

ARABIAN RANCH RIDING NOTES - 2025

Each horse will work individually, performing both required & optional maneuvers.

RANCH HORSE RIDING

The purpose of the ranch riding class is to measure the ability of the horse to be a pleasure to ride while being used as a means of conveyance from performing one ranch task to another. The horse should reflect the versatility, attitude and movement of a working ranch horse riding outside the confines of an arena. 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 ranch riding horse to make timely transitions in a smooth and correct manner, as well as the quality of the movement are of primary considerations. The ideal ranch riding horse should have a natural head carriage at each gait. For rules regarding correct Western appointments, refer to AR215.

Scoring: Horses will be scored on the basis of '0' to 100; 70 denoting an average performance. Each maneuver will receive a score that should be added (to) or subtracted from 70 and is subject to a penalty that should be subtracted. Each maneuver will be scored on the following basis, ranging from plus 1 1/2 to minus 1 1/2: -1 1/2 extremely poor, -1 very poor, -1/2 poor, 0 correct, +1/2 good, + 1 very good, + 1 1/2 excellent. Maneuver scores determined and assessed independently of penalty points.

Patterns: *Ranch Riding* patterns **must be chosen** from the current AQHA **Patterns which may be found in the AQHA Rulebook (SHW 417)** or on AHA website

Posting at the extended trot is permitted; touching or holding the saddle horn is acceptable.

Ranch Horse Penalties:

- **Ten (10) Point Penalties**

1. Eliminates or adds maneuver
2. Incomplete maneuver
3. Failure to complete pattern as written
4. Unnatural (Arabian) Ranch Horse appearance, see AR105.2b; unnatural tail carriage.

- **Zero (0) Score**

1. Major disobedience or schooling.
2. Prohibited use of fingers or hands on reins
3. Incomplete/prohibited attire (AR215.4b1)

- **One (1) point penalties:**

1. Too slow/per gait
2. Over-bridled (per maneuver)
3. Out of frame (per maneuver)
4. Break of gait at walk or trot for 2 strides or less
5. Wrong lead or out of lead for 2 strides or less.

- **Three (3) point penalties**

1. Break of gait at walk or trot for more than 2 strides
2. Break of gait at lope, except when correcting an incorrect lead, wrong lead, or out of lead
3. Wrong lead or out of lead for more than 2 stride
4. Cross-cantering more than 2 strides when changing leads.
5. Draped reins (per maneuver)
6. **Walking or trotting** more than 3 strides in lope departure or when exiting rollback or when making a simple lead change.
7. Severe disturbance of any obstacle.

- **Five (5) point penalties**

1. Blatant disobedience (kick, buck, bite, rear, etc.)

- **No Score/Disqualification (DQ)**

1. Lameness
2. Abuse
3. Prohibited equipment
4. Disrespect or misconduct
5. Leaving work area before pattern is complete
6. Fall of horse/exhibitor.
7. Fresh blood in mouth, nose, chin, shoulder, barrel, and/or hip area (AR105.6)

Notes:

- No specific penalties for nicks/hits on logs/poles or for over/under spins. Deduction may be made in maneuver score.
- Major penalties (no score, zero, or penalties of 5 points or higher) must be reviewed.

Judging Thoughts and Considerations:

- **Pattern Placement** – The pattern should be run as close to the drawn/written description as possible. Deviations from such are deemed to be a fault and a deduction for each maneuver not properly placed should be made. Rider should make good utilization of the arena space without “riding the rail.”
- **Transitions** – Not only should maneuvers and transitions be properly placed according to the pattern, but smooth and responsive transitions between maneuvers and from gait to gait should be rewarded. Conversely rough and awkward transitions should result in maneuver score deductions.
- **Way Of Going** – The overall cadence and performance of gaits should be free-flowing and ground covering, emphasis on forward movement. The overall frame and quality of gait or execution of the maneuver should be taken into account in conjunction with the individual conformation of the horse when considering the overall frame or way of going, as well as any “resistance” or “assistance” in maintaining such frame.

Ranch Horse Gait Definitions - In all gaits, movement of the Ranch Riding horse should simulate a horse needing to cover long distances, softly and quietly, like that of a working ranch horse. The horse should display a level, or slightly above level topline with a bright, attentive expression.

- **Walk** – Natural, flat footed, four beat gait. Rhythmic and ground covering.
- **Extended Walk** – Obvious lengthening of stride that will naturally increase the pace. The horse should move in a natural manner (not a running walk) as if it were moving across an open pasture.
- **Trot** – Natural two beat diagonal gait demonstrating more forward motion than the western jog.
- **Extended Trot** – An obvious lengthening of stride, with a definite increase of pace, as if covering a large area on a ranch with an above level topline.
- **Lope** – A true three beat gait, relaxed and smooth with a natural forward moving stride.
- **Extended Lope** – While not a run or a race, an obvious lengthening of stride, demonstrating a forward working speed. The horse should display an above level topline with a bright attentive expression.
- ***The simple lead change is performed through the walk or jog within three strides.***