

# Ranch Division Overview



**Provided by: Carol Jones**

Owner/Trainer at American Acres Training Center  
VERSA Charter Club, President

This information is also available on ASHBA website &  
USEF Rulebook.

# Table of Contents:

- Ranch Division FAQs
- Tack & Attire
- Ranch Rail Pleasure
- Ranch Riding
- Ranch Riding Patterns
- Ranch Riding Penalties
- Ranch Trail
- Ranch Trail Penalties



# Ranch Division FAQ's:

## 1. What classes are offered in this division?

There are four classes offered in this division. Ranch riding (pattern), ranch rail pleasure, ranch trail (obstacles)and ranchmanship(pattern). A show may offer these classes as open, amateur and youth as entries warrant.

## 2. What is the appropriate attire for Ranch classes?

Working ranch attire is appropriate. A western Cowboy hat or helmet is the best choice for headgear. Long sleeve collared shirt, jeans and boots can be worn, chaps or chinks (knee or shin length) are acceptable but not required. Scarfs or “wild rags” are acceptable. “Bling” (sequins, rhinestones) are highly discouraged on any part of the outfit.

## 3. What kind of saddle/equipment is used in this division?

Clean working tack is the best choice for the Ranch division. It is recommended that saddles have a breast collar and a rear cinch. If a rear cinch is used, it should be attached to the front cinch with a cinch hobble. Hobbles or a rope may be attached to the saddle. Silver on saddle or bridle is highly discouraged but not illegal.

## 4. How should a horse be groomed for this division?

A horse should be clean and brushed. Clipping of the muzzle, ears and bridlepath are optional. A horse shown in a “natural” state is not to be penalized. Hoof black is not cause for disqualification but is highly discouraged. Some horses will be cross entered in other Western Pleasure and Working Western events and that should be taken into consideration by Judges. Braiding or banding of mane or tail and tail extensions will result in a zero score.

## 5. What gaits are required in this division?

- **Walk**-natural, flat footed four beat gait
- **Trot**-natural two beat gait exhibiting more forward motion than the western jog;
- **Extended trot**- obvious lengthening of stride from trot, should be ground covering;
- **Lope**- three beat gait, relaxed, smooth and forward moving stride;
- **Extended lope**- obvious lengthening of stride from the lope but NEVER a run or a race.

## 6. How should a ranch horse carry himself?

A ranch horse should display a natural head position for the individual and be bright with an attentive expression. A horse can be penalized for being over-bridled and out of frame. A rider should have light contact with the reins. An overly tight or a drape in the rein can be penalized.



## Ranch Division FAQ's:

### 7. What maneuvers are required in the patterns?

Maneuvers may include a side pass, turns of 360 degrees or more, change of lead (simple or flying) walk, trot or lope over poles or some reasonable combination of maneuvers that would be reasonable for a ranch horse to perform.

### 8. Is holding the saddle horn acceptable for extended gaits?

Yes! A rider may post or stand in the stirrups and hold the saddle horn at the extended trot and hold the horn and have a forward seat at the extended lope. Holding the horn for the rider's safety over any obstacle in any pattern is acceptable.

### 9. What exactly are judges looking for in these classes?

In a word, PERFORMANCE. The ranch division is to judge a horse's ability to be a pleasure to ride while being used as a means of conveyance from performing one ranch task to another. The overall manners and responsiveness of the ranch riding horse to make timely transitions in a smooth and correct manner, as well as the quality of movement are of primary consideration.

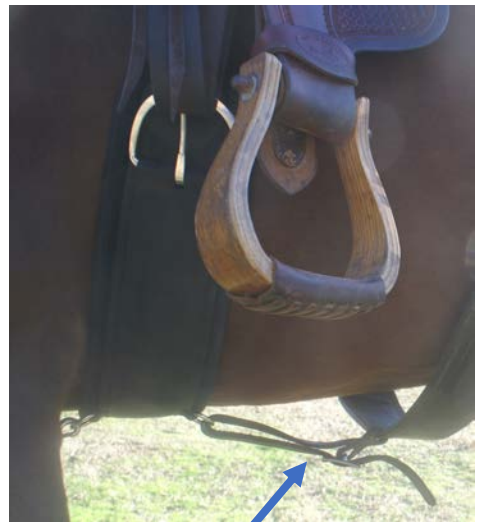
### 10. What obstacles will be in a Ranch trail class?

Mandatory obstacles include: walk over, trot over and lope over obstacles, opening/closing gate (rules may change due to current Covid conditions) ride over wooden bridge, a backing obstacle and a side pass. Optional obstacles may include carry object, a jump (less than 18"), drag an object, mailbox, swing a rope, slicker/rain coat, water obstacle, lead horse through gate, pick up horse's feet and ground tie. The course should be posted AT LEAST one hour before competition. All courses should be safe for all riders to complete and are not meant to trap any horse or rider.



## Ranch Tack:

- Western working tack is encouraged.
- Split or romal reins are permitted.
- Attire and tack should be clean & presentable.
- Silver headstalls and saddles are discouraged.
- Tongue ties are permitted.
- Western work saddle should have a rear cinch, and rear cinch must be connected to front cinch with a hobble.
  - The rear cinch hobble prevents the rear cinch from moving backwards towards the flank.
- Western breast collar or pulling collar is encouraged.
- Color coordinating western saddle pad is permitted. Metallic or shiny thread colors are discouraged.
- Hoof polish is not prohibited but is discouraged.
- No braiding or banding of manes.
- Long tails may be tied up in a neat fashion, to prevent the horse from stepping on and/or breaking it during pattern maneuvers.
- Trimming of bridle path, fetlocks or whiskers is permitted. But a horse left in a natural state is not to be penalized.



Rear cinch hobble





## Ranch Attire:

- Long-sleeved, collared shirt
- Cowboy hat or helmet
- Western boots
- Chaps or Chinks
  - Chinks are protective leg gear that come down just below the knee (shorter than chaps).
- Scarves or wild rags are permitted.
- Attire should be clean and presentable.
- Color-coordinating or matching shirt, scarf, saddle pad and other accessories are permitted.



# Ranch Rail Pleasure

Purpose: measure the ability of the horse to be a pleasure to ride during ranch tasks. The horse should be well-trained, relaxed, quiet, soft, and cadenced at all gaits.

- Rail work only class. (Working off the rail will not be penalized)
- Gaits: walk, extended walk, trot, extended trot, lope, extended lope

## Judging criteria:

- Primary considerations: The overall **manners** and **responsiveness** of the ranch horse to make **timely transitions** in a **smooth and correct manner**, as well as the quality of the movement.
- The horse should be responsive to the rider and should make timely, smooth, & correct transitions.
- The ideal ranch horse should carry his/her head in a natural position comfortable to the individual at each gait.
- Overall cadence and performance of the gaits should be free-flowing and ground covering.
- Riders may stand in the stirrups or post at extended trot or stand in the stirrups at extended lope.
- Riders may touch or hold the saddle horn during extended trot & extended lope.

## Minor Penalties:

- Too slow at any gait
- Over-bridled/behind the bit
- Break of gait
- Wrong lead
- Out of Frame
- Wrong Lead or cross-cantering
- Draped Reins
- Trotting more than two (2) strides when taking lead

## Major Penalties:

- Blatant Disobedience
- Kick out, buck, rear
- Major disobedience or schooling by rider
- Failure to flat walk or halt
- Schooling
- Spurring in front of cinch



## Ranch Riding

Purpose: measure the ability of the horse to be a pleasure to ride while performing ranch tasks.

- A pattern will be utilized to simulate ranch tasks and transitions from one task to another.
- Pattern only. No rail work.
- Judges may select an existing Saddlebred Ranch Riding Pattern, or they may create their own pattern using similar elements.
- The horse should be well-trained, relaxed, quiet, soft, and cadenced at all gaits.
- Primary considerations: The overall **manners** and **responsiveness** of the ranch horse to make **timely transitions** in a **smooth and correct manner**, as well as the quality of the movement.

### Ranch Riding Patterns

#### Required Maneuvers:

- Walk, trot, and lope both directions
- Extended trot in at least one maneuver
- Extended lope in at least one maneuver
- Stop & Back

#### Optional Maneuvers:

- Side pass
- Turns of 360 degrees or more
- Change of lead (simple or flying)
- Walk, trot, or lope over a pole(s)
- Some other combination of maneuvers that would be reasonable for a ranch horse to perform.

#### Judging criteria:

- Overall cadence and performance of the gaits should be free-flowing and ground covering.
- Emphasis on forward movement during and in between maneuvers.
- Transitions should be performed where designated, with smoothness & responsiveness.
- Riders may stand in the stirrups or post at extended trot.
- Riders may stand in the stirrups at extended lope.
- Riders may touch or hold the saddle horn during extended trot & extended lope.





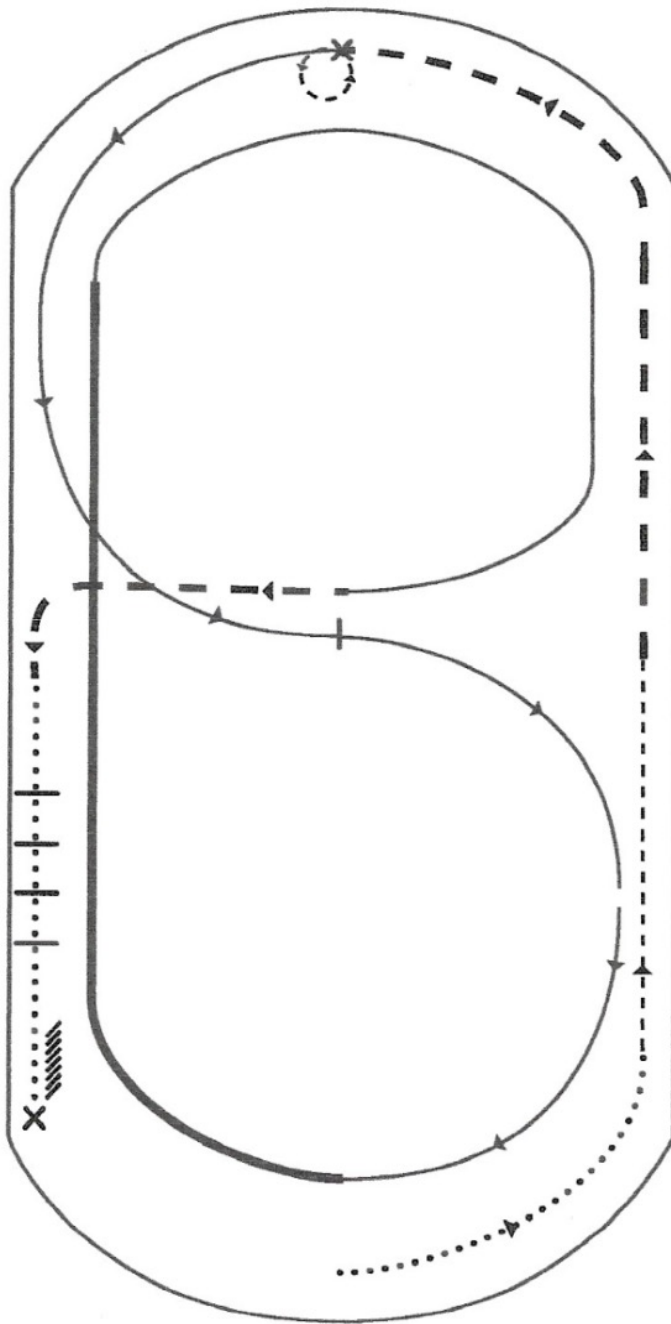
# Ranch Riding Patterns

There are 5 Suggested Ranch Riding Patterns & corresponding Score Sheets, which can be found on the ASHBA website. These patterns are also presented on the next pages.

Show management may create their own pattern using required & optional maneuvers. If you create your own pattern, you will need to fill out a blank score sheet in which the score boxes match the pattern maneuvers.



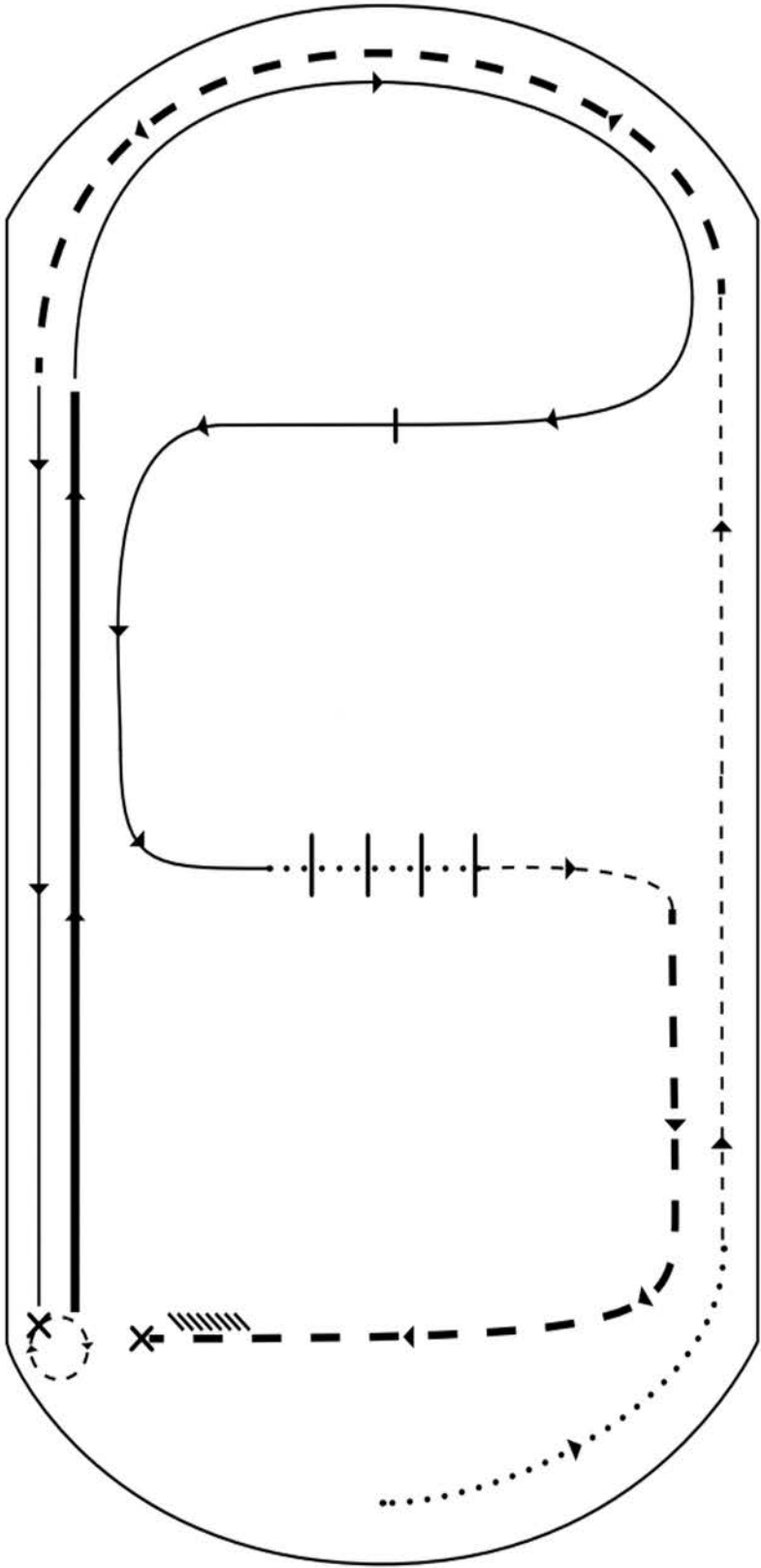
# RANCH RIDING PATTERN #1



- | = Lead Change
- X = Stop
- ..... = Walk
- - - - = Trot
- = Lope
- = Ext. Lope
- - - - = Ext. Trot
- ////// = Back

1. Walk
2. Trot
3. Extend the trot, at the top of the arena, stop
4. 360° turn to the left
5. Left lead one-half circle, lope to the center
6. Change leads (simple or flying)
7. Right lead one-half circle
8. Extend lope up the long side of the arena (right lead)
9. Collect back to a lope around the top of the arena and back to the center
10. Break down to an extended trot
11. Walk over poles
12. Stop and back

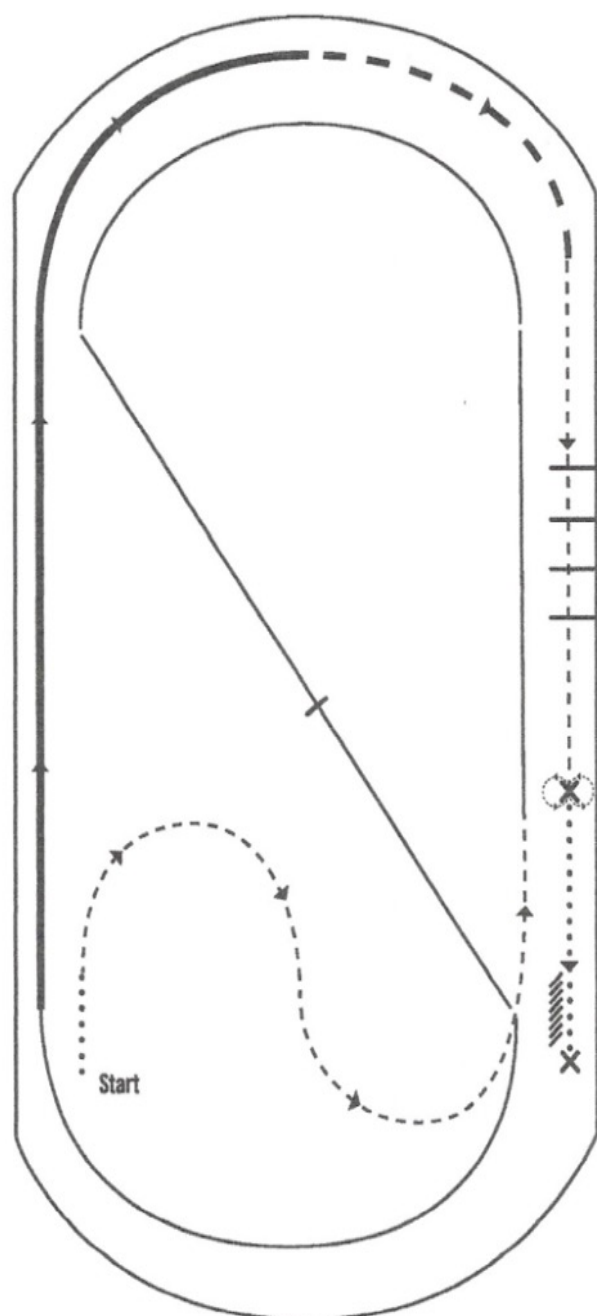
# RANCH RIDING PATTERN #2



- | = Lead Change
- × = Stop
- ..... = Walk
- - - - = Trot
- = Lope
- = Ext. Lope
- - - = Ext. Trot
- \\\\\\\\\\\\ = Back

1. Walk
2. Trot
3. Extended trot
4. Left lead lope
5. Stop, one and one-half turn to the right
6. Extended lope
7. Collect to working lope on the right lead
8. Change leads (simple or flying)
9. Walk
10. Walk over logs
11. Trot
12. Extended trot
13. Stop and back

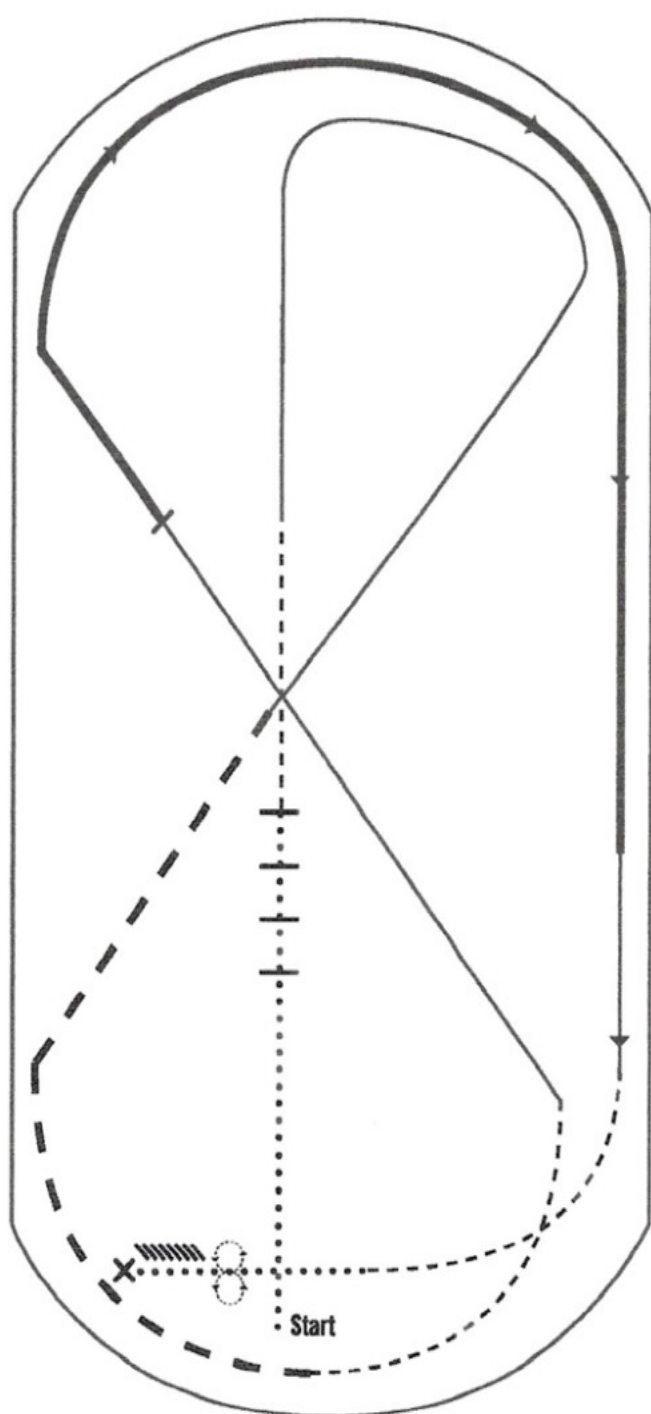
## RANCH RIDING PATTERN #3



- | = Lead Change
- X = Stop
- ..... = Walk
- - - = Trot
- = Lope
- = Ext. Lope
- - - = Ext. Trot
- //// = Back

1. Walk
2. Trot serpentine
3. Lope left lead around the end of the arena, then diagonally across the arena
4. Change leads (simple or flying)
5. Lope on the right lead around the end of the arena
6. Extend lope on the straight away and around corner to the center of the arena
7. Extend trot around corner of the arena
8. Collect to a trot
9. Trot over poles
10. Stop, do a 360° turn each direction (either direction first, L-R or R-L)
11. Walk, stop and back

## RANCH RIDING PATTERN #4

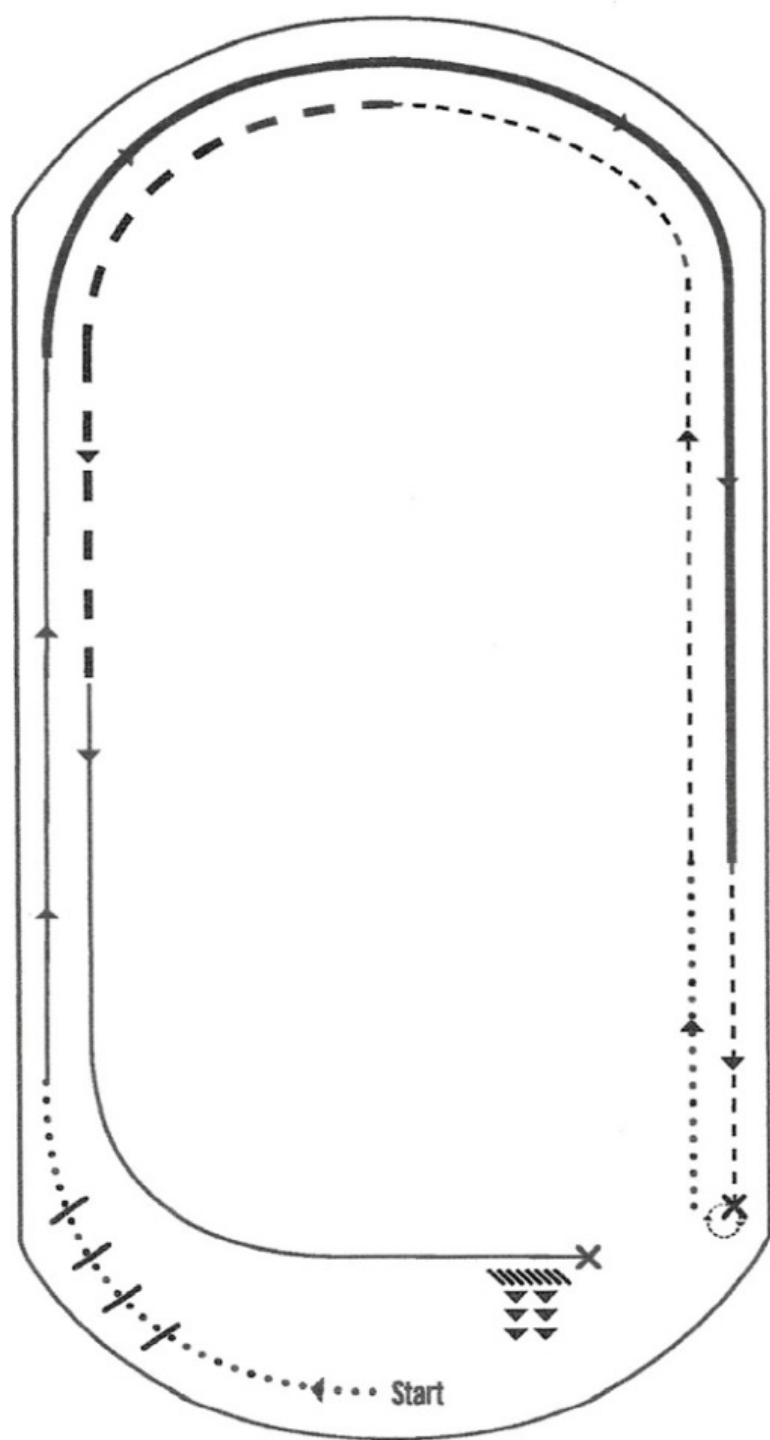


- | = Lead Change
- X = Stop
- ..... = Walk
- = Trot
- = Lope
- = Ext. Lope
- — = Ext. Trot
- //// = Back

1. Walk
2. Walk over logs
3. Trot
4. Lope on the right lead
5. Extended trot
6. Trot
7. Lope on the left lead
8. Change leads (simple or flying)
9. Right lead, extended lope
10. Collect lope
11. Trot
12. Walk
13. Stop & back
14. 360-degree turn each direction (either direction first, L-R or R-L)



# RANCH RIDING PATTERN #5



- | = Lead Change
- X = Stop
- ..... = Walk
- - - - = Trot
- = Lope
- — — = Ext. Lope
- - - - = Ext. Trot
- //// = Back

1. Walk
2. Walk over logs
3. Lope on right lead
4. Extended lope (right lead)
5. Trot
6. Stop, 1 1/2 turns right
7. Walk
8. Trot
9. Extended trot
10. Lope on left lead
11. Stop and back
12. Side pass right

## Ranch Riding Scoring:

When scoring technical performance maneuvers, utilizing this scoring method brings fairness and objectivity to the results. Example: A horse out of frame always carries a -1 penalty, which impacts the score in the same way for every rider.

- Each pattern is scored on the basis of 0 to 100, with each pattern starting at 70.
- **Each individual pattern element will receive BOTH a Maneuver Score and a Penalty Score**, even if there is no penalty incurred.
- A penalty score of zero “0” means that the maneuver was correct and performed without penalty. The goal is to earn a “0” penalty score.
  - When there is no penalty for the maneuver, leave the penalty box blank on score sheet.
- Maneuver scores range from +1.5 to -1.5, and should be added (if positive) or subtracted (if negative) from the score of 70.
- Penalty scores range from 0 to -10, and should be subtracted from the score of 70.
- When writing scores on score sheets, scribes should always use fractions, instead of decimal points. Example: 0.5 is easily confused with -5 when handwritten.

**Maneuver Scores:** To be determined and assessed independently of penalty points. Example: +0.5 maneuver score that is also assessed a penalty of -1.

- -1.5 extremely poor
- -1 very poor
- -0.5 poor
- 0 correct
- +0.5 good
- +1 very good
- +1.5 excellent



**Ranch Riding Penalties:**

- No specific penalties will be incurred for nicks/hits on logs or rails, but deduction may be made in maneuver score.
- No specific penalties will be incurred for over/under spin, but deduction may be made in maneuver score.

**1 Point Penalties:**

- Over-bridled (per maneuver)
- Out of frame (per maneuver)
- Too slow (per gait)
- Break of gait at walk or trot for two (2) strides or less
- Splitting log or rail at lope (one front hoof over log instead of both front feet simultaneously)

**3 Point Penalties:**

- Break of gait at walk or trot for more than 2 strides
- Break of gait at lope
- Wrong lead or out of lead (cross-canter)
- Excessive draped reins
- Severe disturbance of any obstacle
- Out of lead for more than 2 strides when changing leads
- Trotting more than 3 strides when making a simple lead change

**5 Point Penalties:**

- Blatant disobedience (kick, bite, buck, rear, etc) for EACH refusal

**Off Pattern: (OP)**

- **\*\*Exhibitors with an Off-Pattern designation CANNOT place above exhibitors who complete the pattern correctly\*\***
- **Continue scoring all maneuvers, but entry receives an OP designation for each off-pattern infraction in penalty box.**

**Off Pattern Infractions:**

- Eliminates or adds maneuver
- Incomplete maneuver
- Use of two hands on reins (except for junior horse in snaffle bit or hackamore)
- More than 1 finger between split reins, or any fingers between romal reins

**Disqualification: A DQ entry cannot be placed in the class.**

- Illegal equipment
- Braiding or banding mane
- Tail extension
- Willful abuse
- Major disobedience or schooling
- Lameness

## Ranch Trail

Purpose: test the horse's ability in a pattern of obstacles generally found during the course of everyday ranch work.

- Ranch Trail pattern only. No Rail Work. The pattern will be utilized to simulate ranch tasks and transitions from one task to another.
- The Ranch Trail course will be no less than 6 obstacles and no more than 10 obstacles.
- Pattern must include walk, trot, and lope (lead must specified for lope).
- An outdoor course is encouraged wherever possible.
- The judge(s) must walk the course and should alter the course if it is not in keeping with the intent of the class. Judges may remove or change any obstacles if they are deemed unsafe or overly difficult.
- Prohibited obstacles: tarps, water obstacles with slick surface, PVC pipe, tires, rails elevated in a manner that permits the obstacle to roll in a dangerous manner.

### Judging Criteria:

- Correctness, pattern accuracy, and mannerisms of the horse through the obstacles.
- Judging emphasis should be on identifying the well-broke, responsive, well-mannered horse which can correctly navigate & negotiate the course.

### Ranch Trail Patterns:

- Show management should create their own patterns using required & optional obstacles.
- Ranch Trail Score Sheets are available on the ASHBA website. Score boxes should be filled out according to pattern maneuvers.



## Ranch Trail Required Maneuvers:

- Ride over wooden rails on the ground at a walk, trot, or lope. Rails cannot be more than 10" high.
- Walk-Overs – no more than 5 rails per obstacle, with each rail spaced 28-32" apart.
- Trot-Overs – no more than 5 rails per obstacle, with each rail spaced 38-42" apart.
- Lope-Overs - Trot-Overs – no more than 5 rails per obstacle, with each rail spaced 6-7 feet apart.
- Opening, passing through, and closing a gate. A solid gate is suggested when available.
- Ride over a wooden bridge at a walk only. Bridge should be at least 36" wide and 6 feet long.
- Backing obstacle – should be spaced at a minimum of 36" and suggested back throughs include back an "L", back a "V" or back a "U".
- Side-pass obstacle – Side-pass any object that is safe. Example: side-pass over a log, or side pass in a chute between two logs.

## Ranch Trail Optional Obstacles:

- A jump obstacle whose center height is between 14-24" high
- Carry object from one part of the arena to another.
- Trot through cones spaced a minimum of 6' apart.
- Drag an object. Object being dragged should be of a reasonable size and weight to challenge the horse, but not so heavy as to be unmanageable for all riders. Dally is required when dragging. Dally is defined as at least half a wrap of the drag rope around the saddle horn.
- Remove and replace materials from a mailbox.
- Swing rope or throw rope at dummy steer head.
- Put on or pick up a slicker or coat.
- Walk through a water obstacle.
- Open Gate & Lead horse through.
- Pick up horse's feet (from the ground).
- Ground tie.
- Stand to mount with mounting block.





# Ranch Trail Penalties

## 1 Point Penalties:

- Over-bridled per maneuver
- Out of frame per maneuver
- Each hit, bite, or stepping on a log or rail, cone, plant, or any component of the obstacle
- Incorrect or break of gait at walk or trot for 2 strides or less
- Both front feet or hind feet in a single stride slot or space at a walk or trot
- Skipping over or failing to step into required space
- Split pole in lope over
- Incorrect number of strides if specified
- 1 or 2 steps on mount, dismount, or ground tie; except shifting to balance

## 3 Point Penalties:

- Wrong lead or out of lead
- Draped rein
- Break of gait at lope, except when correcting an incorrect lead
- Break of gait at walk or trot for more than 2 strides
- 3-4 steps on mount, dismount, or ground tie

## 5 Point Penalties:

- Spurring in front of cinch
- Blatant disobedience
- Use of either hand to instill fear or praise
- Knocking over, stepping out of, or falling off of an obstacle
- Dropping an object to be carried
- First or second cumulative refusal
- Letting go of gate
- 5 or more steps on mount, dismount, or ground tie

## 10 Point Penalties:

- Unnatural ranch horse appearance
- Horse's tail is obviously and consistently carried in an unnatural manner (blocking or alteration to prevent tail movement/swishing)
- Off Pattern (skipping an obstacle, going the wrong direction, or working obstacles out of order, etc)



# Ranch Trail Penalties

## Zero Score: Total Pattern Score is 0

- Repeated blatant disobedience

## Off Pattern:

- **\*\*Exhibitors with an Off-Pattern designation CANNOT place above exhibitors who complete the pattern correctly\*\***
- **Continue scoring all maneuvers, but entry receives an OP designation for each off-pattern infraction**

### **Off Pattern Infractions:**

- Breaking pattern (wrong direction, skipping obstacle, addition or deletion of maneuver, etc)
- Third Refusal
- Failure to dally and remain dallied on drag obstacle
- Use of 2 hands, except for junior horses in snaffle bridle or hackamore
- More than 1 finger between split reins, or any fingers between romal reins
- Failure to open and shut gate, or failure to complete gate

## Disqualification:

- **A DQ Entry cannot be placed in the class.**
- Lameness
- Abuse
- Leaving working area before pattern is complete
- Prohibited equipment
- Disrespect or misconduct
- Improper attire
- Fall of horse or exhibitor

