving arena before run is complete
- N. Improper western attire
- O. Out of control, dangerous, or excessive schooling

**D. RANCH REINED WORK:**

Reined work is a judged event designed to show the athletic ability of the Versatility Ranch Horse in the confines of a show arena. The best reined horse should be willingly guided or controlled with little or no apparent resistance and should respond to the rider’s subtle cues. Credit will be given for smoothness, finesse, attitude, quickness, and authority in performing the various maneuvers while using controlled speed.

An approved pattern will be used by all contestants in all divisions. (See Appendix for patterns.) Each contestant will perform the required pattern individually. After completing the pattern, the “ranch reined work” portion will be complete. If the Reined Work and Cow Work are run concurrently, the rider will signal to the cow boss that he/she is ready for a cow to be released into the arena.

**General Rules and Regulations**

- All horses will be judged immediately upon entering the arena.
- Ranch Reined Work and Ranch Cow Work may be run concurrently with one draw; however, event management may run the classes under separate draws if extenuating conditions exist.
- The classes may be run independently to facilitate running concurrent events with other associations.
- When run concurrently, there will be no schooling allowed between completion of the reined work and the cow work or between cows if a new cow is awarded. The penalty for this is a major penalty and will be scored as “OP” and the rider cannot place higher than a rider that does not have a major penalty on the Ranch Cow Work score sheet.
- When Reined Work and Cow Work are run concurrently no change of equipment is allowed between classes.
- A break of pattern will result in a major penalty and will be scored as “OP” and the rider cannot place higher than a rider that does not have a major penalty.
- AZVRHA approved Ranch Reined Work Patterns will be all AQHA VRH Patterns.
- Management may post the pattern at any time, and it must be posted at least one hour prior to competition.

- Contestants must carry their rope in the Ranch Reined Work if they intend to rope in the Cow Work class when the classes are run concurrently. If a rope is dropped during the reined work the failed equipment rule will apply and the rider may dismount and retrieve the rope before the Cow Work portion begins. (See Section V. Rule F.)

**Gaited Horse Provision** - In the case of gaited horses, there are a variety of cadences that will not be recognized as a four-beat walk or a three-beat lope. We will refer to this as the “intermediate” gait, and it will serve as the “trot” in those portions of Trail, Ranch Riding and Reined Work where a trot is called for. Horses performing an intermediate gait will not be penalized or receive an off-pattern for failing to execute a two-beat trot. However, that gait must be consistent and cadenced throughout the maneuver. This intermediate gait will be subject to the usual break of gait penalty and the usual maneuver score variation. The extended trot should exhibit a visible lengthening of the stride in an intermediate gait.

See [www.AZVRHA.com](http://www.AZVRHA.com) for patterns and score sheets.

### Scoring

Each maneuver will receive a judge’s score that will be added to or subtracted from 70 and will be scored on the following basis, ranging from +1 1/2 Excellent, +1 Very Good, +1/2 Good, 0 Correct, -1/2 Needs Improvement, -1 Poor, -1 1/2 Very Poor.

Each maneuver is subject to penalties. Penalties should be assessed per occurrence as follows:

#### 1/2 POINT PENALTY

- D. Delay lead change one stride
- F. Failure to remain 20' from fence on approach to stops and roll backs
- J. Exit roll back at trot up to two strides or start circle at trot up to two strides
- S. Over/under spin up to 1/8

#### 1 POINT PENALTY

- B. Over bridled (per maneuver)
- C. Out of lead each 1/4 of a circle, and around the end of the arena cumulative
- F. Out of frame (per maneuver)
- O. Over/underspin between 1/8 and 1/4
- S. Slipping rein

#### 2 POINT PENALTY

- B. Break of gait
- F. Freezing up in spin or roll back
- J. Trot over two strides but less than 1/2 circle
- L. Fail to lope before first marker
- M. Fail to lope past marker before stop is initiated
- S. On trot in patterns failure to stop before lope depart
- T. Trotting behind two strides, but less than 1/2 circle or 1/2 length of the arena

#### 5 POINT PENALTY

- B. Spurring or hitting in front of the cinch at any time
- C. Blatant disobedience
- E. Use of either hand to instill fear

**MAJOR PENALTY - "OP": Cannot place above others who complete pattern correctly**

D. Repeated blatant disobedience

H. Use of two hands (except in snaffle bit or hackamore)

O. Inclusion of a maneuver (over/under spin more than 1/4 and backing more than two strides)

P. Missed Pattern – eliminate or add maneuver, incomplete maneuver

C. More than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except for the two rein)

T. Trotting more than 1/2 circle or 1/2 the length of the arena

**DISQUALIFIED – DQ (score -0-) See page 18**

A. Inhumane treatment/abuse

B. Lameness

G. Illegal or failed equipment

H. Leaving arena before pattern is complete

N. Improper western attire

D. Disrespect or misconduct

F. Fall of horse/rider

O. Out of control, dangerous, or excessive schooling

**E. RANCH COW WORK:**

Scoring emphasis on the cow work class shall be based on the horse always maintaining control of the cow, exhibiting superior cow sense and natural cow working ability without excessive reining or spurring. The greater the difficulty of the run, the more credit should be given. The difficulty may be due to the extreme speed or stubbornness of the cow, or the cow's reluctance to move down the fence when sufficiently driven by the contestant. The most controlled cow work with the highest degree of difficulty should be marked the highest.

- All horses will be judged immediately upon entering the area, schooling will result in a penalty.
- When run concurrently there will be no schooling allowed between completion of the reined work and the cow work, or between cows if a new cow is awarded. The penalty for this is a major penalty and be scored as "OP" and the rider cannot place higher than a rider that does not have a major penalty on the Ranch Cow Work score sheet.
- It is legal to hold the reins and romal in one hand (rein hand) while working the cow and roping.
- Time shall begin when the gate closes behind the cow after being let into the arena. The announcer or judge will signal when time has expired.
- Awarding a new cow - If time and number of cattle permits, the judge may, at his discretion, award new cattle, to enable the contestant to show his horse's ability on the cow, based on the following criteria:
  - The cow will not or cannot run
  - The cow will not leave the end of the arena
  - The cow is blind or will not yield to the horse
  - The cow leaves the arena

**1. Advanced Amateur, Advanced Youth, and Open Divisions**

Upon receiving the cow, the rider shall hold the cow at the end of the arena for sufficient time to demonstrate the ability of the horse to control the cow at that end of the arena. When the contestant is satisfied that he has shown control of the cow, the contestant shall drive the cow through the corner and down the fence, making at least one turn each way on the fence. The first turn must be past the center marker.

After turning the cow on the fence, the participants have the option to rope and bring the cow to a stop (no dragging allowed) or circle the cow in the middle of the arena in both directions. Roping and circling cannot be combined to get credit for this portion of the run; the judge will blow the whistle ending the run with a major penalty and will be scored as "OP" and the rider cannot place higher than a rider that does not have a major penalty.

### **General Rules:**

- There is a three minute time limit with a one minute warning in the combined cow work and roping/circling portion of the class. The clock will start when the gate is closed after the cow enters the arena.
- When the three minute time limit has expired, the announcer will call time.
- It is legal to hold the reins and romal in one hand (rein hand) while boxing the cow.

### **Roping:**

The horse and rider will be judged on rope handling, rating, and stopping the cow. It is not necessary that the roper catch for the contestant to receive a score in the roping portion.

### **General Roping Rules:**

- The exhibitor is allowed only two throws.
- If a rider drops his/her rope at any time during cow work prior to committing to roping, he/she may choose to finish the run by circling.
- When an exhibitor takes down their rope, they have committed to roping and are required to complete the run by roping and stopping the cow. At this point the exhibitor may not for any reason get credit for circling the cow.
- Once the Advanced Amateur or Youth exhibitor takes down their rope, if the rope is dropped the run is over and a major penalty will apply and will be scored as "OP," and the rider cannot place higher than a rider that does not have a major penalty.
- Any attempt to throw any portion of a rope at the cow will be counted as one loop thrown.
- A breakaway rope may be used in the roping portion of this class. Deductions will be reflected in the run content of "stop and hold."
- A legal catch is described as any catch in which a rope goes over the head (cow looks through the loop) and holds the cow including hind legs or foot. A catch which holds on the head (cow does not look through the loop) such as horns or horns and half head is also legal catch. The quality of the catch will be a factor considered by the judge in assigning the maneuver score.
- In addition, a heel or leg catch resulting from a throw that the cow does not look through the loop is an illegal catch. If a cow is stopped with an illegal catch a major penalty will apply and will be scored as "OP" and the rider cannot place higher than a rider that does not have a major penalty.
- There is no dragging of the cow allowed.
- 12-16 inches of mane in front of the saddle may be braided when roping is involved.
- In the event of a tie, the exhibitor that has chosen to rope over circling will be awarded the tie breaker, regardless of whether the exhibitor caught.
- If the rider loses his/her rope (missed dallies) after a legal catch and can regain the rope, he may still receive a stop and hold score.
- For Open riders, a missed first loop receives a penalty of -3 with an additional -2 for missing the second loop resulting in a cumulative -5 for no catch.
- For Advanced Amateurs and Youth riders, a missed first loop will result in a one-point penalty with an additional -1 for missing the second loop resulting in a cumulative two-point penalty for no catch.

### **General Circling Rules:**

The participant will be judged on working efficiently with proper position and control to drive the cow toward the center of the arena and into a full circle one way, switch directions and another full circle in the other direction. The exhibitor must maintain contact with the cow in proper position for a credit earning run and to avoid penalties.

- Circling will be judged based on the circle's size, symmetry, speed, and relative balance from right to left and the horse's ability to maintain control throughout circles without using the fence.
- A penalty of one point – "A. Loss of working advantage" may be applied any time the horse and rider lose contact with the cow.
- The circles should be completed before the cow is exhausted.
- Once a rider is committed to circling the exhibitor must complete the run by circling and may not for any reason get credit for roping.
- If the exhibitor satisfies the circling requirements prior to the three-minute time limit the judge will blow the whistle indicating the run is complete.

### **Scoring**

Each maneuver will receive a judge's score that will be added to or subtracted from 70 and will be scored on the following basis, ranging from +1 1/2 Excellent, +1 Very Good, +1/2 Good, 0 Correct, -1/2 Needs Improvement, -1 Poor, -1 1/2 Very Poor.

Each maneuver is subject to penalties. Penalties should be assessed per occurrence as follows:

#### **1 POINT PENALTIES**

- A. Loss of working advantage
- C. Using corner or end of arena to turn cow
- E. Changing sides of the arena to turn the cow
- L. For each length horse runs past the cow
- P. Working out of position
- R. Two loop catch in Advanced Amateur and Youth
- S. Slipping rein
- T. Failure to drive cow past mid marker on first turn
- V. Over bridled (per maneuver)
- W. Out of frame (per maneuver)
- Z. Excessive hollering

#### **2 POINT PENALTIES**

- A. Going around corner before turning cow
- B. In an open field turn animal gets within three feet of the end fence before being turned
- R. Failure to catch or illegal catch in the Advanced Amateur and Youth

#### **3 POINT PENALTIES**

- D. Dangerous position
- E. Exhausting or overworking the cow before circling or roping
- H. Hanging up on fence (refusing to turn)
- K. Knock down cow without having working advantage
- R. Two loop catch in the Open

## 5 POINT PENALTIES

- A. Failure to turn cow both directions on the fence
- B. Spurring or hitting in front of the cinch
- C. Blatant disobedience
- E. Use of either hand to instill fear
- R. Failure to catch or illegal catch in the Open

## MAJOR PENALTIES - "OP": Cannot place above others who complete pattern correctly

- A. Turn tail
- B. Use of two hands (except in snaffle bit or hackamore)
- C. More than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except for the two rein)
- E. Repeated blatant disobedience
- J. Schooling after entering the arena prior to calling for cow
- K. Schooling between cows if new cow is awarded
- N. Failure to attempt any part of the class
- R. Complete loss of rope once rider is committed to roping

## DISQUALIFIED – DQ (score -0-) See page 18

- A. Inhumane Treatment/abuse
- B. Lameness
- D. Disrespect or misconduct
- F. Fall of horse/rider
- G. Illegal equipment
- H. Leaving the arena before the run is complete
- J. When roping bringing the cow straight over backwards landing on its back or head with all four feet in the air
- N. Improper western attire
- O. Out of control, dangerous, or excessive schooling

## Intermediate Amateur and Intermediate Youth Divisions

The goal of this class is to introduce the advancing rider to the "fence work" and "roping" phases of the cow work.

- If run **concurrent** with Ranch Reined Work, after completing the pattern the rider will signal to the cow boss that he/she is ready for a cow to be released into the arena.
- If run as a **separate** draw, the rider will enter the arena, face the cattle entry gate, and call for the cow to be released into the arena.
- Each contestant upon receiving a cow in the arena, shall hold that cow on the prescribed end of the arena demonstrating the ability of the horse and rider to control the cow.
- When the rider is satisfied that he/she has control of the cow they will set up to drive/rate the cow down the fence to the opposite end of the arena. The distance for driving should be 1/2 to 3/4 the length of the arena. Upon reaching the opposite end of the arena, the rider will then stop and release the cow and move the horse toward the center of arena to set up for boxing. The rider will then regain control and hold the cow at the opposite end of the arena to demonstrate the horse's ability to hold the cow. The exhibitor will then drive/rate the cow back down the fence on the original side past the center marker.
- After completion of the box, drive, box, drive maneuvers, rider will take down his/her rope build a loop, move into position to rope (tracking/rating), and throw the rope completing the dally and stopping portion.

- There is no expectation that the exhibitor will make a “fence turn,” the drive down the fence demonstrates correct position and control around the corner.
- Each contestant will have 2 1/2 minutes to complete the cow work, working full time is not required.
- There will be a 45 second warning, the announcer will signal when time is up.
- The judge will blow the whistle when the rider has completed all requirements prior to time running out.

### Scoring

Each maneuver will receive a judge’s score that will be added to or subtracted from 70 and will be scored on the following basis, ranging from +1 1/2 Excellent, +1 Very Good, +1/2 Good, 0 Correct, -1/2 Needs Improvement, -1 Poor, -1 1/2 Very Poor.

Each maneuver is subject to penalties. Penalties should be assessed per occurrence as follows:

#### 1 POINT PENALTIES

- A. Loss of working advantage
- D. Fail to drive the cow past the mid marker on the second drive before time expires
- E. Driving the cow down the opposite fence, changing sides
- L. For each length horse runs passed the cow (Advanced and Open)
- P. Working out of position
- S. Slipping rein
- V. Over Bridled (per maneuver)
- W. Out of frame (per maneuver)
- Z. Excessive hollering

#### 3 POINT PENALTIES

- D. Dangerous position
- K. Knock down cow without having working advantage
- L. Losing a cow while boxing
- W. Performing a fence turn (whether initiated by horse or rider)
- Z. Failure to drive cow past middle marker on second drive before time expires

#### 5 POINT PENALTIES

- B. Spurring or hitting in front of the cinch at any time
- C. Blatant disobedience
- E. Use of either hand to instill fear
- F. Failure to initiate at least one turn/change on the second boxing phase before terminating work
- X. Running cow into back fence with force

#### MAJOR PENALTIES - “OP”: Cannot place above others who complete pattern correctly

- A. Turn Tail
- E. Repeated blatant disobedience
- F. Turning the cow on the fence
- H. Use of two hands (except in snaffle bit or hackamore)
- J. Schooling between rein work and cow work or before cow work begins
- L. Allowing cow to cross center line during boxing of opposite end
- K. Schooling between cows if new cow is awarded
- C. More than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except for the two rein)
- N. Failure to attempt any part of the class

**DISQUALIFIED – DQ (score -0-)** See page 18

- A. Inhumane treatment/abuse
- B. Lameness
- G. Illegal or failed equipment
- H. Leaving the arena before the run is complete
- N. Improper western attire
- D. Disrespect or misconduct
- F. Fall of horse/rider
- O. Out of control, dangerous, or excessive schooling

**Limited Amateur and Limited Youth Division:**

The Limited Amateur division will consist of a box – drive – box – drive element. If run concurrent with Ranch Reined Work the rider will face the cattle entry gate and signal the cow boss that he/she is ready for a cow to be released into the arena. Limited ranch cow work exhibitors are allotted one minute and forty-five seconds to complete the work. When there are 50 seconds left, the announcer will announce, “50 seconds remaining”. At one minute and forty-five seconds, the announcer will call for time. Exhibitors are not required to use all 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; 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, instead 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 the 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 – Move horse toward center of arena to set up cow for boxing. Box the cow for a sufficient time to demonstrate the ability of the horse to contain the cow at that end. If the cow does not immediately challenge the horse, the rider shall aggressively move in on the cow to demonstrate their horse’s ability to drive and block the cow on the fence. If contestant is not in a working position that causes the cow to initiate at least one turn/change of direction on the second boxing phase before crossing the timeline and terminating the work, a five point penalty will be assessed.

Part Four – Drive the Cow back down the fence (original side) - After a reasonable amount of time, the contestant shall set up and drive/rate the cow down the fence, opposite fence of the judges, to the opposite end of the arena. When coming out of corner, the horse shall be close enough to the cow to demonstrate control with cow against the fence. This distance and control should be maintained past the center marker and continue until the judge signifies the completion of the run or time expires. The rider will then release the cow.

## **Credits and Penalties for Box-Drive Box-Drive**

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.

### **Scoring**

Each maneuver will receive a Judge's Score that will be added to or subtracted from 70 and will be scored on the following basis, ranging from +1 1/2 Excellent, +1 Very Good, +1/2 Good, 0 Correct, -1/2 Needs Improvement, -1 Poor, -1 1/2 Very Poor.

Each maneuver is subject to penalties. Penalties should be assessed per occurrence as follows:

#### **1 Point Penalties:**

- A. Loss of working advantage
- C. Driving the cow down the opposite fence on second drive (changing sides)
- P. Working out of position
- S. Slipping rein
- T. On the first drive, failure to drive past the middle marker
- V. Over bridled (per maneuver)
- W. Out of frame (per maneuver)
- Z. Excessive hollering

#### **3 Point Penalties:**

- D. Dangerous position
- K. Knocking down the cow without having a working advantage
- W. Performing a fence turn (whether initiated by horse or rider)
- Z. Failure to drive cow past the middle marker on second drive before time expires

#### **5 Point Penalties:**

- B. Spurring in front of cinch
- C. Blatant disobedience
- E. Use of either hand to instill fear
- T. Failure to initiate at least one turn on the second boxing phase before crossing the timeline and terminating the work
- X. Running the cow into the back fence with force

#### **MAJOR PENALTIES - "OP": Cannot place above others who complete pattern correctly**

- A. Turning tail
- H. Use of two hands (except in snaffle bit or hackamore) per maneuver
- C. More than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except two rein) per maneuver
- E. Repeated blatant disobedience
- F. On the first drive down the fence, failure to drive the cow past the middle marker after two attempts
- J. Schooling after entering the arena prior to calling for cow
- K. Schooling horse between cows, if new cow is awarded
- N. Failure to complete any part of the class

## **DISQUALIFIED – DQ (score -0-)** See page 18

- A. Inhumane treatment/abuse
- B. Lameness
- D. Disrespect or misconduct
- F: Fall of horse/rider
- G. Illegal equipment
- H. Leaving working area before pattern is complete
- N. Improper western attire
- O. Out of control, dangerous, or excessive schooling

## **Novice Amateur and Novice Youth Divisions**

The goal of this class is to introduce the rider to the “boxing” phase of the cow work and develop skills for reading and controlling the cow. Exhibitors in boxing 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 for Boxing**

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.

## **Scoring**

Each maneuver will receive a judge’s score that will be added to or subtracted from 70 and will be scored on the following basis, ranging from +1 1/2 Excellent, +1 Very Good, +1/2 Good, 0 Correct, -1/2 Needs Improvement, -1 Poor, -1 1/2 Very Poor.

Each maneuver is subject to penalties. Penalties should be assessed per occurrence as follows:

### **1 Point Penalties:**

- A. Loss of working advantage
- P. Working out of position
- S. Slipping rein
- V. Over bridled (per maneuver)
- W. Out of frame (per maneuver)
- Z. Excessive hollering

### **3 Point Penalties**

- D. Dangerous position
- K. Knock down cow without having working advantage
- L. Losing a cow while boxing

### **5 Point Penalties**

- B. Spurring in front of the cinch
- C. Blatant disobedience
- E. Use of either hand to instill fear

### **MAJOR PENALTIES - "OP": Cannot place above others who complete pattern correctly**

- A. Turning tail
- B. Use of two hands (except in snaffle bit or hackamore) per maneuver
- C. More than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except two rein) per maneuver
- E. Repeated blatant disobedience
- J. Schooling after entering the arena prior to calling for cow
- K. Schooling horse between cows, if new cow is awarded
- N. Failure to attempt complete any part of the class

### **Disqualification (DQ):** See page 18

- A. Inhumane treatment/abuse
- B. Lameness
- D. Disrespect or misconduct
- G. Illegal equipment
- H. Leaving arena before run is complete
- F. Fall of horse/rider
- N. Improper western attire.
- O. Out of control, dangerous, or excessive schooling

## **VIII. WALK/TROT DIVISION – RULES AND REGULATIONS**

This division of ranch horse competition is for adult or youth riders who wish to experience showing their ranch horses at an introductory level. This division will be governed by the general rules of the AZVRHA Handbook EXCEPT as noted in this supplement.

### **WALK/TROT RANCH RIDING:**

The rider will follow the pattern of written transitions for the Walk/Trot Ranch Riding class. The pattern will meet the requirements as outlined in the AZVRHA Handbook Ranch Riding EXCEPT:

- There will be no loping. The pattern will be made up of multiple walk, trot, and extended trot transitions; stop and turn maneuvers may be asked to be performed by the rider.
- If markers are provided, the rider must stay within the markers (markers on the outside of the pattern or as indicated by the pattern) to avoid a major penalty.

### **Scoring**

Each maneuver will receive a Judge's Score that will be added or subtracted from 70 and will be scored on the following basis, ranging from +1 1/2 Excellent, +1 Very Good, +1/2 Good, 0 Correct, -1/2 Needs Improvement, -1 Poor, -1 1/2 Very Poor.

Each maneuver is subject to penalties. Penalties should be assessed per occurrence as follows:

#### **1 POINT PENALTY**

- A. Too slow at any gait per maneuver
- B. Over bridled (per maneuver)

- G. Incorrect or break of gait for two strides or less
- F. Out of frame (per maneuver)

### **3 POINT PENALTY**

- G. Break of Gait at walk or jog for more than two strides
- R. Draped Reins

### **5 POINT PENALTY**

- B. Spurring or hitting in front of the cinch at any time
- D. Blatant disobedience
- F. Instill fear or praise
- R. First or second refusal cumulative (balk or evade)

### **MAJOR PENALTY - "OP": Cannot place above others who complete pattern correctly**

- A. Missed Pattern - eliminate or add maneuver, incomplete maneuver
- D. Repeated disobedience (balk or evade), will be asked to move on
- H. Use of two hands (except in snaffle bit or hackamore) per maneuver
- C. More than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except two rein) per maneuver

### **DISQUALIFIED – DQ (score -0-) See page 18**

- A. Inhumane Treatment/abuse
- B. Lameness
- G. Illegal Equipment
- H. Leaving the arena before the run is complete
- N. Improper western attire
- D. Disrespect or misconduct
- F. Fall of horse/rider
- G. Out of control, endangering the horse or rider (judge blows whistle and ends the work)
- O. Out of control, dangerous, or excessive schooling

### **WALK/TROT TRAIL:**

The rider will follow the written Walk/Trot Trail Pattern. The Pattern will meet the requirements as outlined in the AZVRHA Handbook under RANCH TRAIL except:

- There will be walk, trot, or extended trot maneuvers with stop, back, side pass options, no loping.
- No log drag element will be used in Walk/Trot.
- Rope handling will be a required element but at a modified degree of difficulty.

### **Scoring**

Each maneuver will receive a Judge's Score that will be added to or subtracted from 70 and will be scored on the following basis, ranging from +1 1/2 Excellent, +1 Very Good, +1/2 Good, 0 Correct, -1/2 Needs Improvement, -1 Poor, -1 1/2 Very Poor.

Each maneuver is subject to penalties. Penalties should be assessed per occurrence as follows:

### **1 POINT PENALTY**

- G. Incorrect or break of Gait at walk or trot for two strides or less
- H. Each hit, bite, push or stepping on a log, cone, plant, gate, or any component of the obstacle. *(Ticks through brush piles or jumbles will not be penalized)*
- I. Incorrect number of strides, if specified

- K. Skipping over or failing to step into required space
- P. Split pole in lope over
- S. One to two steps on dismount or ground tie except shifting to balance
- T. Both front and hind feet in a singled stride slot or space at a walk or trot

### **3 POINT PENALTY**

- G. Break of Gait at walk or trot for more than two strides
- R. Draped reins
- S. 3 to 4 Steps on dismount or ground tie

### **5 POINT PENALTY**

- B. Spurring or hitting in front of the cinch at any time
- C. Blatant Disobedience
- E. Instill Fear or praise
- K. Knocking over, stepping out of, or falling off an obstacle
- L. Let go of gate
- O. Dropping an object required to be carried slicker, rope etc.
- R. 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> refusal cumulative, (balk or evade)
- S. 5 or more steps on dismount or ground tie

### **MAJOR PENALTY - "OP": Cannot place above others who complete pattern correctly**

- E. Repeated blatant disobedience
- N. Failure to attempt an Obstacle
- P. Missed Pattern eliminate or add maneuver, incomplete maneuver
- R. Third refusal (Balk or evade), will be asked to move on

### **DISQUALIFIED – DQ (score -0-) See page 18**

- A. Inhumane Treatment/abuse
- B. Lameness
- G. Illegal Equipment
- H. Leaving the arena before the run is complete
- N. Improper Western Attire
- D. Disrespect or misconduct
- F. Fall of horse/rider
- G. Out of control, endangering the horse or rider (judge blows whistle and ends the work)
- O. Out of control, dangerous, or excessive schooling

### **WALK/TROT CUTTING:**

Refer to AZVRHA Handbook VII(C) for general cutting rules and description. All AZVRHA Ranch Cutting Rules will govern this class EXCEPT as defined below.

The Walk/Trot Rider will attempt to "set up a cut" two times, separating one cow each time. The time limit is two minutes, and the rider does not have to work the entire time. The rider will enter the herd, driving one or more head out, continue stepping forward to set up one cow to be separated from the herd in the center of the arena. If the rider fails to separate a cow from the herd the penalty will apply. The rider will return to the herd to set up the cut one additional time.

- When the first cow is sufficiently out of the herd the rider indicates he/she is set up to work by stopping the horse in the working position and "Tagging off" the cow.
- The rider will then go back to the herd and drive a second cow out to "set up to work" and "tag off" when the horse and cow are in working position. The run will be complete.

- “Tagging off” is indicated by first stopping the horse, the rider then places the non-rein hand at the wither while using the rein hand to slowly back and turn the horse away from the cow.
- If the cow is lost to the herd penalties will occur.

Credit earning situations:

- Demonstrating good herd working skill
- Shaping (setting-up) the cut
- Maintaining working advantage

### Scoring

Each maneuver will receive a judge’s score that will be added to or subtracted from 70 and will be scored on the following basis, ranging from +1 1/2 Excellent, +1 Very Good, +1/2 Good, 0 Correct, -1/2 Needs Improvement, -1 Poor, -1 1/2 Very Poor.

Each maneuver is subject to penalties. Penalties should be assessed per occurrence as follows:

#### **1 POINT PENALTY**

- A. Loss of working advantage
- C. Working out of position
- D. Toe, foot, or stirrup on the shoulder

#### **3 POINT PENALTY**

- B. Cattle picked up or scattered
- D. Back Fence
- E. Biting or striking the cow
- H. Hot quit

#### **5 POINT PENALTY**

- A. Quitting the cow
- B. Spurring or hitting in front of the cinch at any time
- C. Blatant disobedience
- E. Use of either hand to instill fear or praise
- F. Failure to separate a single cow after leaving the herd
- L. Losing the cow back to the herd
- S. Changing cattle after a specific commitment

#### **MAJOR PENALTY - “OP”:** Cannot place above others who complete pattern correctly

- A. Turn tail
- E. Repeated blatant disobedience
- H. Use of two hands (except in snaffle bit or hackamore) per maneuver
- C. More than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except two rein) per maneuver

#### **DISQUALIFIED – DQ (score -0-)** See page 18

- A. Inhumane treatment/abuse
- B. Lameness
- G. Illegal Equipment
- H. Leaving the arena before the run is complete
- N. Improper western attire
- D. Disrespect or misconduct
- F. Fall of horse/rider

- G. Out of control, endangering the horse or rider (judge blows whistle and ends the work)
- O. Out of control, dangerous, or excessive schooling

### **WALK/TROT REINED WORK:**

AZVRHA Handbook Ranch Reining rules will govern the Walk/Trot Ranch Reining except no loping will be required. The rider will follow the pattern of reining maneuvers that may include walk, trot, extend the trot, stop, roll back, back, and spinning. Center and end markers will be placed as appropriate to the pattern being ridden. Emphasis will be placed on a well-controlled and symmetrical pattern with horse and rider in balance for good circles, stops, rollbacks, and spins as described in the pattern.

### **Scoring**

Each maneuver will receive a Judge's Score that will be added to or subtracted from 70 and will be scored on the following basis, ranging from +1 1/2 Excellent, +1 Very Good, +1/2 Good, 0 Correct, -1/2 Needs Improvement, -1 Poor, -1 1/2 Very Poor.

Each maneuver is subject to penalties. Penalties should be assessed per occurrence as follows:

#### **1/2 POINT PENALTY**

- F. Failure to remain 20' from fence on approach to stops and roll backs
- S. Over/under spin up to 1/8

#### **1 POINT PENALTY**

- O. Over/underspin between 1/8 and 1/4

#### **2 POINT PENALTY**

- B. Break of gait
- F. Freezing up in spin or roll back
- S. On trot in patterns failure to stop before lope departure

#### **5 POINT PENALTY**

- B. Spurring or hitting in front of the cinch at any time
- C. Blatant Disobedience
- E. Instill Fear or praise

#### **MAJOR PENALTY - "OP": Cannot place above others who complete pattern correctly**

- P. Missed Pattern - eliminate or add maneuver, incomplete maneuver
- M. Inclusion of a maneuver (over/under spin more than 1/4 and backing more than two strides)
- D. Repeated blatant disobedience
- H. Use of two hands (except in snaffle bit or hackamore) per maneuver
- C. More than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except two rein) per maneuver

#### **DISQUALIFIED – DQ (score -0-) See page 18**

- A. Inhumane Treatment/abuse
- B. Lameness
- G. Illegal Equipment
- H. Leaving the arena before the run is complete
- N. Improper western attire
- D. Disrespect or misconduct
- F. Fall of horse/rider

- G. Out of control, endangering the horse or rider (judge blows whistle and ends the work)
- O. Out of control, dangerous, or excessive schooling

### **WALK/TROT COW WORK:**

This is the introduction to both horse and rider to begin controlling the cow for boxing and later for fence work and roping of the cow. The use of an extended trot rather than the lope is more appropriate to this division.

Walk/Trot competitors will be required to drive, rate, stop and turn the single cow after it is released into the arena. Competitors should begin no closer than the center marker to allow the cow to be released into the arena, after which the competitor will find the cow and begin their work first by tracking the cow, then immediately moving into a driving, then rating, stopping, and turning positions.

The whole arena may be used, and it is encouraged to use the space of the arena to show the progress of gaining control of the cow, with an allowable five strides of loping without incurring penalties per offense. The competitor must drive, rate, and stop and turn the cow at least once in each direction anywhere in the arena.

- Upon completing the Ranch Reining Pattern or entering the arena the rider will call for the cow.
- There will be a 50 second time limit and time begins when the gate closes behind the cow. The rider must work the full 50 seconds.
- Credit will be given for courage and proper position on the cow to show the gaining of control of the cow in all elements of the work.
- The horse that shows cow sense in rating and tracking the cow with a light contact rein will be rewarded over a horse that is ridden with a tight rein and that is lacking in cow sense.
- Loping will be allowed, without penalty, up to five strides as needed for a faster cow.
- Excessive loping beyond five strides will be penalized one point per occurrence, up to a two penalty points maximum.
- Continuing to lope in this class may cause you to be assessed a maneuver score of up to – 1 ½.
- The judge's whistle or the timer will signal completion of work.

### **Scoring**

Each division will have a unique score sheet and each maneuver will receive a judge's score that will be added to or subtracted from 70 and will be scored on the following basis, ranging from +1 1/2 Excellent, +1 Very Good, +1/2 Good, 0 Correct, -1/2 Needs Improvement, -1 Poor, -1 1/2 Very Poor.

Each maneuver is subject to penalties. Penalties should be assessed per occurrence as follows:

#### **1 POINT PENALTY**

- A. Loss of working advantage
- L. Loping six strides or more
- P. Working out of position
- S. Slipping rein

#### **3 POINT PENALTY**

- E. Exhausting or overworking the cow
- K. Knock down cow w/out working advantage
- L. Losing a cow while boxing

## 5 POINT PENALTY

- B. Spurring or hitting in front of the cinch at any time
- C. Blatant Disobedience

## MAJOR PENALTY - "OP": Cannot place above others who complete pattern correctly

- A. Turn Tail
- E. Repeated blatant disobedience
- J. Schooling between rein work and cow work or before cow work begins
- K. Schooling between cows if a new cow is awarded
- N. Failure to attempt any part of the class
- H. Use of two hands (except in snaffle bit or hackamore) per maneuver
- C. More than one finger between split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except two rein) per maneuver

## DISQUALIFIED – DQ (score -0-) See page 18

- A. Inhumane Treatment/abuse
- B. Lameness
- G. Illegal Equipment
- H. Leaving the arena before the run is complete
- N. Improper western attire
- D. Disrespect or misconduct
- F. Fall of horse/rider
- G. Out of control, endangering the horse or rider (judge blows whistle and ends the work) [OBJ]
- O. Out of control, dangerous, or excessive schooling

# IX. DRY WORK ALL-AROUND – RULES AND REGULATIONS

## A. DIVISIONS, POINTS & SCORING:

An exhibitor must enter all three classes (Ranch Riding, Ranch Trail and Ranch on the Rail) in any one division of the Dry Work All-Around to be eligible to earn points toward the High Point Dry Work All-Around, for either the Event High Point Award or the Year-End High Point Award.

1. Winners of the Dry Work All-Around will be determined using the same point scoring system as the all-around with cattle.
2. Dry Work All-Around riders will be scored against other Dry Work All-Around riders for the tabulation of Dry Work All-Around points, but will be scored for individual class prizes along with riders in other divisions
3. The Dry Work All-Around will be offered in the Open, Amateur and Youth Divisions. AzVRHA reserves the right to adjust divisions as necessary based on the number of entries.

## B. CLASSES:

1. **Ranch Riding:** See VII. A. For the class standard. This class will run concurrent with the regular versatility ranch riding class.
2. **Ranch Trail:** See VII. B. For the class standard. This class will run concurrent with the regular versatility ranch trail class.
3. **Ranch on the Rail:**

### Description & Judging Criteria

There are no score sheets or specific penalties for Ranch on the Rail, but the class will be judged and placed using the following criteria:

The Ranch on the Rail class measures the ability of the horse to be a pleasure to ride and should reflect the versatility, attitude, and movement of a working horse. The horse should be well broke, relaxed, quiet, soft and cadenced at all gaits. The movement of the working western rail horse should simulate a horse needing to cover long distances, softly and quietly. The overall manners and responsiveness of the horse and the horse's quality of movement are the primary considerations. Maximum credit should be given to the horse that has a natural flowing stride and consistent, ground-covering gaits.

Transitions should be performed when requested, with smoothness and responsiveness. The ideal working western rail horse should have a natural head carriage at each gait. The horse should be ridden on a relatively loose rein with light contact and without requiring undue restraint while being responsive to the rider and making timely transitions in a smooth and correct manner. The horse should be soft in the bridle, yield to contact and shall not be shown on a full drape of rein. Riders are encouraged to use adequate space given the extension of gaits required. This class should show the horse's ability to work at a forward, working pace while under control by the rider. The horse shall be balanced and appear willing and a pleasure to ride in a group situation.

### **Scoring**

AZVRHA uses a performance-based comparative evaluation system relative to the qualities desirable in a Ranch Horse when ridden in a group setting. Each horse and rider team will be evaluated as they are being ridden in a group setting while performing required class maneuvers. Judges may make their own score sheets reflective of their maneuver evaluation and comparison with other entries.

- All exhibitors will work as a group. Individuals working off the rail will not be penalized and passing is permissible.
- Horses must work both ways of the ring at the walk, trot and lope. Horses must work at least one way of the ring at the extended trot and extended lope. At the option of the judge, horses may be asked to extend their stride at the walk.
- The overall cadence and performance of the gaits should be with an emphasis on forward, free-flowing, and ground-covering movement.
- At the extended trot and lope, the exhibitor may post or stand in the stirrups.
- Touching or holding the saddle horn during any extended gait is acceptable.
- Horses are to be reversed to the inside (away from the rail). They may be required to reverse at the walk or trot at the discretion of the judge but shall not be asked to reverse at the lope.
- Horses are required to back easily and stand quietly. Horses may be brought to the center or backed on the rail.
- The rider shall not be required to dismount except in the event the judge wishes to check equipment.

Faults scored according to severity:

- Too slow (any gait)
- Excessive speed (any gait)
- Over-bridled (nose behind the vertical)
- Head carried too low such that the poll is below the withers
- Out of frame
- Head carried too high

- Break of gait
- Wrong lead or out of lead
- Failure to take the appropriate gait when called
- Opening mouth excessively
- Draped reins
- Use of spurs forward of the cinch
- Canted at the Lope
- Blatant disobedience (kick, bite, buck, rear, etc.)

Faults scored according to severity:

- Head carried too low and/or clearly behind the vertical excessively and consistently while the horse is in motion, or otherwise showing the appearance of intimidation.

### **C. AWARDS:**

1. **Single Shows:** These will be decided by the AZVRHA Board prior to each event. (ie: jackpot, buckle, etc.)
2. **Circuit Shows:** These will be decided by the AZVRHA Board prior to each event. (ie: jackpot, buckle, etc.)
3. **End of the Year:** These will be decided by the AZVRHA Board prior to the end of the year.

## THE RANCH HORSE

### A. THE IDEAL RANCH HORSE

Arizona Versatility Ranch Horse Association has an ideal horse in mind. As we go forward, in our judging and our training, our goal is to remain true to this ideal, even as we may work together with other organizations.

A truly versatile ranch horse is an animal of any breed that can capably, efficiently and with athleticism, complete the tasks required of it on a working cattle ranch.

- The best of these horses is balanced and between the reins, with the more finished horses being ridden one-handed and in a bridle. As a result, these horses can accurately change leads, stay balanced, and go forward at a variety of speeds.
- The best of these horses is a graceful and efficient mover with good length of stride and much adjustability. A ranch horse should never move in a manner that is highly stylized or would detract from his ability to complete ranch tasks.
- The best of these horses can transition precisely up and down through all gaits, from any gait to any gait, even while traveling through terrain outside of the arena.
- The best of these horses works naturally from their hind quarters, whether with a cow or performing other tasks. This includes the ability to slide stop, rollback, and spin.
- The best of these horses can quietly and safely negotiate any obstacle that it may encounter on the ranch, including gates of differing configurations, dragging items with a rope, or passing over obstacles on the ground.
- The best of these horses performs these tasks while remaining alert, aware, careful, and relaxed, always able to stand quietly whenever it is required.

A truly versatile ranch horse is completely comfortable and capable with cattle.

- This horse can separate a single cow from a herd and hold it away from that herd with a minimum of guidance.
- The best of these horses can “read” that cow and help the rider to complete the task efficiently, even if some guidance is required.

A truly versatile ranch horse can also control and direct a single cow.

- While working from its hindquarters and with the use of a fence, that horse should be able to cause the cow to change directions, hold and control that cow in a space

A truly versatile ranch horse is a rope horse.

- The best of these horses is confident with the rope around him in all manners, whether it is being swung, coiled, thrown, or dragged.
- The best of these horses will accurately track a cow at any speed, placing and keeping the rider in the best position to make an efficient catch.
- The best of these horses then has the strength and ability to use his body to stop the cow after the rider has dallied, quietly holding the cow.

## B. MECHANICS OF MOTION OF THE HORSE

The way a horse moves is indicated by the individual's GAIT. A gait is the pattern of a horse's stride as he moves forward at varying speeds and sequences of steps. These differences distinguish one gait from another.

It is important for equestrians to know the differences of the horse's gait to further good horsemanship skills and training of the horse. To know the CADENCE or rhythm of each gait will enhance not only the rider's knowledge but also enhance the beauty of the horse in motion. The following is an outline of the gaits of the horse, stressing the quality of step and fullness of stride as indicated by each gait. Each gait may be COLLECTED whereby the horse is asked to spend more time on the ground and shortening his stride or EXTENDED whereby the horse is asked for more suspension, less time on the ground, and lengthening of the stride.

The basic gaits of the horse are Walk, Trot, Canter, Gallop, and Back. The collected gaits, gained through training of the horse, include the trot and lope. The horse in motion will STEP with each foot as indicated by the gait and will fulfill a STRIDE at the completion of the number of steps described by each gait.

Gaits may be broken into five basic categories:

1. Lateral: Cycle of movement where both legs on one side work together. The walk and gallop are lateral gaits.
2. Diagonal: Cycle of movement where opposite diagonal legs work together. The trot and canter are diagonal gaits.
3. Two-beat gait: Two feet hit the ground in unison and then the other two feet hit the ground in unison. The trot and the back are two-beat gaits.
4. Three-beat gait: Two feet hit together, a diagonal pair, and then the other feet hit individually. The canter and lope are three beat gaits.
5. Four-beat gait: Each foot strikes the ground independently. The walk and gallop are four beat gaits.

The SEQUENCE of the step of each foot at each gait is described from the movement beginning at the hind foot. Either near or offside count will suffice except at the canter where the departure step is the outside hind of the desired lead.

It should be noted that each forward swing of the legs in sequence is a step and that as the series of steps is complete, the horse has completed a stride. Therefore, at the walk, four complete steps are a stride; at the trot, two complete steps are a stride; and at the canter, three complete steps are a stride. The backup striding is as with the trot complete with two steps. The observer may choose to focus on one foot as it strikes the ground, counting that strike as "1" and continue counting as that same foot strikes until the number of "strides" is obtained. (For example: At the walk to find five strides, count the near hind as it strikes the ground five times. There will be 20 steps if all four feet are counted.)