

## RULES FOR JUDGING

### A. GENERAL

To rein a horse is not only to guide him, but also to control his every movement. The best reined horse should be willingly guided or controlled with little or no apparent resistance and dictated to completely. Any movement on his own must be considered a lack of control. All deviations from the exact written pattern must be considered a lack of/or temporary loss of control and therefore a fault that must be marked down according to severity of deviation. After deducting all faults, set here within, against execution of the pattern and the horse's overall performance, credit should be given for smoothness, finesse, attitude, quickness and authority of performing various maneuvers, while using controlled speed which raises the difficulty level and makes him more exciting and pleasing to watch to an audience. The official guideline for the application for the rules for judging shall be as specified in the NRHA Judges Guide.

### B. SCORING

(1) The scoring will be on a basis of zero (0) Infinity, with seventy (70) denoting an average performance. The individual maneuvers are scored in one-half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) point increments from a low of  $-1\frac{1}{2}$  (one and one-half to a high of  $+1\frac{1}{2}$  (one and one-half) with a score of zero (0) denoting a maneuver that is correct with no degree of difficulty. Scores will be announced after each horse works.

(2) **TIES** All ties for 1st place will be worked off if the tied exhibitors agree to participate in a run-off. Tied exhibitors have the alternate option of agreeing not to run-off and to be named co-champions but must determine the winner of the awards by a flip of a coin. If they do not agree, the exhibitor(s) who does not want to run-off will forfeit first place to the other. (Exceptions: Freestyle reining. See Freestyle Reining conditions to determine winner or co-champions; Category 2 Snaffle Bit or Hackamore classes—a run-off is not required for 1st place.)

If a tie occurs after the run-off, the entrants will be named co-champions; will evenly split 1st and 2nd prize money, but must determine the winner of the awards by a flip of a coin. A horse not returning for a run-off without such an agreement will forfeit 1st place prize money regardless of the added money. In the case of a run-off, the contestant(s) not winning the run-off cannot be placed lower than the lowest position for which he/she was tied, i.e., 2nd/3rd. All other ties are not worked off and will involve as many places as there are horses tied, i.e., 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, The prize money in the previously mentioned example is added together and split equally-four ways.

### (3) Equipment:

(a) References to hackamore mean the use of a flexible, braided, rawhide, leather, or rope bosal, the core of which may

be either rawhide or flexible cable with a maximum diameter of 3/4" at the cheek. Absolutely no rigid material will be permitted under the jaws or on the noseband in connection with the bosal, regardless of how padded or covered. Horsehair bosals are prohibited. This rule does not refer to the so-called mechanical hackamore which is illegal.

**(b)** References to snaffle bits mean conventional O-ring, egg-butt, or D-ring with a ring no larger than 4" and no smaller than 2". The inside circumference of the ring must be free of rein, curb or headstall attachments which would provide leverage. The mouthpiece should be round, oval or egg-shaped, smooth and free of wire. It may be inlaid, but smooth and/or latex wrapped. The bars must be a minimum of 5/16" in diameter, measured 1" in from the cheek with a gradual decrease to center of the snaffle. Optional curb strap is acceptable however curb chains are not acceptable. These requirements remain the same for all classes in which a rider may use a snaffle bit.

**(c)** References to a bit means the use of a curb bit that has a solid or broken mouthpiece, has shanks and acts with leverage. All curb bits must be free of mechanical device and should be considered a standard western bit. A standard western bit includes:

1. 8½" maximum length shank to be measured as indicated in the judge's guide. Shanks may be fixed or loose.
2. Concerning mouthpieces, bars must be round, oval or egg-shaped, smooth and free of wire of 5/16" to 3/4" in diameter, measured 1" from the cheek. They may be inlaid, but must be smooth or latex wrapped. Nothing may protrude more than 1/8" below the mouthpiece (bar).
3. The port must be no higher than 3½" maximum, with rollers and covers acceptable. Broken mouthpieces, half-breeds, and spades are standard.
4. Slip or gag bits, donuts or flat polo mouthpieces are not acceptable.

**(d)** Except for Snaffle Bit and Freestyle, Green and Ride Classes, only one hand may be used on the reins, and the hand must not be changed. The hand is to be around the reins, with the bight or tail of the reins exiting the heel of the hand. Index finger only between split reins is permitted. Violation of this rule results in a penalty score of zero (0). In the NRHA Green and Ride classes, the rider must not change hands or switch from one to two hands.

**(e)** When a curb bit is used, a curb strap or curb chain is required, which must be at least ½" in width, lie flat against the jaw, and be free of barbs, wire, and/or twists.

**(4)** The following will result in no score:

**(a)** infraction of any state or federal law which exists pertaining to the exhibition, care, and custody of horses within the

- state or country where an NRHA Reining is being held;
- (b)** abuse of an animal in the show arena and/or evidence that an act of abuse has occurred prior to or during the exhibition of a horse in competition;
  - (c)** use of illegal equipment, including wire on bits, bosals or curb chains;
  - (d)** use of illegal bits, bosals or curb chains;
  - (e)** use of tack collars, tie downs or nose bands;
  - (f)** use of whips or bats;
  - (g)** use of any attachment which alters the movement of or circulation to the tail;
  - (h)** failure to dismount and/or present horse and equipment to the appropriate judge for inspection;
  - (i)** disrespect or misconduct by the exhibitor.
  - (j)** the judge(s) may excuse a horse at any time while in the arena for unsafe conditions or improper exhibition pertaining to both the horse and/or rider.
  - (k)** closed reins are not allowed except as standard romal reins and mecates on snaffle bits and bosals in classes where the use of two hands is allowed and in the Youth 10 & Under Short Stirrup class where closed reins are allowed.
- (5)** Excess rein may be straightened at any place a horse is allowed to be completely stopped during a pattern. When using a romal, the rider's hand shall be around the reins with the wrist kept straight and relaxed, the thumb on top and the hand closed around the reins; no fingers between the reins are allowed. The free hand may be used to hold the romal provided it is held in a relaxed position and there is at least 16" of romal from the free hand to the reining hand. Use of the free hand while holding the romal to alter the tension or length of the reins from the bridle to the reining hand is considered to be the use of two hands, and a score of zero (0) will be applied with the exception of any place a horse is allowed to be completely stopped during a pattern.
- (6)** The following will result in a \$25 fine:
- (a)** failure to have correct exhibitor number displayed.
- (7)** The following will result in a score of zero (0):
- (a)** use of more than index or first finger between reins;
  - (b)** use of two (2) hands (exception in Snaffle Bit, Hackamore, NRHA Green or Ride classes designated for two hands) or changing hands;
  - (c)** use of romal other than as outlined in #5;
  - (d)** failure to complete pattern as written;
  - (e)** performing the maneuvers other than in specified order;
  - (f)** the inclusion of maneuvers not specified, including, but not limited to
    1. backing more than two (2) strides
    2. turning more than ninety (90) degrees
    3. On run in patterns, once beginning a canter a complete

stop prior to reaching the first marker.

(Exception: a complete stop in the 1st quarter ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ) of a circle after a canter departure is not to be considered an inclusion of maneuver; a two (2) point break of gait penalty will apply.) (See Figure #3B)

- (g) equipment failure that delays completion of pattern;
- (h) balking or refusal of command where performance is delayed;
- (i) running away or failing to guide where it becomes impossible to discern whether the entry is on pattern;
- (j) jogging in excess of one-half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) circle or one-half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) the length of the arena ;
- (k) over spins of more than one quarter ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ) turn;
- (l) fall to the ground by horse or rider. A horse is deemed to have fallen when its shoulder and/or hip and/or underline touches the ground;
- (m) dropping a rein that contacts the ground while the horse is in motion;
- (n) failure to wear appropriate western attire as outlined in the *NRHA Handbook*, Section L. in General Show Conditions 8.

**NOTE:** Neither a no score nor a zero (0) is eligible to place in a go round nor single go round class. Neither a no score nor a zero (0) may advance in a multi-go event. In multi-go events, finals qualifying horses that get a zero (0) or scratch will still be eligible for payouts, with a zero (0) placing higher than a scratch. In the event not enough horses qualify for total purse distribution, the undistributed portion of the purse will be retained by show management.

- (8) The following will result in a penalty of five (5) points:
  - (a) spurring in front of cinch;
  - (b) use of either hand to instill fear or praise;
  - (c) holding saddle with either hand, except in the Youth 10 & Under Short Stirrup class where holding the saddle is allowed;
  - (d) blatant disobedience including kicking, biting, bucking, rearing and striking.
- (9) The following will result in a two (2) point penalty:
  - (a) break of gait; Note: Simple lead changes are allowed in NRHA Green classes, no break of gait penalty should be applied during the lead change. NRHA Ride classes may use altered patterns and if simple lead changes are specified, no break of gait penalty should be applied during the lead changes.
  - (b) freezing up in spins or rollbacks;
  - (c) on walk in patterns, cantering prior to reaching the center of the arena and/or failure to stop or walk before executing a canter departure;
    - (a) on run in patterns, failure to be in a canter prior to reach-

ing the first marker or break of gait prior to the first marker.

**(b)** if a horse does not completely pass the specified marker before initiating a stop position.

**(10)** Starting or performing circles or eights out of lead will be judged as follows:

**(a)** Each time a horse is out of lead, a judge is required to penalize by one (1) point. The penalty for being out of lead is cumulative, and the judge will add one (1) penalty point for each one quarter ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ) of the circumference of a circle or any part thereof that a horse is out of lead.

**(b)** A judge is required to penalize a horse one half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) of a point for a delayed change of lead by one (1) stride where the lead change is required by the pattern description.

**(11)** Deduct one half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) point for starting circle at a jog or exiting rollbacks at a jog up to two (2) strides. Jogging beyond two (2) strides but less than one half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) circle or one half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) the length of the arena, deduct two (2) points.

**(12)** Deduct one half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) point for over or under spinning up to one eighth ( $\frac{1}{8}$ ) of a turn; deduct one (1) point for over or under spinning up to one quarter ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ) of a turn.

**(13)** In patterns requiring a run-around, failure to be on the correct lead when rounding the end of the arena will be penalized as follows: for one half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) the turn or less, 1 point; for more than one half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) turn, two (2) points.

**(14)** There will be a one half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) point penalty for failure to remain a minimum of twenty (20) feet from the side of the arena when approaching a stop and/or rollback.

**(15)** Judges may not confer on any penalty or maneuver score prior to submitting a score. If a major penalty (a penalty which results in a no score, a zero (0), or a five (5) point penalty) is unclear, a judge will submit his/her score and ask that the score be held, pending a conference or review of the official video at the next drag or as soon as practical. Should the judges determine via conference or video replay that a penalty was incurred, it should be applied. If, however, no penalty occurred, the score will be announced as originally submitted. No judge shall be required to change his/her score following a conference or video replay. Each judge's decision is an individual call and based on individual decision from a conference or video replay. The use of video equipment by the judges is only permissible if the judge has reason to believe that all entries have been videotaped.

**(16)** The judge shall have the authority to remove any contestant from a show he is judging, should said contestant show any disrespect or misconduct so as to render himself or the show in an unprofessional manner.

**(17)** All riders must dismount and the horse must be presented and the bridle dropped by the rider or a designated representative. The horse and equipment must be checked by the designated judge in the arena or in close proximity to the arena during a pre- or post-check. Should the equipment judge detect cause

for a no score the exhibitor or his/her representative, trainer or guardian may at that time accept the no score and allow the equipment judge to cause the appropriate changes to all score cards or request the other judges confer on the appropriate call. In the case of a youth exhibitor, should a parent, trainer or guardian not be present, it will be assumed that all parties are aware of this rule and agree to abide by the exhibitor's decision. If requested, the equipment judge will confer with the other judges as soon as practical. Failure to comply with this rule shall result in a no score.

**(18)** Judges shall be the sole persons responsible to determine if a rider has correctly completed the pattern as written.

**(19)** An exhibitor or owner in the respective class may request a review of a major penalty (penalty score zero (0) and five (5) point penalty). The judge(s) has the right to deny or honor the request. If honored by the judge(s) he/she must believe the entire class was videotaped by an official videographer. The request must be made no later than thirty (30) minutes after the last run of the day and before the judge(s) has left the grounds for the day. In cases where a class is run in sections over multiple days, each day's scores will be official thirty (30) minutes after the last run of each section. Exhibitors or owners may not have direct contact with the judge(s) during the entire process of requesting a review. The request must be submitted to the Show Steward, Show Representative, or if need be Show management who will take the request to the judge(s).

**(20)** NRHA permits the judge the option of awarding a re ride to any contestant who in the judge's opinion is unable to complete a pattern for reasons that are out of the rider's control. In the instance where a re ride is warranted in the judge's opinion, the judge should advise the NRHA Representative and/or horse show management of such as soon as is possible.

**(21)** The NRHA Judges Committee will evaluate individual requests from challenged riders regarding the use of aids when exhibiting. In the event an individual is granted special privileges, he or she will be presented said privileges in writing and must provide a copy to the show committee each time he or she exhibits. The Show Committee is required to present said privileges to the Judge(s) as well as the individual's draw number and exhibitor number prior to the class in which he or she will be competing.