

# Western Saddle Clubs Association Ranch Horse Guidelines 2023



## General Rules

- The Ranch Horse classes are designed to show the overall ability of the horse to perform skills necessary to those of the all-around ranch horse.
- No horses less than 3 years of age may be exhibited.
- Only horses or ponies permitted. No mules or donkeys.
- Exhibitor must be a member in good standing of a Western Saddle Clubs Association saddle club and complete all registration information by deadlines found online at [wsca.org](http://wsca.org).

## Showcase Classes

Ranch classes will be offered in the following age divisions:

17 & Under

18-35

35 & Over

Cross entries into additional pleasure classes will be permitted.

## Ranch Riding

### Purpose

The purpose of the ranch riding class is to evaluate the rider's ability to execute, in concert with their horse, a set of maneuvers with precision and smoothness while exhibiting poise and confidence, and maintaining a balanced, functional and fundamentally correct body position. The horse should be well-trained, relaxed, quiet, soft and cadenced at all gaits. The ideal ranch horse will travel with forward movement and demonstrate an obvious lengthening of stride at extended gaits. 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.

### Class Routine

Ranch Riding will consist of individual pattern work only. Ranch Riding patterns will be included for judges' selection.

### Ranch Riding Patterns

1. Each horse will work individually, performing both required and optional maneuvers, and scored on the basis of 0 to 100, with 70 denoting an average performance.
2. The required maneuvers will include the walk, trot, and lope both directions; the extended trot and extended lope at least one direction; as well as stops, and back.
3. Three optional maneuvers may include a side pass, turns of 360 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.
4. The maneuvers may be arranged in various combinations with final approval by the judge.
5. The overall cadence and performance of the gaits should be as those

described in Western Performance classes with an emphasis on forward movement, free-flowing, and ground covering for all gaits. Transitions should be performed where designated, with smoothness and responsiveness.

6. No time limit.

7. One of the suggested five patterns may be used, however a judge may utilize a different pattern as long as all required maneuvers and the three (or more) optional maneuvers are included.

8. Sitting at the regular trot and lope is recommended; though standing in the stirrups at the extended trot and extended lope, or posting the extended trot is acceptable.

## **Ranch Riding Scoring & Penalty System**

### **Ranch Riding Scoring**

The scoring system is designed to be positive, straightforward, and always encourage growth and improvement in both horse and rider. The scoring system is designed to give credit for the work done. Each horse/rider team is scored between 0-100 points. The horse/rider team is scored on the quality of each maneuver (e.g., -1 1/2 extremely poor; -1 very poor; -1/2 poor; 0 correct, +1/2 Good, +1 very good, +1 1/2 excellent). Plusses and minuses are a reflection of the smoothness, finesse, attitude, quickness and authority of the horse/ rider team when performing the various maneuvers. Penalties may be accrued for incorrect maneuver execution. Posting or standing at the extended trot is acceptable.

### **Ranch Riding Penalties**

A contestant shall be penalized each time the following occur:

#### **Minor Penalties:**

1. Too slow/per gait.
2. Over-bridled.
3. Out of frame.
4. Break of gait at walk or jog for 2 strides or less.

#### **Major Penalties:**

5. Break of gait at walk or jog for more than 2 strides.
6. Break of gait at lope.
7. Wrong lead or out of lead.
8. Draped reins.
9. Out of lead or cross-cantering more than two strides.
10. Trotting more than three strides when taking lead.
11. Severe disturbance of any obstacle.

#### **Severe Penalties:**

12. Blatant disobedience (kick, bite, buck, rear, etc.).
13. Each refusal

#### **Placed Below Horses Performing All Maneuvers:**

14. Eliminates maneuver.
15. Incomplete maneuver.

#### **Zero Score:**

16. Illegal equipment.
17. Willful abuse.
18. Major disobedience or schooling.

\*Rider may only touch the saddle with the free hand at the extended trot.

\*No penalties will be incurred for hits/ nicks of logs, but deductions may be made from maneuver score.

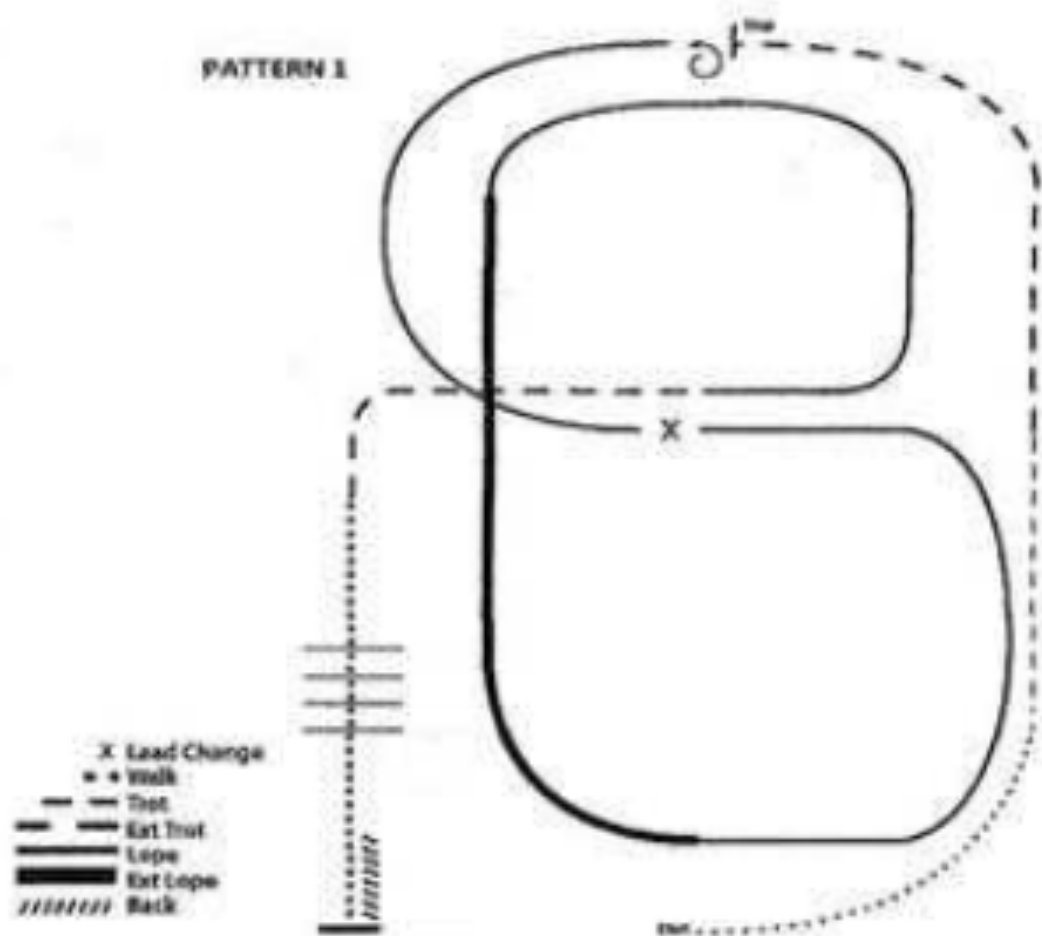
\*No penalties will be incurred for over/ under spins, but deductions may be made in maneuver score.

### **Ranch Riding Apparel and Equipment**

1. Hoof polish is discouraged.
2. Braided or banded manes and artificial hair extensions are discouraged.
3. Trimming inside ears is discouraged.
4. Trimming bridle path is allowed, also trimming of fetlocks or excessive (long) facial hair.
5. Grooming allowances will be made for horses exhibited in additional classes.
6. Equipment with silver should not count over a good working outfit. Silver on bridles and saddles is discouraged.
7. It is suggested that competitors use a breast collar and rear cinch. Horses, of all ages, may be shown in a snaffle, bosal, or curb bit. When a bit is used, the mouthpiece must be at least 5/16" and not more than 3/4" in diameter measured one inch from cheek and must be smooth. A standard western curb bit must not be longer than 8 1/2 inches measured on the outside length from the top bridle attachment to the rein attachment. The port must not be higher than 3 1/2 inches with rollers and covers acceptable. Broken mouthpieces, spades and halfbreeds are standard. Split reins shall be used with all bits except that a romal is acceptable with a curb bit. Closed reins are not allowed except as standard romal reins or standard mecate reins which include a tie rope with snaffle bit or bosal. Curb straps are required for curb bits and the curb chains or straps 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. Absolutely no iron will be permitted under the jaws. Prohibited equipment includes tie downs, cavessons, slip or gag bits, donut or flat polo mouthpieces, mechanical hackamores and running martingales.

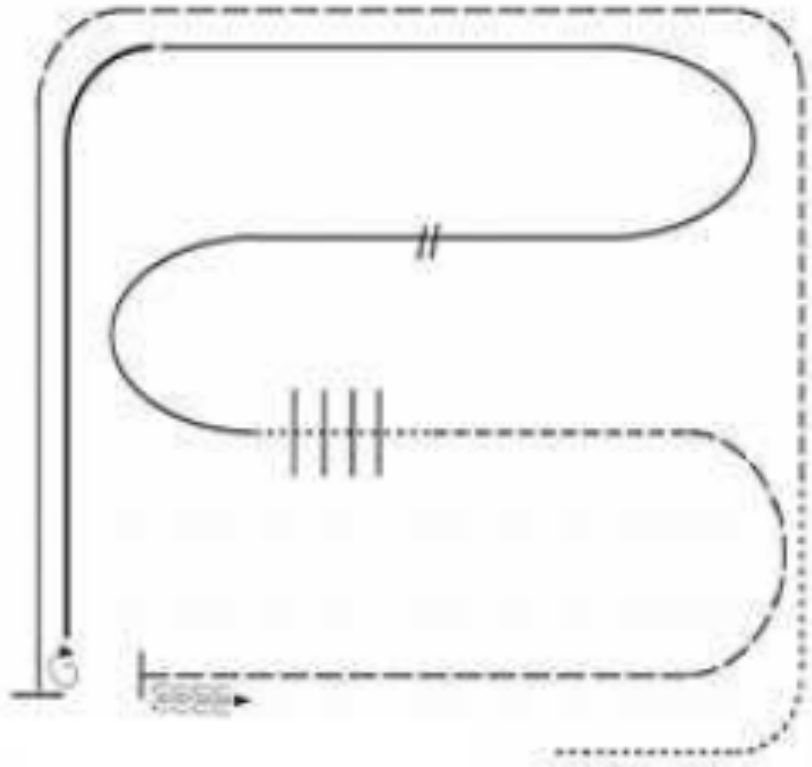
### **2023 Ranch Riding Patterns**

Judges are encouraged to select from these patterns at local saddle club events.



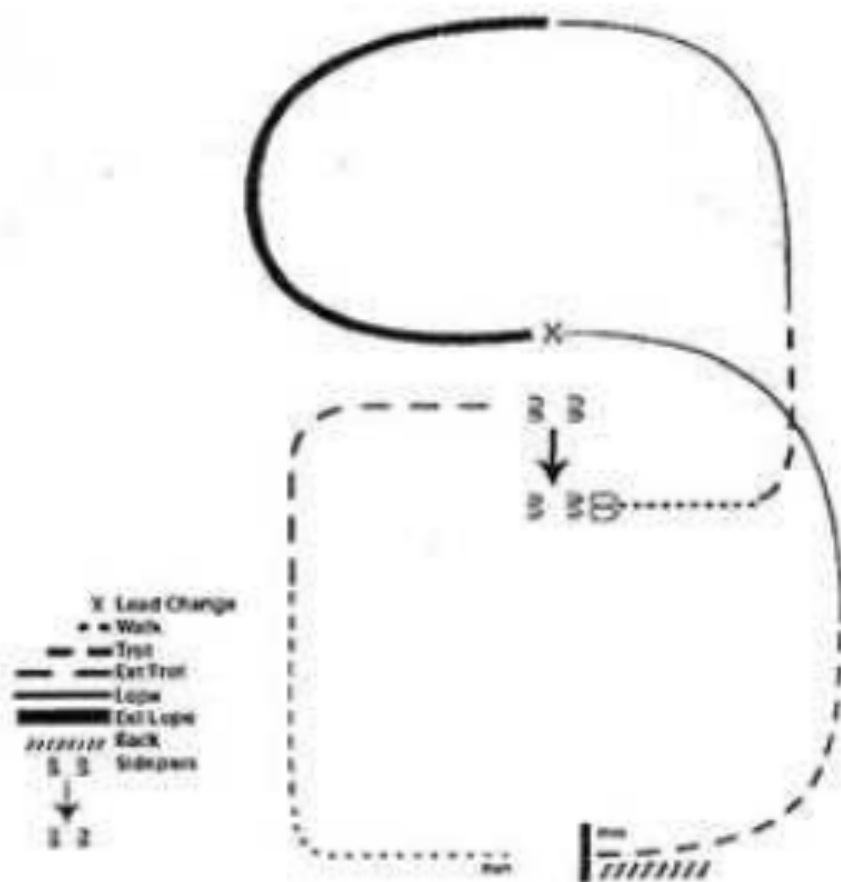
1. Walk
2. Trot
3. Extended trot. At the top of the arena, stop
4. 360 degree turn to the left
5. Lope left lead half circle to the center of arena
6. Change leads (simple or flying)
7. Right lead half circle
8. Extended lope right lead up the long side of the arena
9. Collect back to a lope around the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

## PATTERN 2



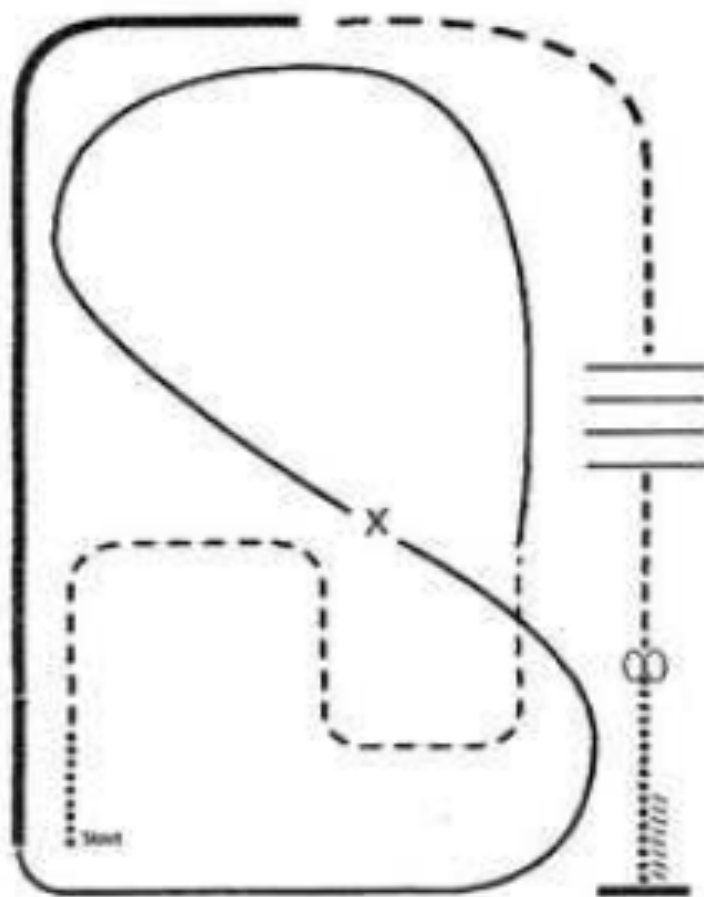
1. Walk
2. Trot
3. Extended trot
4. Lope left lead
5. Stop, 1-1/2 turn right
6. Extended lope
7. Collect to a working lope, right lead
8. Change leads (simple or flying)
9. Walk
10. Walk over logs
11. Trot
12. Extended trot
13. Stop and back

### PATTERN 3



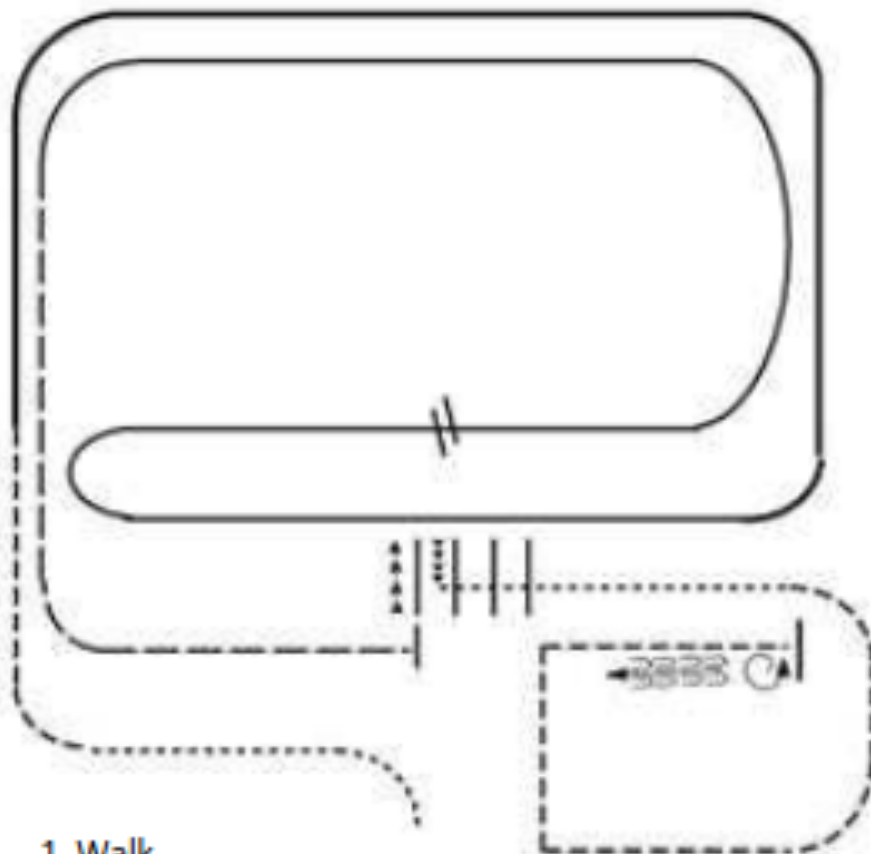
1. Walk to the left around corner of arena
2. Trot
3. Extended trot along the side of arena and around corner to center
4. Stop, sidepass right
5. 360 degree turn each direction, either way first (R-L or L-R)
6. Walk
7. Trot
8. Lope left lead
9. Extended lope
10. Change leads (simple or flying)
11. Collect to a lope
12. Extended trot
13. Stop and back

#### PATTERN 4



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

### PATTERN 5

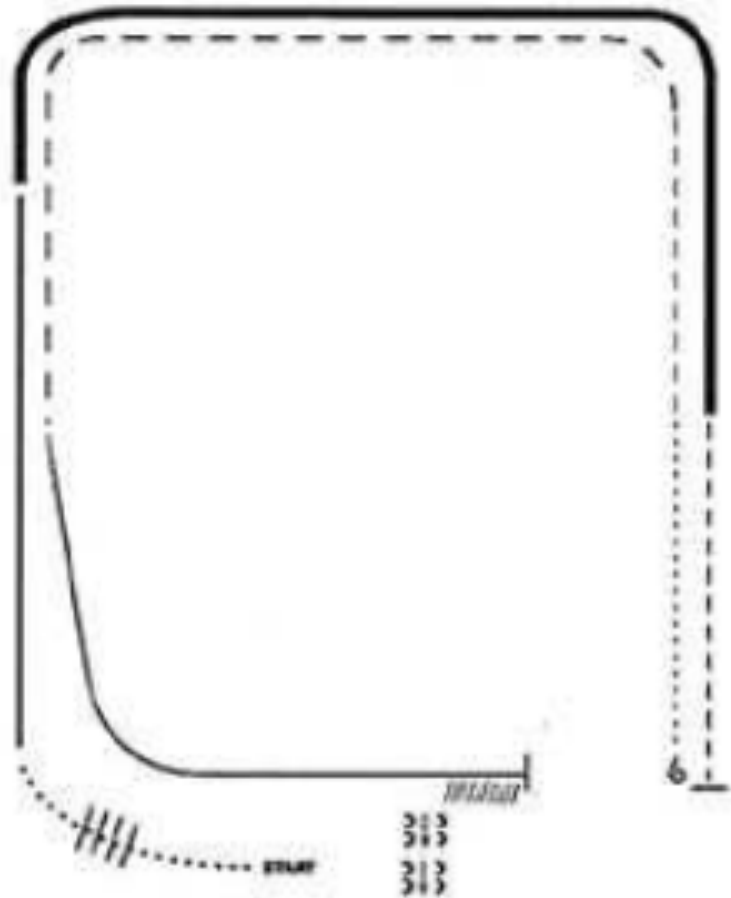


1. Walk
2. Trot
3. Extended lope right lead
4. Lope right lead
5. Change leads (simple or flying)
6. Lope left lead
7. Extended trot
8. Stop. Sidepass log left, sidepass right halfway
9. Walk over logs
10. Walk
11. Trot square
12. Stop, 360 degree turn left, back





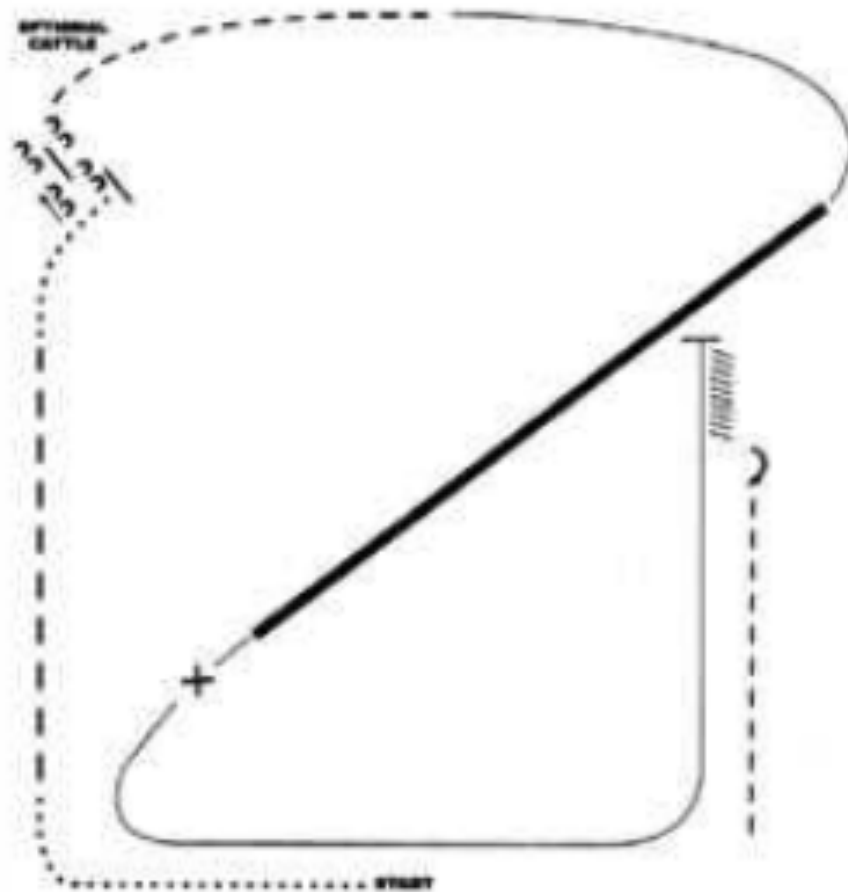
PATTERN 7



1. Walk
2. Walk over logs
3. Lope right lead
4. Extended lope right lead
5. Trot
6. Stop, 1-1/2 turn right
7. Walk
8. Trot
9. Extended trot
10. Lope left lead
11. Stop and back
12. Sidepass right



## PATTERN 9



1. Walk
2. Extended trot
3. Walk
4. Stop, sidepass log left
5. Trot
6. Lope right lead
7. Extended lope right lead
8. Collect lope and change leads (simple or flying)
9. Lope left lead
10. Stop and back
11. 180 degree turn to the right
12. Trot



# Ranch Rail Pleasure

## Purpose

The ranch rail pleasure class measures the ability of the horse to be a pleasure to ride while being used as a means of conveyance from one ranch task to another and should reflect the versatility, attitude, and movement of a working horse. The horse should be well-trained, relaxed, quiet, soft and cadenced at all gaits. The ideal ranch horse will travel with forward movement and demonstrate an obvious lengthening of stride at extended gaits. 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. The overall manners and responsiveness of the horse to make timely transitions in a smooth and correct manner, as well as the quality of the movement are of primary considerations.

## Class Routine

The class will work both directions on the rail and require at least 1 (one) extension of gait at the trot or lope. This class is intended as a rail class but individuals working off the rail will not be penalized, and in fact, riders are encouraged to use adequate space given the extension of gaits required. Horses are required to back.

## Ideal

The ideal ranch rail horse should have a natural head carriage at each gait. In all gaits, movement of the ranch rail pleasure horse should simulate a horse needing to cover long distances, softly and quietly, like 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 quality of the horse's movement are the primary considerations.

## Gaits

The following terminology shall apply:

1. Walk – The walk is a natural, flat footed, four-beat gait. The gait is rhythmic and ground-covering. As in all gaits, the horse should display a level, or slightly above level topline with a bright, attentive expression.
2. Trot – The trot is a natural two-beat gait demonstrating more forward motion than the western jog.
3. Extended Trot – The extended trot is an obvious lengthening of the stride with a definite increase in pace. The horse should be moving in a manner as if it were covering a large area on a ranch with an above level topline.
4. Lope – The lope is a three-beat gait. The lope should be relaxed and smooth with a natural, forward moving stride.
5. Extended Lope – The extended lope is not a run or a race but should be an obvious lengthening of the stride, demonstrating a forward, working speed. The horse should display an above level topline with a bright, attentive expression.

## Evaluating Transitions and Guiding

Part of the evaluation of this class is on smoothness of transitions. A horse may be collected from the extended trot as the horse moves into the lope. The transition from the extended lope down to the trot is a transition to the seated trot, not the extended trot. Therefore, an extra cue to achieve this gait is expected. Horses that complete this total transition within three strides calmly and obediently should be rewarded. Horses that attempt to stop or do stop prior to trotting will be penalized. Judges expect to see horses that have been trained to respond to cues. To see these cues applied discretely and the horse responding correctly could be a credit earning situation. 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.

## **Ranch Class Apparel and Equipment:**

Attire and tack should be clean and presentable. Working tack is encouraged.

1. Hoof polish is discouraged.
2. Braided or banded manes and tail extensions are discouraged.
3. Trimming inside ears is discouraged.
4. Trimming bridle path, fetlocks or excessively long facial hair is allowed.
5. Grooming allowances will be made for horses exhibited in additional classes.
6. Equipment with silver should not count over a good working outfit. Silver bridles and saddles are discouraged.
7. It is suggested that competitors use a breast collar and rear cinch.

Horses, of all ages, may be shown in a snaffle, bosal, or curb bit. When a bit is used, the mouthpiece must be at least 5/16" and not more than 3/4" in diameter measured one inch from cheek and must be smooth. Nothing may protrude below the mouthpiece such as extensions or prongs. A standard western curb bit must not be longer than 8 1/2 inches measured on the outside length from the top bridle attachment to the rein attachment. The port must not be higher than 3 1/2 inches with rollers and covers acceptable. Broken mouthpieces and halfbreeds are standard. Split reins shall be used with all bits except that a romal is acceptable with a curb bit. Closed reins are not allowed except as standard romal reins or standard mecate reins which include a tie rope with snaffle bit or bosal. Curb straps are required for curb bits and the curb chains or straps 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. Absolutely no iron will be permitted under the jaws. Prohibited equipment includes tie downs, cavessons, gag bits, mechanical hackamores and running martingales.