

NRCHA
NATIONAL REINED COW HORSE ASSOCIATION



Reined Cow Horse Rules

2024 National High School Finals Rodeo

Primo

Reined Cow Horse - updated rules for NHSFR

General Rules:

REINED COW HORSE will use NRCHA rules when not in conflict with NHSRA rules. Contestants may change horses in the Reined Cow Horse throughout the season. A Contestant may not change horses between the rein work and cow work portion of an event.

1. Reined Cow Horse must be offered at all State/Province Finals. States/Provinces will have two options in conducting their qualified Reined Cow Horses.
 - a. Option I: Reined Cow Horse will be held at or assigned to each qualifying rodeo. All points earned in the Reined Cow Horse will be applied to the All Around.
 - b. Option II: The Reined Cow Horse will be offered at a minimum of three (3) times at the qualifying level. If optional Reined Cow Horse are approved, points may be used for an award for the All-Arounds for that qualifying rodeo.
 - c. Choice of Option I or Option II must be approved by the State/Province Board of Directors prior to the rodeo season. The decision must be conveyed to State/Province membership and the NHSRA office prior to the start of rodeo season.
2. The State/Province may hold their Reined Cow Horse Finals prior to their State/Province Finals Rodeo. If they choose to do so, the Reined Cow Horse must be held within 60 days of the State/Province Finals Rodeo.
 - a. All Reined Cow Horse must be approved on an activity sheet by the National Director and the National Executive Director.
 - b. States/Provinces are encouraged to hold as many Reined Cow Horse events as possible. Holding multiple events or events with local NRCHA associations may help to reduce cost.
3. All states/provinces will hold a minimum of three (3) Reined Cow Horses at the qualifying level.

Event Rules:

1. Reined Cow Horse is co-ed. Boys and girls will compete in the same event.
2. Horse's name will not be announced; only the contestant's name and number may be announced.
3. In the Reined Cow Horse, each go round will be randomly drawn.
4. National Reined Cow Horse Association Open rules will be followed when not in conflict with NHSRA Rules.
5. Standing rules and rules for judging.
 - a. No two exhibitors can ride the same horse.
 - b. A contestant may drop out of the cow horse contest, due to injury to himself or horse.
 - c. All contestants will work at the appointed time so designated by the arena director or be disqualified. Horses are to be judged on performance only, regardless of conformation, sex, age, color, appearance, previous performance or breed.
 - d. Each judge must sign his/her score card and the rodeo secretary shall post the score cards in a conspicuous place immediately following each performance. There must not be any consultation between judges until after score cards are turned in and after cards are turned in there will be no changes. Mathematical corrections can be made within one hour of the class ending. When two or more individuals are judging a cow horse contest and one or two judges cannot complete judging of a go-round, the score or scores of the remaining judge or judges who complete the go-round will be the sole basis of computing the go-round. Each judge must score each horse individually, and if any one of his scores is counted in a go-round, all of his scores must be counted. Judges must be mounted or seated on stands high enough to see clearly.
 - e. When a contestant is thrown from a horse, or falls off a horse, or horse falls to ground, the work is terminated and a score of zero will be given for that part of the run. i.e. If a rider is thrown from a horse during the rein work, he or she may re-mount to complete the cow work portion of the event for a score.

6. The following rules were adopted as a judging standard of Cow Horse contest after due consideration and careful study by the National Reined Cow Horse Association. Attention was given to the fact that no two cattle will act alike. These rules constitute a fair basis for judging all Cow Horses in contest and determining both their good work and occasional bad habits. The reined work and the cow work will be judged separately from **60** to 80. The two scores are added together for the final score. A total score of more than 110 will be required to receive placing or points.

- a. **General Description: Credit must always be given when applicable, even when there is a penalty involved. When the judge is in doubt, benefit always goes to the contestant. The scoring system is based on 60-80 points. Half-points may be used. The contestant is judged from the time that he/she enters the arena until he/she completes the pattern.** A judge marks from zero to 80 points. An average performance should be marked 70 points. A judge should be careful not to mark an average performance too high because the next horse that shows may put on a top performance that deserves 5 or 6 points above average, and if the average performance was marked 75, that would leave no room to give the top horse the credit he deserves above the other.
- b. **Horses are judged on performance only.**
- c. **Scoring System - The scoring system for NHSRA classes is based on a 60-80 point system. The lowest score possible is 60 points and the highest score possible is 80. the average score for a typical work is 70.**
- d. **Failure of exhibitor to attempt to take the cow down the fence in the fence work portion of the class; failure to attempt to compete the reined world portion of the class; will result in the exhibitor not being eligible for placing. This will be considered a Non-entry and will be designated by the judge as N-E in the score box of the judge's cards. An entry which attempts to complete the cow work pattern and has not been disqualified will be scored accordingly to the judge's discretion. An entry going off pattern in the rein work will receive a score of zero. An entry which attempts both the rein work and**

- the cow portion may be placed, even if a 0 score is received in one portion of the class. (Example: If a horse is disqualified and receives a 0 score for the rein work, but scored a 70 for the cow work, its total score would be a 70 and the horse would be eligible for placing.)**
- e. **A judge may blow his/her whistle at any time to terminate the work. A score of zero will be given if the work is not complete at that time.**
 - f. **Horse must appear visibly sound at the beginning of the run. In the case of a multiple judged event the majority of the judges must agree on soundness prior to the horse beginning the pattern or work. Obvious lameness will be cause for immediate disqualification.**
 - g. **No score will include abuse or lameness of the horse. Abuse is defined as exhibiting a lame horse, abusive showing or schooling techniques. Zero tolerance is defined as: Abusive showing techniques will not be tolerated and will be whistled out by the judge immediately. Failure of exhibitor to stop immediately will result in punishment from the State, Provincial or National Board.**
 - h. A judge (or judges) shall present in writing any grievance that he may have against contestants or show to an officer, director, secretary, or duly elected or appointed representative of the National High School Rodeo Association at the time of the grievance, and his/her case will be reviewed by the appropriate committee.
 - i. A judge shall conduct himself in a manner fitting and proper to one afforded the honor of officiating at any NHSRA approved contest. Any misconduct on the part of the judge at any NHSRA approved rodeo, such as drinking immediately prior the contest, the use of abusive language, showing obvious favoritism to, or discrimination against, either an individual or a horse performing in the contest, or any misconduct unbecoming to one in his position will make him subject to a complete and impartial hearing of the cause of the complaint before the appropriate committee.
 - j. NHSRA cow horse judges do not have to be NRCHA approved judges. Judges should have equine experience and

expertise, as well as good personal character and conduct. Judges must have a good understanding of the sport, rules and purpose of the cow horse event.

Equipment

1. Age-Appropriate Headgear - Horses 5 years old and younger may be shown in a snaffle bit, hackamore, curb bit, half-breed, spade bit or two-rein setup. Horses 6 years old and older may only be shown in a curb bit, half-breed, spade bit or two-rein setup.

a. If asked, any contestant showing a horse in a snaffle or hackamore must provide the rodeo or show secretary documentation proving the age of the horse is 5 years of age or less. Documentation should physically describe the horse with drawings or photos. Examples: breed registration certificate, current health and coggins, grade registration from association or state brand papers.

b. If a contestant shows a horse that is 6 years old or over in a hackamore or snaffle they will be zeroed in both phases of competition.

2. Bit: 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. The overall length of the bit shall not be longer than 8½ inches measured from the inside bottom of the top of headstall ring to point of pull in the bottom ring. Shanks may be fixed or loose.

b. Mouthpieces - Bars must be round, oval or egg shaped, smooth and unwrapped metal of 5/16" to 3/4" in diameter, measured 1" from the cheek. They may be inlaid, but must be smooth. However, wire on the sway bars (above the bars and attaching to the spade) of a traditional spade bit is acceptable. Nothing may protrude below the mouthpiece (bar), such as extensions or prongs, including upward prongs on solid mouthpieces. The mouthpiece may be two pieces and the port must be no higher than 3 1/2" maximum, with rollers and covers acceptable. Broken mouthpieces, half-breeds and

spades are standard; Slip or gag bits, donut or flat polo mouthpieces are prohibited.

c. When using a curb bit, only one hand is permitted to be on the reins.

i. Split Reins – Rider may not switch hands. With split reins, only one finger is permitted between the reins. The hand is to be around the reins and the index finger, only, between split reins is permitted.

ii. Romal Reins – If romal reins are used, the reins can be held in either hand, with hand around reins in a fist position with thumbs up. The non-rein hand must be on the romal. (The keeper, or hobble, that attaches the romal to the reins is considered to be a part of the romal.) The non-rein hand is not allowed, at any time, to touch the reins or a score of -0- will be applied. The rider is allowed to shorten the reins while the horse is in motion as long as their hands are held in a legal manner. No fingers are permitted between the reins except when using a two-rein setup.

3. Snaffle Bit: Snaffle bits are a conventional O-ring, egg-butt or D-ring with a ring no larger than 4" in diameter. These bits must be such that when the reins are pulled no undue leverage is applied, i.e. the inside of the circumference of the ring must be free of rein, curb, or head stall attachments.

a. The mouthpiece should be round, oval or egg-shaped, smooth and unwrapped metal. It may be inlaid, but smooth. The bars must be a minimum of 5/16" in diameter, measured one inch in from the cheek with a gradual decrease to center of the snaffle. The mouthpiece may be two pieces.

b. A leather or other woven material chin strap or hobble of any width is to be used. No iron, chain or other material may be used. Chin Strap or hobble is allowed to include metal buckles and/or keepers on snaffle bits only. Reins are to be attached above the chin strap or hobble.

c. Split reins must be used; no closed reins. Two hands must be used on the reins, except to provide safety to

rider or adjust equipment.

4. Two-Rein – In the Two Rein class bosals may be of any size, constructed of braided rawhide or leather and have a non-metal flexible core. No iron or foreign substance may be used.
 - a. The rider must use one hand on the reins. Fingers between the reins will be permitted.
 - b. Both mecate and bridle reins are to be held in the rein hand.
 - c. The bit for a two-rein set up must follow bit rules defined in Rule 2 above.
 - d. The chin strap for a two-rein set up must follow chin strap rules defined in Rule 5 below.
5. Chin Straps – Required for curb bit, half-breed, spade bit or two-rein setup; they must be at least one-half inch in width, and must lie flat against the jaw of the horse. A curb bit must be used with a curb strap or curb chain properly attached.
6. Hackamore - Hackamore means the use of a flexible, braided rawhide, leather or rope bosal, the core of which must be flexible. 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. Horse hair bosals are prohibited. This rule does not refer to a mechanical hackamore, which is prohibited.
 - a. Two hands must be used on the reins except to provide safety to rider or adjust equipment.
7. Roping reins, choke ropes, tiedowns, nosebands or wire around the horse's neck are PROHIBITED.
8. Breast harness collars may be used. The rider must keep his hand free from horse's mane and breast harness collar.
9. The judges will have authority to have rider remove anything they think would be unfair to use in a contest.
10. Chaps and spurs may be worn.
11. Quirt or bat must not be carried.
12. A judge has the right to have a contestant report to him/her and drop their bridle.
13. If the rider uses illegal equipment while showing, he/she will receive a score of 0 in each phase of the competition.
14. Broken Equipment
 - a. If at any time during a performance a piece of equip-

ment breaks, the rider may continue provided the broken equipment does not pose a hazard to the rider and/or is not cruel to the horse.

b. When the cow work immediately follows the rein work, broken equipment may be repaired between the two phases, within a 1-minute time period. If a new cow is awarded, the rider may repair equipment between cows as well.

c. Rider may dismount, if necessary, to make the repair or pick up lost equipment or attire. Horse and 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.

15. ~~No choke ropes, tiedowns, or wire around the horse's neck will be permitted. Horse must be ridden with a bridle (with bit in the mouth and no noseband or bosal), or hackamore. Clarification: A two-rein rig is considered a bridle and legal piece of equipment. The bosalita piece of the two-rein rig is not considered a noseband or bosal. Hackamore must made of rawhide and have no metal parts. Any wire, tight noseband or mechanical device that will give a rider undue control over a horse must not be used in contest. Reins must be romal reins or split reins and must not be made of nylon (no roping reins). If showing in a bridle, romal or split reins riders must show one handed. If showing in a bridle, two handed in the romal or split reins will result in a score of zero. If showing in a snaffle-bit, split must be used shown two handed. Breast harness may be used. The rider must keep his hand free from horse's mane and breast harness. The judges will have authority to have rider remove anything they think would be unfair to use in a contest. Chaps and spurs may be worn. Quirt or bat must not be carried. Any time a contestant is guilty of an infraction of this rule, or any part thereof, he shall be penalized 10 points by each judge. A judge has the right to have a contestant report to him if he is suspicious of any infraction of this rule.~~

16. ~~Bits: Snaffle bits mean the conventional O-ring, egg-butt or D-ring with a ring no larger than 4" in diameter (100 mm). 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 unwrapped metal. It may be inlaid, but smooth or latex-wrapped. The bars must be a minimum of 5/16" (8 mm) in diameter, measured one inch (25 mm) in from the cheek with a gradual decrease to center of the snaffle. The mouthpiece may be two or three pieces. A three-piece, connecting ring of 1 1/4" (32 mm) or less in diameter, or a connecting flat bar of 3/8" to 3/4" (10 mm to 20 mm) measured top to bottom, with a maximum length of 2" (50 mm), which lies flat in the horse's mouth, is acceptable. Optional leather strap attached below the reins on a snaffle bit is acceptable. 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. Shanks may be fixed or loose; concerning mouthpieces, bars must be round, oval or egg shaped, smooth and unwrapped metal of 5/16" to 3/4" (8 mm to 20 mm) in diameter, measured 1" (25 mm) from the cheek. However, wire on the sway bars (above the bars and attaching to the spade) of a traditional spade bit is acceptable. They may be inlaid but must be smooth or latex wrapped. Nothing may protrude below the mouthpiece (bar), such as extensions or prongs, including upward prongs on solid mouthpieces. The mouthpiece may be two or three pieces. A three-piece, connecting ring of 1 1/4" (32 mm) or less in diameter, or a connecting flat bar of 3/8" to 3/4" (10mm to 20 mm) measured top to bottom with a maximum length of 2" (50 mm), which lies flat in the horse's mouth, is acceptable; the port must be no higher than 3 1/2" (90 mm) maximum, with rollers and covers acceptable. Broken mouthpieces, half breeds and spades are standard; gag bits, donut and flat polo mouthpieces are not acceptable; a curb bit must be used with a curb strap or curb chain properly attached so as to make contact with horse's chin;

17. A horse of any age may be shown in any legal bridle, snaffle or hackmore as described without incurring any penalty. A horse shown in a bridle (any bit that is not a snaffle or hackamore) must be shown one handed in romal or split reins. Showing two handed, or touching a rein with a second hand, in any legal bridle will result in a score of zero.
18. It is recommended for safety reasons that a breast collar and back cinch should be used.

Self Adjusting Monitor System

1. Definition: A self-adjusted monitor system may be used when judging the reined cow horse. **A single judge, in a Self-Adjusted Monitor System, may call for a review of any of the major penalties listed in IV.1 - IV. 2. In a multiple judge system,** when there is a major penalty marked by at least one judge, and at least one of the other judges did not mark it, a review of the penalty is mandatory. Major penalties shall be defined as follows:
2. **In the rein work, a 2 point penalty or greater, with the exception of marker penalties and cumulative lead penalties may be reviewed.**
3. **In the cow work, 2 point penalties and above may be reviewed.**
4. **A judge in a single or multiple judged situation should mark his/her card with an "R" to indicate a review is needed for penalties mentioned in IV.1 - IV. 2. The review should be communicated to the announcer in lieu of a score.**
5. **During the review, in a multiple judge situation, each judge will have an opportunity to reassess the penalty in question. Until the review is complete and a final decision is made, the penalty shall remain on the score card(s) as originally marked. Once the review is complete, the judge(s) will mark in the appropriate score. For judges who add a penalty or take one away at the time of review, they should either strike through the penalty legibly or add it and circle it to show it was added. The previous score should be struck through and the new score circled to the side of the score box with the judges initials.**
6. Show management has the right to consult the judges at any time regarding the Self-Adjusted Monitor System

Reined Work - Maneuver Scores for Reined Work: Score sheets and reining patterns are available from the NRCHA or NHSRA website. The NRCHA has divided each rein pattern into sets of maneuvers. It is the judge's responsibility to evaluate these maneuver groups individually and rate each maneuver group on the following scale:

- 1 ½ Extremely Poor
- 1 Very Poor
- ½ Poor

0	Correct
+½	Good
+1	Very Good
+1 ½	Excellent

Reined Work: Horses shall work individually. Judging begins the moment the horse enters the arena. There will be no schooling from the time the horse enters the arena. A reined work must consist of the following: circles, lead changes and runs terminating in well-balanced stops straight to the line of travel, turns and a back-up of a reasonable distance with slight hesitations denoting each maneuver. ~~The judge may deviate from traditional order of performance and he/she may also deviate from the official pattern(s).~~ Any modifications to the pattern(s) must be posted 1 hour prior to the start of the cow horse event. The judging ends when the rider indicates he/she is finished by coming to a complete stop. **Praising or rewarding of the horse is only allowed after the reining pattern is complete and before the exhibitor calls for a cow.**

The best reined horse shall be easily guided or controlled with little or no apparent resistance. Bad manners exhibited by the horse will be penalized. All deviations from the exact given pattern ~~will result in an automatic score of 50 and the run may be subject to further penalties~~ **must be considered failure to complete the pattern as given and marked down accordingly.** Credit shall be given for the smoothness, finesse, attitude, quickness, and authority of performing various maneuvers while using controlled speed which raises the difficulty level and makes the horse more exciting and pleasing to watch.

Circles: Circles are a controlled maneuver at the lope in the designated area of the arena. Emphasis on the scoring shall be given to the contestant exhibiting smooth, controlled figure eights with easy lead changes. Right and left circles shall have a common center line in the middle of the designated area. Circles shall be run and/or begun on the correct lead. The speed and size of the right circles shall be exactly the same as the speed and size of the left circles. The horse shall lope in an even, fluid manner with a minimum of rider contact and/or commands. Circles shall be run far enough from arena wall that it does not affect the circles.

Lead Changes: The act of changing the propelling side of the horse's body when changing the direction traveling at a lope. **The**

lead change must be executed at a lope with no change of speed or gait. The horse shall change leads at the exact location dictated in the pattern description and not changed in the same stride

or the lead change may be a flying lead change or a simple lead change. The simple lead change may **should** involve up to 3 strides of jogging. It is important to note one stride is defined as the complete movement or steps of all 4 legs, **at** one time.

Jogging: ~~Jogging beyond 2 strides will incur a 2-point penalty. Jogging in excess of one-half circle or one-half the length of the arena will result in an automatic score of 60 and the run may be subject to further penalties.~~ **Jogging up to 2 strides incurs a ½ point penalty, jogging beyond 2 strides will incur a 2 point penalty. Jogging in excess of one-half circle or one-half the length of the arena will result in a score of 0. In determining whether a ½ or 2 point penalty has been incurred, it is useful for a judge to consider the distance traveled and to count the steps of the rear legs. Four steps and under would represent 2 or less strides and require a ½ point penalty; 5 steps and more, therefore, would require a 2 point penalty.**

Run-Downs: Runs lengthwise through the arena. They shall be made as described in the given pattern, unless the judge indicated otherwise due to arena conditions. The horse shall demonstrate a relaxed fluid attitude when starting a run-down and throughout the maneuver. The horse shall use controlled speed consistent with the size of the arena and the condition of the ground. The horse shall travel in a straight line with a minimum of contact with the rider. Straight, controlled run-downs with square, smooth stops, maintaining suppleness and proper head position are desirable.

Stops: Shall be in line with the direction of travel. Horse shall have its hocks well under it during the entire stop, maintaining a proper head position and response to a light rein.

Spins: Consistent and positioned 360-degree turns ~~executed with the inside hind quarter (pivot) remaining stationary.~~ Spins shall be smooth and efficient. The location of the hind quarters shall be fixed at the start of the spin. The horse shall stop the spin exactly as dictated by the pattern description. The right and left spins shall have a similar speed and balance.

Back-up: The horse being caused to move in a reverse motion in a straight line for a required distance. The horse shall begin the back-up in a controlled manner and shall continue to back-up without

hesitation until directed to stop by the rider. In the instance where a horse backs up where a back-up is not specified in the pattern, ~~a 3-point penalty~~ **the penalty score of 0** will be incurred when the horse backs more than 2 full strides. It is important to note one stride is defined as the complete movement or steps of all 4 legs, one time. In this particular situation it is very helpful for a judge to watch and count the steps of the front feet. Up to and including 4 steps of the front feet in the not required back-up receives no penalty; five steps and beyond constitutes ~~a 3-point penalty~~ **the inclusion of a maneuver not specified and thus a penalty score of 0.**

Hesitate: Hesitation is only long enough to show the completion of one maneuver before the next one starts. There shall be slight hesitation to indicate each maneuver.

Definition of fall of horse: When the horse's shoulder and hip are on the ground and all four feet are facing in one direction. Fall of horse in any event receives a score of -0- for that part of the run.

Definition of fall of rider: Rider is no longer astride the horse.

Reined Work - Penalty Points:

1/2-point penalties:

- Over or under spin 1/8 turn
- Jogging first three strides

1-point penalties:

- Out of lead
- Scotching or anticipating a stop
- Over or under spinning up to 1/4 turn
- Excessive whipping or spurring (Over and Under)

2-point penalties:

- Lead missed around end of arena past 2nd corner

- Not ever changing leads in patterns where there is only a 1/2 circle

- Failure to run by marker before stop is initiated
- Freezing up in turn
- Jogging for more than **beyond** 2 strides, except when executing a **simple** flying lead change
- Breaking gait (Break of gait is defined as "when the cadence of the lope is disrupted or not maintained." Break of gait only occurs from the lope gait and where a lead change is not expected)
- On trot in patterns, failure to "Stop" before executing a lope de-

parture

- A stop in the first one-quarter of the circle, after a lope departure, is a break of gait

- At end of pattern, failure to hesitate to demonstrate completion of pattern.

3 Point Penalties:

~~-Backing more than two strides, when backing is not called for~~

5-point penalties:

- Spurring or hitting in front of cinch at any time

- Blatant disobedience, defined as kicking, biting, bucking, rearing, striking, or obviously insubordinate

10-point penalties:

~~-carrying a quirt or bat~~

~~-60- Score~~

~~-Jogging in excess of one-half circle or one-half the length of the arena~~

~~-50- Score~~

~~-Failure to complete the pattern as given (i.e. over or under spin more than 1/4. may be subject to further penalties.)~~

~~-0- Score:~~

-Failure to complete the pattern as given (i.e. over or under spin more than 1/4)

-Two hands on the reins when using a bridle or two rein

-Fingers between the reins when using romals, except in the two rein

-Horse balking

- Bloody Mouth (inside)

- Illegal Equipment

~~-Using two hands on the reins in a bridle; romal definition: If the hand holding the romal touches the closed part of the reins it is considered two hands on the reins. Fingers between the romal reins.~~

- Leaving the working area before pattern is complete

- Fall of horse or rider

-Backing more than two strides, when backing is not called for

-Jogging in excess of one-half circle or one-half the length of the arena

-Improper Western Attire

-Failure to work in the proper working order

- A judge may blow his/her whistle at any time to terminate the

work. A score of zero will be given if the work is not complete at that time

N-E

- Failure of an exhibitor to attempt to work the pattern

No Score

- Abuse
- Lameness of the horse

Leads and Lead Change Penalties: A judge is required to penalize a horse ½ of a point for a delayed change of lead by one stride. The penalty for being out of lead is cumulative, and the judge will add 1 penalty point for each 1/4 of the circumference of a circle or any part thereof that a horse is out of lead.

Cow Work

1. Cow Work: **“The most important point when working a cow is for the horse to have the advantage or be in control of the cow. At the same time, the horse should exhibit a smooth willingness to do his job. He should respond to a light rein and show good manners in his face and body,” – Bobby Ingersoll.**
2. **Judging begins when the contestant enters the arena.**
3. **There shall be no schooling between the completion of the rein work and cow work, when the cow work immediately follows the rein work; the penalty for this will be a zero.**
4. **Pattern: The required pattern for the cow work is: boxing, fence turns and circles, in that order.**

~~Cow Work~~

~~Cattle will be chute run, not drawn.~~

Whistles: The judge may blow his/her whistle at any time during the work. One whistle to terminate the work, two whistles to award a new cow. If the judge feels the exhibitor is out of control or has exhausted the cow, he/she may terminate the work. If the judge awards a new cow, the exhibitor must accept the new cow or the score will result in a zero (0). If the exhibitor intends to accept the new cow, he or she must pull up immediately. With a multiple judge system, any one of the judges may terminate the work or signal for a new cow.

If at any time a judge feels that the contestant is out of control endangering themselves and/or their horse, the judge may terminate

the work, and a score of zero will be given. In the case of an emergency (Such as a person falling into the arena or part of the arena falling apart) the judge may blow two whistles for a second time. At this point, the contestant has no option to continue and must receive a new cow. Contestant must pull up immediately or a score of zero will be given. Judging ends when the whistle blows. A score of zero will be given if the work is not complete at that point.

In the case that a rider is awarded a third cow, the rider will have the option to work their new cow or to rest their horse and work their new cow at the end of the next set, If the rider is in the last set of the class they shall be afforded up to 20 minutes for their horse to recover before working the third cow.

In the cow work phase of any class one hand on the horn may be used to prevent the fall of the rider. During the cow work, when a cow leaves the working area, it is automatic that the contestant will receive a new cow and scoring will begin again with the new cow.

A. Boxing: ~~Working the cow on the end of the arena until such time as the contestant has proven the ability of the horse to hold the cow.~~ **At the start of the work, each contestant, upon receiving a cow in the arena, shall hold that cow on the prescribed end of the arena for a sufficient time to demonstrate the ability of the horse to contain the cow at that end.** The horse should exhibit superior cow sense and natural cow working ability without excessive reining or spurring. In the head-to-head working position, the degree of difficulty shall be considered.

B. Turning: **After a reasonable amount of time, the contestant shall take the cow down the fence, making at least one turn each way on the fence. The contestant must get a minimum of one turn in each direction when attempting the fence work. To qualify as a turn, the exhibitor must be in position to control the animal and be the cause of the animal to change course. During the turn, the horse should use himself in a controlled athletic manner, using its hocks to stop and drive out of the turn, while using its front end to balance and turn. More than two good turns in each direction should not result in extra credit but also should not be penalized unless the cow is thereby too exhausted to circle correctly. One turn each way may not necessarily result in extra credit if the horse and/or cow are out of control.**

C. Types of Turns

- a. Fence Turn: A turn in which the cow, while being run down the fence on one side of the arena is turned in a different direction and held near the same fence while being run in the new direction. The exhibitor must be close enough to the cow to be the cause of the turn. The situation where a horse and rider attempt to turn the cow and the cow exits the turn behind the horse is also considered to have satisfied the fence turn requirement. The route of the cow being worked has been altered because of the influence of the horse and rider.
- b. Open Field Turn: A turn in which the cow, while being run down the arena more than 20 feet away from the perimeter fence is turned in a different direction and held on the same side of the arena, while being run in the new direction. The exhibitor must be close enough to the cow to be the cause of the turn.
- c. Circling Turn: A turn in which the horse, while attempting an open field turn does not use its hocks to stop and drive out of the turn, but instead continues forward motion and guides or 'circles' the cow into the new direction. If an exhibitor performs a circling turn as the second turn of a two (2) turn run, then they must show separation between the second turn and the first circle. To avoid a 2C penalty, they must then change sides on the cow after completing the circling turn and before beginning the first circle.

~~Turning on the fence: A fence turn is defined as. A turn in which the cow, while being run down the fence on one side of the arena, or in the "open field", is turned in a different direction and held near the same fence, or the same side of the arena, while being run in the new direction. The exhibitor must be close enough to the cow to be the cause of the turn.~~

~~The situation where a horse and rider attempt to turn the cow and the cow exits the turn behind the horse is also considered to have satisfied the fence turn requirement. The route of the cow being worked has been altered because of the influence of the horse and rider. The actual stopping or turning of the cow by the end fence will not qualify as a fence turn. To qualify as a fence turn the turn must be accomplished without the aid of the end fences to ac-~~

tually stop or turn the animal being worked. During the turn the horse should use himself in a controlled athletic manner, using its hocks to stop and drive out of the turn, while using its front end to balance and turn. When attempting to make an open field turn, it is preferable to separate the turn from the circles. This can be accomplished by making an open field turn, then changing sides before circling, or briefly hesitating after the open field turn before attempting to circle the animal in the same direction. In either case it is important to show separation in the circle and turn maneuvers. The contestant must get a minimum of one turn in each direction when attempting the fence work. More than two good turns in each direction should not result in extra credit but also should not be penalized, unless the cow is thereby too exhausted to circle correctly. One turn each way may not necessarily result in extra credit if the horse and/or cow are out of control.

Circling: The contestant shall take the cow to an open part of the arena and maneuver the cow smoothly at least 360 degrees in each direction without interference from the fence. The circle's size, symmetry, speed and relative balance from right and left show control. Tightening the circles down with fast head-to-head speed will be a credit situation. Once a rider has committed to circling a cow, if the cow falls down no new cow will be awarded. The rider should complete the run by riding around the fallen cow to fulfill circling requirements. **Tightening the circles down with fast head-to-head speed will be a credit situation.** The circles should be completed before the cow is exhausted.

Run Content:

- A. The judge should take into consideration the size of the arena, condition of the ground and disposition of the cattle in scoring each work. If ground, arena and/or weather conditions are deemed unfavorable by the show management, they may inform the judge and decide to alter the required cattle work for safety reasons.**
- B. 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, that exhibits good form throughout, should be marked the**

highest. Bad manners exhibited by the horse will be penalized under run content.

C. In the cow work phase of any class one hand on the horn may be used to prevent the fall of the rider. Holding the horn excessively may be penalized under run content.

New Cow:

A. When enough cows are available, the contestant should receive a new cow if the cow drawn is unreasonably difficult or unworkable. The judge will indicate new cow by blowing his/her whistle twice – indicating the awarding of a new cow. Allowing the horse to quit working before the judge signals for a new cow will result in a zero score. If the judge awards a new cow, the exhibitor must accept the new cow. The exhibitor must initiate the pull up immediately: instantly, at once, without delay. If the exhibitor is using a bridle or two-rein setup, he/she must not use two hands at any time; either when pulling up from the cow being worked, or while waiting for the new cow. From the time the exhibitor enters the arena until the final whistle, signifying the work is complete, the pair are being judged. If two hands are used on the bridle reins at any time, a score of zero will be applied. With a multiple judge system, any one of the judges may terminate the work or signal for a new cow.

B. In the case of an emergency (Such as a person falling into the arena) or part of the contestant has no option to continue and must receive a new cow. Contestant must pull up immediately or a score of zero will be given.

C. During the cow work, when a cow leaves the working area, it is automatic that the contestant will receive a new cow and scoring will begin again with the new cow.

D. Once a rider has committed to circling a cow, if the cow falls down no new cow will be awarded. The rider should complete the run by riding around the fallen cow to fulfill circling requirements.

E. In the case that a rider is awarded a third cow, the rider will have the option to work their new cow or to rest their horse and work their new cow at the end of the next set. If the rider is in the last set of the class they shall be afforded up to 20 minutes for their horse to recover before working the third

cow. If the rider elects to leave the show arena, the horse must stay in the warm-up area adjacent to the show arena. If the horse leaves the warm-up area or works a cow, the run will result in a 0 score.

Terminating the Work:

- A. The judge may blow his/her whistle once at any time during the work to terminate it.
- B. If at any time a judge feels that the contestant is out of control endangering themselves and/or their horse, the judge may terminate the work, and a score of zero will be given.
- C. Judging ends when the whistle blows. A score of zero will be given if the work is not complete at that point.

Cow work - Penalty Points:

1-point penalties:

- A. Loss of working Advantage
- ~~C. Using the Corner or the end of the arena to turn the cow. (In an oval arena, when the cow's head breaks the plane of the end marker) \~~
- C. When the cow's head breaks the plane of the 1 point marker.**
- E. Changing sides of arena to turn cow. (1 point each time)
- L. For each Length horse runs past cow. A length by is 1 horse length of daylight between the cow's head and the top of the horse's tail.
- P. Working out of Position
- S. Slipping a rein**

T. Failure to drive cow past middle marker on the first run down the fence (first Turn)

~~W. Excessive Whipping, spurring, or hollering.~~

2-point penalties:

- A. Going around the corner of the arena before turning the cow. **(When the cow's head breaks the plane of the 2 point penalty marker)**
- B. When working an animal in the open field (at least 20' from the side of arena) and the animal gets within 3 feet from the end fence before being turned. This applies when going from one end of the arena to the other.
- C. Circling Turn – Failure to change sides after a circling turn**

prior to the first circle

3-point penalties:

- D. Dangerous Position
- E. Exhausting or overworking the cow.
- H. Hanging up on the fence (refusing to turn).
Hang-Up; Definition: When attempting to turn a cow on the fence a horse is considered to be hung up when the animal being worked exits the turn and the horse momentarily refuses the riders command and freezes up (stops lateral movement of the shoulders). Also considered a hang-up is when a horse is put in a position where it is physically impossible to complete the turn and the lateral movement of his shoulders is stopped.
- K. Knocking down the cow without having a working advantage

5-point penalties:

- A. Not getting one turn each way (5 points each way)
- B. Spurring or hitting in front of cinch at any time **or excessive-ly whipping or spurring the horse.**
- C. Blatant disobedience, defined as kicking, biting, bucking, rearing, striking, or obviously insubordinate

~~-50-Score~~

- ~~D. Turn tail (may be subject to further penalties)~~

-0- Score:

- A. Turn tail**
- B. Using 2 hands on the reins in a bridle or two rein**
- C. Fingers between the reins when using romals, except the two rein**
- D. Balking**
- E. **Extremely** Out of control (Any horse that is out of control while working the cow, thus endangering the rider, i.e. crossing the path of the cow, shall be called off the cow.)
- F. Bloody Mouth (inside)
- G. Illegal Equipment
- H. Leaving the work area before the pattern or work is complete
- I. Fall of horse or rider
- J. Schooling of the horse between the rein and cow work when the cow work immediately follows the rein work**
- K. Schooling of the horse between cows, if a new cow is awarded. Schooling is defined as gaining an advantage by excessive pulling, turning, stopping or backing or failure**

to immediately pull up when a new cow is accepted.

- L. If a rider hits or kicks the animal being worked, with the ro-
mal or reins, in an abusive manner
- M. Failure to pull up immediately after a new cow has been
awarded

N. Improper Western Attire

O. Failure to work in the proper working order

N-E

Failure of an exhibitor to attempt to complete the work.

No Score

- A. Lameness of the horse
- B. Abuse

Credits:

- A. Maintaining control of cow at all times
- B. Maintaining proper position

NOTE: A judge may blow his/her whistle at any time to terminate the work. A score of zero will be given if the work is not complete at that time.

Livestock Suggestions

It is suggested that the cattle be of all one sex, similar type, conformity, and similar size (450-550 lbs.) if horned tipped to a dime and no longer than two inches.

**For Patterns and Arena Layout please visit
nrcha.com/nhsra-reined-cow-horse
or scan the QR Code below.**





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