



Photo: AQHA - Journal

General Guidelines:

Riders should not wear bling on their clothes or excess silver on their tack. Chaps or chinks are not required but can be worn at riders discretion. Tail extensions, braided manes, and tails, black polish on hooves and clipping inside the ears are not encouraged. Horses should be well groomed but natural in appearance.

Working Ranch Rail - AQHA Rule - SHW425

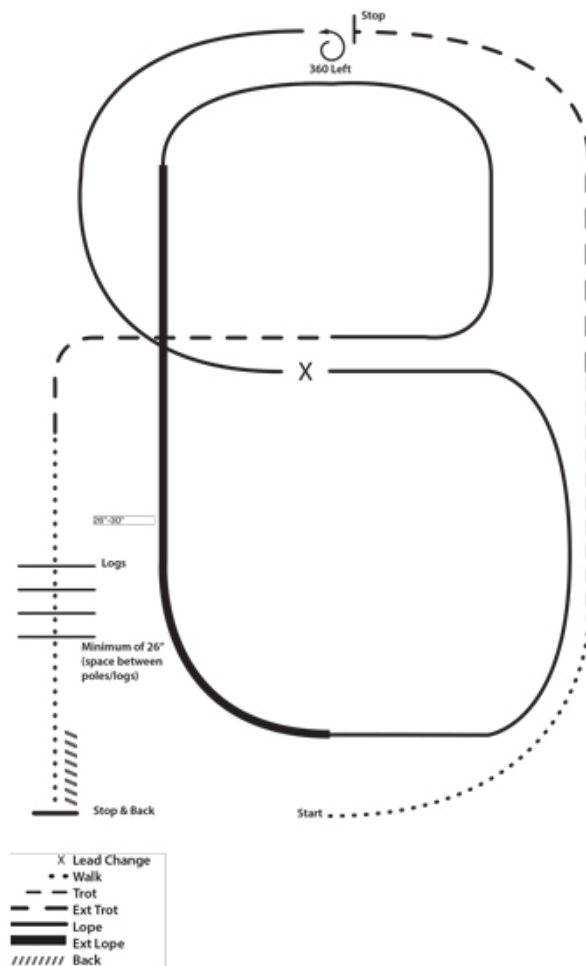
The working western rail class measures the ability of the horse to be a pleasure to ride and should reflect the versatility, attitude, and movement of a working horse. The horse should be well-broke, relaxed, quiet, soft and cadenced at all gaits. The movement of the working western rail horse should 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.

Ranch Riding- AQHA Rule SHW416/417

The purpose of the Ranch Riding horse should reflect the versatility, attitude, and movement of a working horse. The horse's performance should simulate a horse riding outside the confines of an arena and that of a working ranch horse. This class should show the horse's ability to work at a forward, working speed while under control by the rider. Light contact should be rewarded and horse shall not be shown on a full drape of reins. The overall manners and responsiveness of the horse while performing the maneuver requirements and the horse's quality of movement are the primary considerations. The required maneuvers will include the walk, trot, and lope (except in the case of walk/trot classes) both directions; as well as stops, and a back. Additional maneuvers might include a side pass, turns of 360 degrees or more, change of lead (simple or flying), walk, trot, or lope over a pole(s); or some reasonable combination of maneuvers that would be reasonable for a ranch horse to perform. Each contestant will perform the required pattern individually and separately.

Sample Pattern Below:

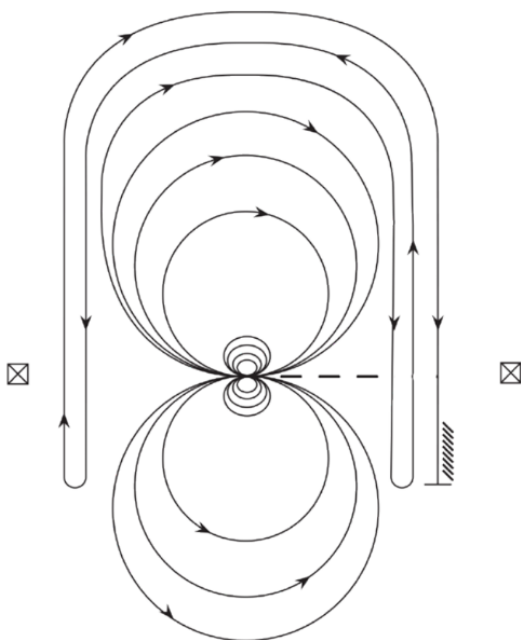
RANCH RIDING - PATTERN I



Ranch Reining - AQHA Rule SHW562.VRH

Reining is a judged event designed to show the athletic ability of the horse in the confines of a show arena. To rein a horse is not only to guide him, but also to control his every movement. The best reined horse should be willfully guided or controlled with little or no apparent resistance. Pattern will be selected by judge/show management. Each contestant will perform the required pattern individually and separately. All horses will be judged immediately upon entering the arena and judging will cease after the last maneuver. Any fault incurred prior to the commencement of a pattern will be scored accordingly.

Stock Horse Reining Pattern 2



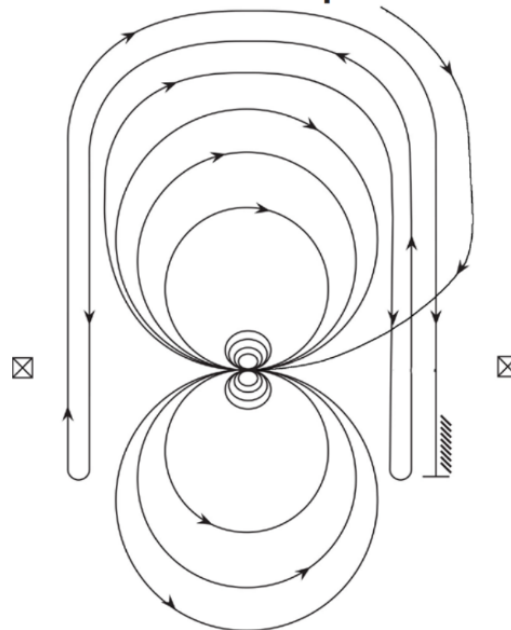
Mandatory Marker along Fence or Wall

The judge shall indicate with markers on arena fence or wall the center of pattern.

Ride pattern as follows:

1. Start by trotting into center of arena and either stop or walk before departure.
2. Make a large fast circle to right on the right lead.
3. Draw the second circle down to a small circle until you reach the center marker; stop.
4. Do four right spins at the center marker; hesitate
5. Begin on left lead and make a large fast circle
6. Then a small circle, again drawing it down to the center of the arena, stop.
7. Do four left spins, hesitate
8. Take a right lead & make a large fast circle to the right, change leads and make a large fast circle to the left, change leads
9. Begin a large fast circle to the right but do not close this circle. Run down the right side of the arena past the marker and do a left roll back at least 20 feet from the wall or fence
10. Continue back the arena, run down the left side of the arena past the center and do a right roll back at least 20 feet from the wall or fence
11. Run down the right side of the arena past the center marker and do a sliding stop at least 20 feet from the wall or fence. Back up at least 10 feet. Hesitate to show completion of pattern.

Stock Horse Reining Pattern 2 - Lope In



Mandatory Marker along Fence or Wall

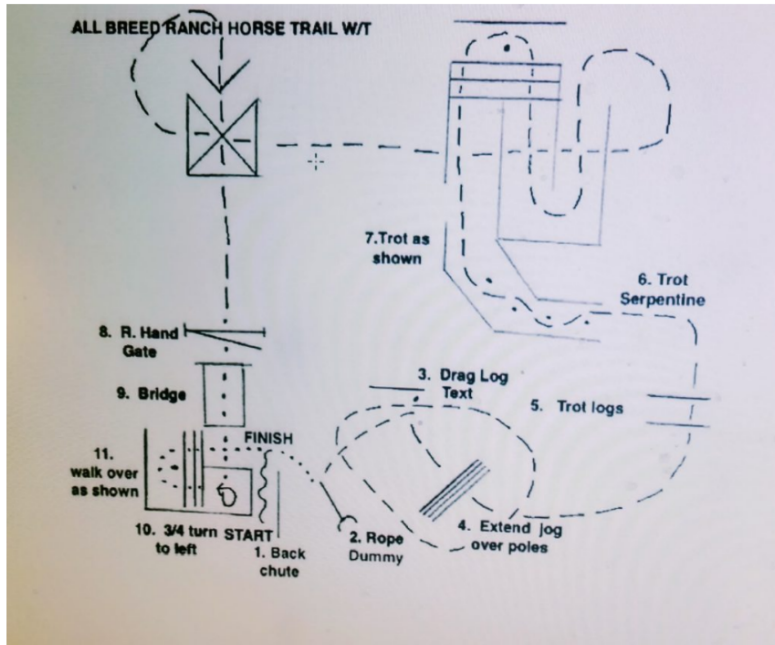
The judge shall indicate with markers on arena fence or wall the center of pattern.

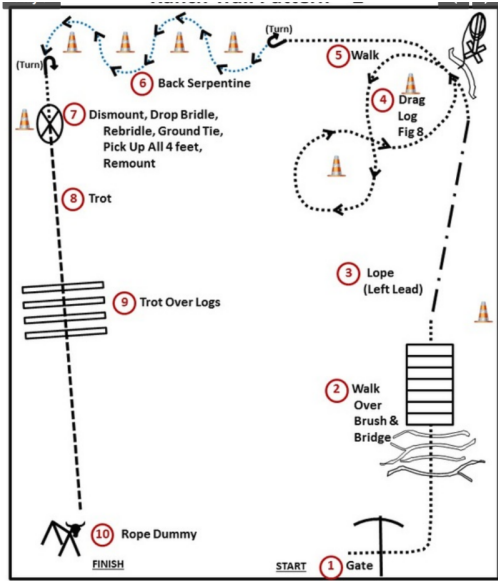
Ride pattern as follows:

1. As you enter the arena, begin on right lead and lope to the center, without stopping or breaking gait, and begin the pattern
2. Make a large fast circle to right on the right lead.
3. Draw the second circle down to a small circle until you reach the center marker; stop.
4. Do four right spins at the center marker; hesitate
5. Begin on left lead and make a large fast circle
6. Then a small circle, again drawing it down to the center of the arena, stop.
7. Do four left spins, hesitate
8. Take a right lead & make a large fast circle to the right, change leads and make a large fast circle to the left, change leads
9. Begin a large fast circle to the right but do not close this circle. Run down the right side of the arena past the marker and do a left roll back at least 20 feet from the wall or fence
10. Continue back the arena, run down the left side of the arena past the center and do a right roll back at least 20 feet from the wall or fence
11. Run down the right side of the arena past the center marker and do a sliding stop at least 20 feet from the wall or fence. Back up at least 10 feet. Hesitate to show completion of pattern.

Ranch Trail -AQHA RULE: SHW420/421

This class will be judged on the performance of the horse over obstacles with emphasis on manners, response to the rider and quality of movement. Credit will be given to horses negotiating the obstacles with style and some degree of speed, providing correctness is not sacrificed. Horses should receive credit for showing attentiveness to the obstacles and the capability of picking their own way through the course when obstacles warrant it, and willingly responding to the rider's cues on more difficult obstacles. Courses will be developed by the show manager and obstacles will allow the ranch horse to demonstrate its capability to work in a ranch type setting.





Legend



New Rule for 2023 “Ranch Horse Appearance”



What is “Ranch Horse Appearance” on the SHTX Score Card?

In an effort to promote and preserve the western tradition and heritage of working stock and ranch horse, SHTX adopted a recent rule change from AQHA VRH rules that adds a judged maneuver box on the score cards of non-cattle classes. For each class, a judge will score a horse/rider team on Ranch Horse Appearance on the traditional scoring scale (-1 1/2 extremely poor - 1 1/2 Excellent). The word “Appearance” could lead one to believe judges are looking at what you wear, etc., but this is incorrect. It’s not about your attire, your matching saddle pad, your hat crease, etc. It’s about the overall appearance and eye appeal of your horse.

What DOES NOT matter:

- Things like the color of your saddle pad or hat
 - If you’re wearing a wild rag
 - If your horse has sliders or not
 - If your horse is slick or has winter hair
 - If you have leg protection on
- If you trimmed excessive hair in the horse’s ears or muzzle

What DOES matter:

- Does your horse demonstrate forward movement and an obvious lengthening of stride at extended gaits?
- Does your horse travel with a level to slightly raised neck and head without being overly bridled or traveling out of frame?
- Does your horse appear well-broke, confident, responsive and well-mannered as it goes throughout the requirements of the class?
 - Does your horse have a pleasing expression and pleasant attitude?
 - Does your horse have a natural appearance from head to tail?
- Does your horse travel like something a cowboy would want to ride all day across a 10,000 acre pasture?

The Ranch Horse Appearance box is very similar to the Eye Appeal box in cattle classes. Consider this....at a recent judging seminar focusing on cow horse, a presenter said, “Anything that is excessive or over done in any one area is likely not a “plus.” That’s an excellent comment that could pertain to all of the stock horse classes.

Current score cards offer the judge penalties for unnatural appearance such as being over-bridled, out of frame, etc. The new Ranch Horse Appearance column also offers a judge the opportunity to also give CREDIT. We encourage riders to review the class descriptions for the ideal ranch/stock horse in the rule book - these descriptions offer great insight!

cownsh.com

Above graphic from CoWN Stock Horse Association-

Sources -

ARHA - <https://www.americanranchhorse.net/>

SHOTX - <https://stockhorsetexas.org/pdfs/SHTX-Handbook-web.pdf>

AQHA VRH -

<https://www.aqha.com/disciplines/ranching/competitions/versatility-ranch-horse-competition>

CoWN Stock Horse Association- <https://cownsh.com/>

Additional information about ranch horse classes can be found in the links above.