

**WVHA Versatility Ranch Horse Rules for Junior & Senior Horse Divisions**  
**Green Rider Division follows these rules for Ranch Riding, Ranch Trail & Conformation, but**  
**has ammended rules for Ranch Cutting and Working Ranch Horse.**

**478. VERSATILITY RANCH HORSE**

**(a) GENERAL RULES:**

(1) The purpose of the Versatility Ranch Horse class is to demonstrate the performance, versatility and conformation of the American Quarter Horse as a working ranch horse.

(2) All horses must be registered with the AMERICAN QUARTER HORSE ASSOCIATION.

(3) Each exhibitor must have current individual membership in the AMERICAN QUARTER HORSE ASSOCIATION or the AMERICAN QUARTER HORSE YOUTH ASSOCIATION.

(4) One or multiple judges may be used. However, when multiple judges are used, only one judge per class is permitted. Judges must be chosen from the AQHA Versatility Ranch Horse Approved Judges list.

(5) No horses, less than 3 years of age may be exhibited.

(6) No hoof polish.

(7) No braided or banded manes or tail extensions.

(8) Trimming inside ears is discouraged.

(9) Trimming bridle path is allowed, also trimming of fetlocks or excessive (long) facial hair.

(10) Equipment with silver should not count over a good working outfit. Silver on bridles and saddles is discouraged.

**(b) GENERAL RULES FOR TACK AND EQUIPMENT:**

Will follow guidelines as set forth in AQHA's Official Handbook.

**(c) LAMENESS:**

Will follow guidelines as set forth in AQHA's Official Handbook.

**(d) POINTS:**

(1) AQHA Points will be awarded based on the final placing of all eligible horses. To be eligible for points for the Versatility Ranch Class one rider/one horse must enter all five classes. Credits will be applied per class according to the placing received based on the number of horses competing in that particular class. Horses competing and placing in the top nine will be awarded one credit for each horse or contestant placing below them, plus one additional credit, not to exceed nine credits for first place. Credits received in each class will be totaled. After totaling credits, the horse receiving the highest

number of credits will be placed first in the Versatility Ranch Class. The horse receiving the second highest credits will be placed second in the Versatility Ranch Class and so on. AQHA points will be awarded in the Versatility Ranch Class according to the existing point schedule. (See Chart 415 of the AQHA Official Handbook).

(2) Ties in the final placing for the Versatility Ranch Class will be broken by the highest placing horse in the Working Ranch Class. All exhibitors should be placed in the Working Ranch Class in order to break ties.

**AWARDS AND RECOGNITION:**

(1) Current AQHA point system will apply

(2) Versatility ranch points will be awarded based on the number of horses meeting all requirements outlined.

(3) A year-end high-point award will be established for ranch and youth divisions.

(4) Horses enrolled in the Incentive Fund will be eligible to receive money earned based on total versatility ranch points earned.

**SHOW APPROVAL:**

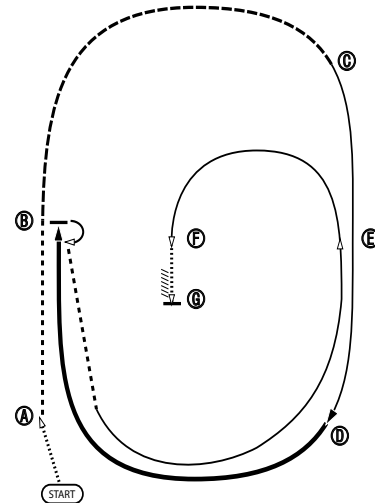
(1) Letter must be submitted a minimum of 90 days prior to the event stating the date and location of the desired event for tentative approval.

(2) Approval of dates will be based on a 300 mile radius.

(3) The event will be approved if there is not an already known similar approved versatility ranch event on the same date within the mileage radius.

(4) Competition may be held in conjunction with other events.

**SUGGESTED VERSATILITY RANCH RIDING PATTERN**



1. Walk from start cone to cone A.
  2. Jog from A to B.
  3. Extend the jog from B to C.
  4. Lope on the right lead from C to D.
  5. Extend the lope from D to B.
  6. Stop at B, turn and jog to A.
  7. Lope on the left lead from A to E.
  8. Turn toward the middle of the arena and continue to lope to F.
  9. Walk from F to G.
  10. Stop and back approximately one horse length.
- (Realizing trail course is set in arena, ranch riding pattern can be adjusted to fit arena conditions)

**(j) RANCH CONFORMATION**

- Open/Amateur
- Stallions
- Mares
- Geldings
- Youth/Novice Amateur
- Mares
- Geldings

The purpose of this class is to preserve American Quarter Horse type by selecting well-mannered individuals in the order of their resemblance to the breed ideal and that are the most positive combination of balance, structural correctness, and movement with appropriate breed and sex characteristics and adequate muscling. The ranch conformation class must be held after the conclusion of the other four events, except at the VRH World Championship Show. All sexes will be shown together as one class. Horses are to be shown in a good working halter: rope, braided, nylon or plain leather. Horses will walk to the judge one at a time. As the horse approaches, the judge will step to the right to enable the horse to trot straight to a cone placed 50 feet away. At the cone, the horse will continue trotting, turn to the left and trot toward the left wall or fence of the arena. After trotting, horses will be lined up head to tail for individual inspection by the judge. The judge shall inspect each horse from both sides, front and rear and place the horses in order of preference.

(5) There will be a \$50.00 approval fee.

**(e) DIVISIONS:**

(1) **OPEN** - For all horses, regardless of ownership or trainer. Open exhibitor may show two horses.

(2) **AMATEUR** - For horses shown by exhibitors who fulfill the amateur requirements under Rule 403 amateur eligibility. The amateur division will be shown concurrently with the open division. Placings for each eligible division will be recorded. The amateur entries will be counted as open entries and will be counted for placings and points in open. A separate or stand-alone amateur show may not be held without a corresponding open show.

(3) **NOVICE AMATEUR** - For horses shown by exhibitors who fulfill the Novice Amateur requirements under Rule 405A(a) Novice Amateur Eligibility. The novice amateur division will not be shown concurrently with the open division. Novice Amateur entries will not be counted and are not eligible for placing in the amateur and open division. Novice Amateurs may show in the amateur and/or open classes as an additional entry. A separate novice show without a corresponding amateur or open division may be held.

(4) **YOUTH** - For horses shown by exhibitors 18 years of age or younger (age as of January 1). The exhibitor must be the recorded owner of the horse shown or show a horse owned by his or her immediate family members. Exhibitor may show horses owned by a ranch where the exhibitor's family is a full-time employee (six months or more).

(f) **RANCH RIDING** - Ranch riding and ranch trail will be shown back to back. Each exhibitor will perform the trail obstacle course and then immediately perform the ranch riding pattern along perimeter of arena or in the vicinity of the ranch trail obstacles. The suggested ranch riding pattern may be used or another pattern may be drawn as long as all elements of the class are fulfilled. The ranch riding class shows the horse's ability to move at a working speed with a rider. Horses will be shown individually at three gaits - walk, trot and lope - in each direction of the arena. Horses will also be asked to reverse away from the rail, to stop and back. The judge must ask for an extended trot and extended lope at least one direction of the ring. A horse will be given credit for traveling with his head held in a normal position, ears alert and moving at a natural speed for the gait requested. Credit will also be given for making a smooth transition between the gaits, for keeping the correct lead, and for maintaining the gait requested until the judge requests a change. A rider must show his horse with only one hand on the reins, unless the horse is 5 years old or younger and is being shown in a snaffle bit or hackamore (bosal). Judges are encouraged to work exhibitors thoroughly, if time permits.

(g) **RANCH TRAIL** - The ranch trail class contains a course with a minimum of six obstacles and is designed to show a horse's ability and willingness to perform several tasks that might be asked of him during the course of a normal day's ranch work. Whenever possible, realistic or natural obstacles are encouraged. Also, the course is encouraged to be set outside of an arena using the natural terrain of the land whenever possible. The horse will be judged on three gaits - walk, trot and lope - performed between six obstacles to be determined when the judge chooses the pattern. A horse will be rewarded with higher credit for performing these gaits on the correct lead and with an alert attitude.

(1) Horses to be shown at a ground-covering walk, work-

ing trot and lope. The horse should perform with a reasonably loose rein that maintains contact with the horse. A distance of at least 30 feet or more is mandatory between obstacles to evaluate the horse's way of going at each gait.

(2) Six obstacles will be used, three of which are mandatory and ten that are optional. Combinations of two or more obstacles are permissible. If three combinations of two obstacles are used, there must be sufficient distance between one of the combinations to allow the horse to perform two gaits. All obstacles must meet the approval of the judge.

(3) The judge may walk the course and has the right and duty to alter the course in any manner. The judge may remove or change any obstacle he deems unsafe or unreasonable. If at any time a trail obstacle is deemed to be unsafe by the judge, it shall be repaired or removed from the course. If it cannot be repaired and horses have completed the course, the score for that obstacle shall be deducted from all previous works for that class.

(4) Judges should use the suggested scoring system for trail as described in Rule 454B.

**Mandatory Obstacles:**

(1) Opening, passing through and closing the gate. Use a gate that will not endanger horse or rider. The rein hand may be changed to work the gate without penalty if the change is made prior to and after the gate has been worked.

(2) The horse shall remain quiet while the rider dismounts. No penalty will be assessed for horse shifting to balance. A one point penalty for one step, a three point penalty for two to three steps and a five point penalty for four or more steps will be assessed. The horse should remain still and quiet as the rider remounts, leaving a loose rein. Exhibitors have the option of using a mounting block to remount. Once the rider is settled into the saddle and is still, he or she may then move the horse forward.

(3) Log drag - Horse must be willing to drag a log for a short distance, either in a straight line or around a set pattern. Rope should be dallied around the saddle horn and not tied hard and fast. A five-point penalty will be assessed for first refusal, balk or attempting to evade an obstacle by shying or backing more than two strides away. An additional five-point penalty will be assessed for second refusal, balk or attempting to evade an obstacle by shying or backing more than two strides away.

**Optional Obstacles:**

(1) Water hazard - The horse should show willingness to cross a small ditch or shallow pond (or simulated water obstacle).

(2) Hobble or ground tie (contestant's option) - The horse shall remain in place while the rider dismounts and performs a normal ranch task such as moving a rail, moving a bale of hay, etc.

(3) Put on and remove slicker - Rider approaches slicker, removes slicker from holder, puts on slicker and replaces slicker to holder.

(4) Remove, carry and replace item - Requires the exhibitor to carry or remove an item that is used everyday on horse back such as mail from a mailbox, sack, rope, etc.

(5) Bridge - Horse shows willingness to walk across obstacle designed to simulate a bridge.

(6) Crossing obstacle - While mounted the horse would walk over obstacle no more than 18" in height.

(7) Ride over at least four logs - Walking only if laid at odd angles. Laid flat and in measured distances, the measuring point should be the path the horse would be expected to take.

Trot overs 2'6" to 3'6"

Lope overs 6' to 7'

(8) Stationary steer - This obstacle is used to show the willingness of the horse to have a rope thrown from its back. The judge will give credit to the horse that stands quietly while the contestant makes the swing and throw at the stationary steer. Shying from the rope will be penalized, but missing the stationary steer will not be penalized.

(9) Back

(10) Sidepass

A judge has the right and duty to alter the course in any manner or remove any obstacle deemed unsafe. All courses and obstacles are to be constructed with safety in mind so as to eliminate any possible accidents. It is permissible to change rein hand to work an obstacle. An exhibitor that does not perform an obstacle or performs an obstacle incorrectly is assessed a 10 point penalty and cannot place over another exhibitor that performs the course correctly.

**(h) RANCH CUTTING** This class is judged on the ability of the horse to work a cow by separating it from the herd and holding it to demonstrate the horse's ability to work the cow. A single numbered cow is cut from the herd and the horse must demonstrate its ability to work the cow.

(1) For Open and Amateur, the number of designated cattle will equal the number of entries and the number of non-numbered cattle also equals the number of entries. **For European countries, the number of designated cattle will equal the number of entries but the number of non-numbered cattle will be at the option of show management. If European show management chooses just one numbered cow per entry and no non-numbered cattle, there will be a one and one-half minute time limit.**

(2) Objective will be to cut one designated cow from the herd and work the cow with the assistance of two turn-back riders and two herd holders.

(3) Cattle to be located at one end of the arena. Cattle will be clearly marked with numbers. Cattle numbers will be drawn.

(4) For open and amateur competition, there will be a two minute limit. Each exhibitor must work two head, but has the option of working the full two minutes. Exhibitor must work their designated cow and one additional non-numbered cow within the two minute time limit. For Novice Amateur and Youth competition, there will be a one and half minute time limit. Exhibitor must work their designated cow but has the option of working the full minute and a half. Time will begin when a rider crosses a time line just prior to entering the herd. Time should not start until contestant crosses a pre-determined and marked timeline. Cattle numbers can be announced prior to crossing the starting line. The rider will then quietly separate his/her numbered cow from the herd. Unnecessary roughness or disturbing the herd excessively could result in disqualification.

(5) Show management may supply two herd holders and two turn back riders, or exhibitors may supply their own helpers. If an exhibitor is a herd holder or turn back rider, he or she may use the horse that they are competing on, or use a different horse. Herd hold-

ers' and turn back rider's horses should be American Quarter Horses.

(6) Credit will be given to those horses who demonstrate excellence in their herd work, driving and setting up the cow to cut, working in the center of the arena, and degree of difficulty of the cow drawn, within the 2 minutes. Horses will not be penalized for reining during the cutting portion, but should display natural ability.

#### One Point Penalty

- losing working advantage
- toe, foot or stirrup on the shoulder
- working out of position

#### 3 Point Penalties

- cattle picked up or scattered
- spurring on shoulder
- pawing or biting cattle
- back fence

#### 5 Point Penalties

- quitting cow
- losing cow

#### 0 - Score

- illegal equipment
- excessive disturbance of herd to the point that exhibitor is asked to leave the arena
- two hands on reins except when exhibiting a junior horse in either a snaffle bit or hackamore
- failure to work designated cow**

(8) Scoring: 100 percent will be judged by the horse's performance and natural ability. If time and number of cattle permit, the judge may, at his discretion, award new cattle, to enable to contestant to show his horse's ability on the cow.

**(i) WORKING RANCH HORSE:** This class combines the reining ability, cow sense and roping ability of the horse and will be judged on horse's reining ability, cow sense and roping ability. Each contestant will perform individually. First with the reining pattern and then releasing one cow into the arena.

(1) Each exhibitor will be allowed a maximum of six minutes to complete the class. At the four-minute mark there will be a two-minute warning whistle. When the six-minute time limit has expired, the exhibitor will be required to exit the arena.

(2) The class will be judged in three parts. The reining, the cow work and the roping portion. At the end of the performance, the scores for the three portions will be added together for the final score. Rules for scoring the reining portion are defined in Section 451 of the AQHA Official Handbook.

(3) The reining portion will be performed first using one of the three patterns approved for this class. **The American Stock Horse Association reining patterns may be used at dual approved shows.** Each contestant will perform the required pattern individually and separately.

(4) Rules for scoring the cow working portion are defined in Section 452 of the AQHA Official Handbook. Roping is defined in Section 468 of the AQHA Official Handbook. However, in the working ranch horse class, the horse will be judged on three (3) maneuvers: 1. the ability to trail, 2. the ability to rate, 3. the ability to stop the cow. Additionally, a two loop run will receive a penalty of three (3) points and a no catch run will receive a penalty of five (5) points. It is not necessary that the roper catch for the contestant to

receive a score in the roping portion. However, if there is no catch, a five-point penalty must be subtracted from the roping score accumulated prior to the catch (i.e., if a horse trails and rates its cow but no catch is made, the horse will receive the score it has earned up to the point of the catch minus five points). In the working ranch horse portion any blatant disobedience for a circumstance that is not listed results in a five (5) point penalty. \*\*\*\*\*see note below

(5) After the exhibitor has completed his reining pattern, he will call for the cow to be turned into the arena. Upon receiving the cow, contestant shall hold the cow on the prescribed end of the arena for sufficient time to demonstrate the ability of the horse to contain the cow on that end. 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. A three (3) point penalty will be assessed for refusing to turn. Exhibitor must then rope the cow and bring it to a stop. There is to be no dragging. The exhibitor is allowed only two throws. In order for a catch to be legal; the loop must hold in front of the shoulders. If the rope falls off saddle during the class it would be considered equipment failure thus resulting in a score of zero. For shows conducted in Europe, the exhibitor has the option of circling the cow each direction instead of roping or breakaway roping. Judge may blow the whistle at any time to terminate the cow work. A score of zero, in the cow work segment, will be given if the work is not complete at that time. The exhibitor should then continue with the roping segment of the class.

(6) For the entire class, reining, cow work and roping, an average score will be 210 points. If the contestant fails to attempt any part of the class, he or she will receive a zero for the entire class.

(7) Riders are not permitted to have their rope tied onto the horn of the saddle.

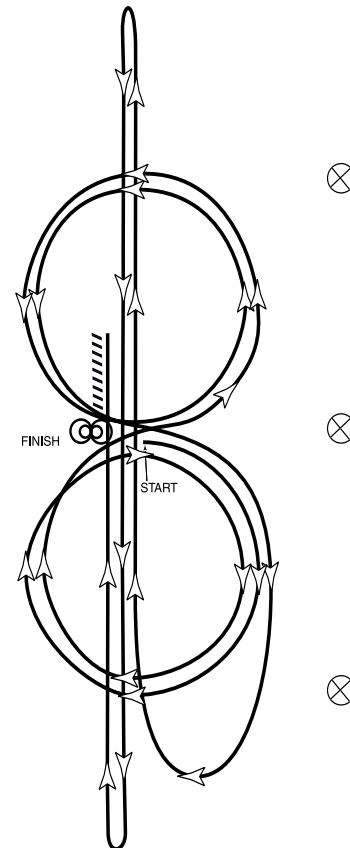
(8) If time and number of cattle permit, the judge may, at his discretion, award new cattle, to enable the contestant to show his horse's ability on the cow, based on the following criteria:

- (A) The cow won't or can't run
- (B) The cow won't leave the end of the arena
- (C) The cow is blind or won't yield to the horse
- (D) The cow leaves the arena.

(9) Ties will be broken by the placing in the Working Ranch Horse class.

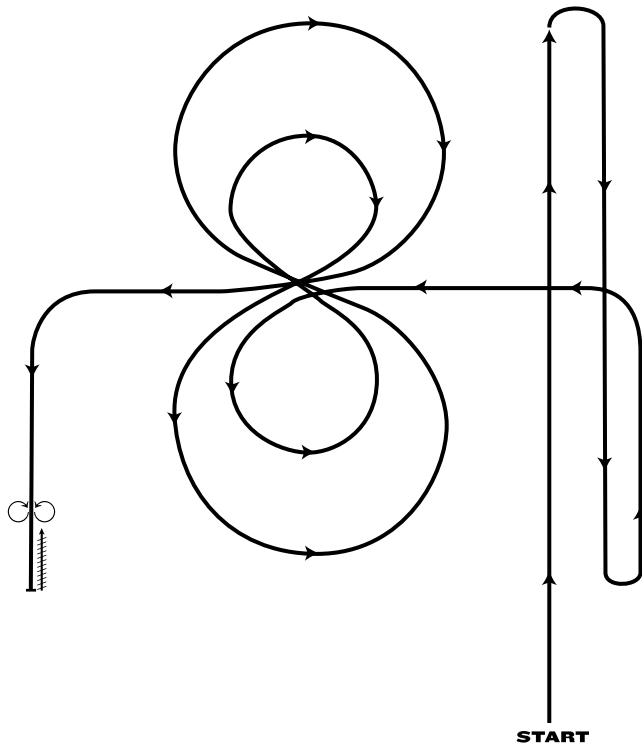
\*\*\*WVHA Ammended Rule -- In the Working Ranch Horse class, riders may circle the cow each way in lieu of roping.

## WORKING RANCH HORSE PATTERN I



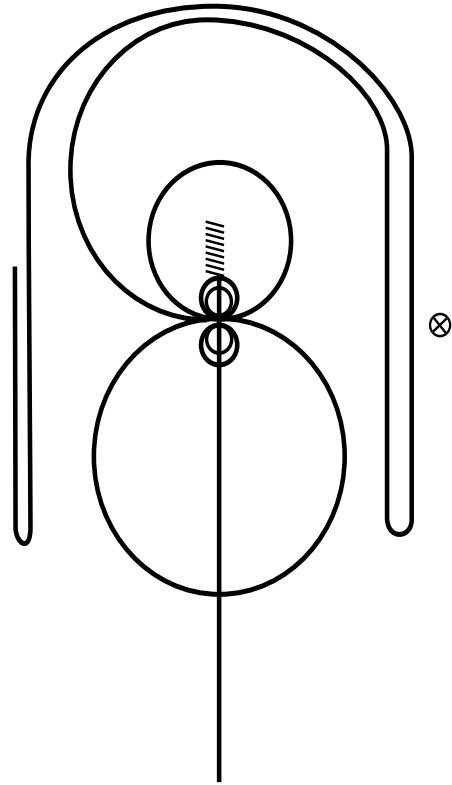
1. Beginning at the center, take a right lead and do two circles to the right, away from the judge, of moderate size and speed.
2. At the center of the arena, change leads and do two circles to the left both of moderate size and speed.
3. At the center of the arena, change leads.
4. Go to the end of the arena without stopping or breaking gait, and begin run down near the approximate center of the arena; run the length of the arena past marker.
5. Do a square, sliding stop, hesitate.
6. Turn left and begin a run to the opposite end of the arena; run length of arena past the marker.
7. Do a square, sliding stop, then hesitate.
8. Turn right, and begin a run down past the center marker of the arena.
9. Do a sliding stop, and back to the center of the arena or at least 10 feet (3 meters). Let horse settle in approximate area of stop.
10. Do two spins to the right.
11. Do two spins to the left.
12. Hesitate to show completion of pattern.

## WORKING RANCH HORSE PATTERN II



1. Start on right side of arena and lope to far end of arena.
2. **Sliding** stop and rollback to the right. Continue to other end of arena.
3. **Sliding** stop and rollback to the left. Continue to center of arena.
4. Lope small, slow circle to left. Change leads.
5. Lope right circle with medium speed. Change leads.
6. Lope large fast circle to left. Change leads.
7. Lope large fast circle to right. Change leads.
8. Continue down arena.
9. **Sliding** stop and back 10 to 15 feet.
10. Do 360-degree spin right or left.
11. Do 360-degree spin opposite direction taken in
12. Hesitate to show completion of pattern.

## WORKING RANCH HORSE PATTERN III



Mandatory Marker Along Fence or Wall Ride pattern as follows:

1. Start at end of arena. Run past the center marker and do a sliding stop. Back approximately 10 to 15 feet to the center.
2. Complete 2 spins right
3. Complete 2 1/4 spins left
4. Begin on right lead and complete one circle right small and slow. Change leads
5. Complete one circle left large and fast. Change leads
6. Continue loping around end of arena without breaking gate. Run straight down the right side of the arena past the center marker and do a left rollback.
7. Continue back around the previous circle but do not close this circle. Run down the left side of the arena past the center marker and do a right rollback.
8. Continue past center marker and do a sliding stop
9. Hesitate to complete pattern