

## **RANCH TRAIL**

**SHW305.7** Junior horses competing in western pleasure, western horsemanship, western riding, trail, reining, working cow horse, boxing, ranch riding, **ranch trail**, trail, all versatility ranch horse and all ranching heritage challenge classes that are shown with a hackamore or snaffle bit may be ridden with one or two hands on the reins. The tails of the reins must be crossed on the opposite side of the neck when riding with two hands on split reins except in reining, working cow horse, boxing, ranch riding, **ranch trail**, all VRH classes, and all RHC classes. Closed reins (example mecate) may not be used with a snaffle bit, except in working cow horse, boxing, ranch riding, **ranch trail**, all VRH classes and, all RHC classes, where a mecate is permitted. When using a snaffle bit in working cow horse, boxing, ranch riding, ranch trail, all VRH classes and all RHC classes, a leather or other woven material chin strap of any width is to be used and should be attached to the bit below the reins. No iron, chain, or other material is allowed. The chin strap can include metal buckles and/or keepers.

**SHW306.4** Protective boots, leg wraps and bandages are allowed in reining, working cow horse, boxing, team penning, ranch sorting, barrel racing, pole bending, stake racing, jumping, tie-down roping, breakaway roping, dally team roping-heading, dally team roping-heeling, cutting, western horsemanship, ranch riding, **ranch trail**, versatility ranch horse classes and ranching heritage classes. The use of slip on (easycare) horse boots or related footwear are not considered as protective boots and are permissible to be worn in all classes.

**SHW334 GAITS - RANCH CLASSES**. In all gaits, movement of the ranch horse should simulate a horse needing to cover long distances, softly and quietly, like that of a working ranch horse.

**SHW400. PERFORMANCE CLASSES**. In open division competition, an exhibitor may enter one or more horses in a class, but each horse may have only one rider per class. In individual open division working events (ranch riding, **ranch trail**, reining, working cow horse, boxing, western riding, barrel racing, pole bending, jumping, working hunter, trail, tie-down roping, dally team roping - heading, dally team roping - heeling, team penning, ranch sorting and cutting) a rider may:

**SHW461.1** No horse may cross enter **Trail and Ranch Trail or** Trail and Versatility Ranch Horse Trail regardless of division.

**SHW470.RANCH TRAIL This class should test the horse's ability to cope with situations encountered while being ridden through a pattern of obstacles generally found during the course of everyday ranch work. The horse/rider team is judged on the correctness, efficiency, and pattern accuracy with which the obstacles are negotiated, and the attitude and mannerisms exhibited by the**

**horse. Judging emphasis is on identifying the well broke, responsive, and well-mannered horse which can correctly navigate and negotiate the course. The ideal ranch trail horse should have a natural ranch horse appearance from head to tail in each maneuver.**

**SHW470.1 No horse may cross enter Trail and Ranch Trail or Trail and Versatility Ranch Horse Trail, regardless of division.**

**SHW471. At show management option the competition trail course may be made available to exhibitors or posted prior to the day of competition. It must be posted at least one hour prior to competition.**

**SHW472.SCORING. All runs begin upon entering the area of competition and any infractions are subject to penalty at that time (such as two hands on the reins, using either hand to instill fear or praise, etc.). The rider has the option of eliminating any obstacle, however this will result in being “off pattern” (OP) and the horse/rider team may not place above others who have completed the pattern correctly. A judge may ask a horse to pass on an obstacle after three refusals or at any time for safety concerns.**

**SHW473. Credit is given to horse/rider teams who negotiate the obstacles correctly and efficiently. Horses should receive credit for showing attentiveness to obstacles and ability to negotiate through the course when the obstacles warrant it while willingly responding to rider’s cues on more difficult obstacles. Quality of movement and cadence should be considered part of the maneuver score for the obstacle. Penalties are assessed as follows:**

**SHW473.1 One (1) point**

- over-bridled (per maneuver)
- out of frame (per maneuver)
- each hit, bite or stepping on a log, cone plant or any component of the obstacle
- incorrect or break of gait at walk or trot for two (2) strides or less
- both front or hind feet in a single-stride slot or space at a walk or trot
- skipping over or failing to step into required space
- split pole in lope-over
- incorrect number of strides, if specified
- one to two steps on mount/dismount or ground tie except shifting to balance

**SHW473.2 Three (3) points**

- wrong lead or out of lead
- draped reins
- break of gait at lope, except when correcting an incorrect lead
- break of gait at walk or trot for more than two (2) strides
- three to four steps on mount/dismount on ground tie

**SHW473.3 Five (5) points**

- spurring in front of cinch

blatant disobedience  
use of either hand to instill fear/praise  
knocking over, stepping out of, or falling off an obstacle  
dropping an object required to be carried  
1st or 2nd cumulative refusal  
letting go of gate  
five or more steps on mount/ dismount or ground tie

#### **SHW473.4 Ten (10) points**

Unnatural ranch horse appearance (Horse's tail is obvious and consistently carried in an unnatural manner in every maneuver)

#### **SHW473.5 Off-Pattern (OP) - exhibitors cannot place above others who complete pattern correctly**

Incomplete maneuver  
eliminating or adding a maneuver  
3rd refusal  
repeated blatant disobedience, and failure to dally and remain dalled  
use of two hands (except junior shown in a snaffle bit/hackamore), more than one finger between  
split reins or any fingers between romal reins (except in the two-rein)  
failure to open and shut gate, or failure to complete gate

#### **SHW473.6 Disqualified 0 – Score**

lameness  
abuse  
leaving working area before pattern is complete  
illegal equipment  
disrespect or misconduct  
improper western attire  
fall of horse/rider

**SHW474.RANCH TRAIL COURSE. When setting courses, management will be mindful that the idea is not to trap a horse/rider team or eliminate it by making an obstacle too difficult. All courses and obstacles are to be constructed with safety in mind to reduce the risk for accidents. Show committee shall have the option of setting up the trail course to best fit the arena conditions. An outdoor course is recommended if appropriate terrain is available. Each single-performance event can be time consuming, especially with large classes, so it is imperative that time restrictions are placed on this class. The show committee, either through a pilot run or estimation, shall select a course that has a continuous and positive flow that can be negotiated in four minutes or less.**

**SHW474.1 Judges must walk the course and have the right and duty to alter the course if it is not in keeping with the intent of the class. The judge may remove or change any obstacles they deem unsafe, non-negotiable or unnecessarily difficult. Any time a trail obstacle becomes unsafe during a class,**

it shall be repaired or removed from the course. If the course cannot be repaired and some horses have completed the course, the score for that obstacle shall be deducted from all previous draws in that class.

SHW474.2 The ranch trail course will include no less than six and no more than nine obstacles. It is mandatory that the horse be asked to walk, trot and lope during the course. Walk can be part of obstacle score or be scored with the approaching obstacle. Trot must be at least 35 feet and score with approaching obstacle. Lope must be lead-specific, at least 50 feet and score with approaching obstacle. Care must be exercised to avoid setting up any obstacles that may be hazardous to the horse or rider.

SHW474.3 The course must be designed using the mandatory obstacles and maneuvers plus optional obstacles. Combining two or more of the obstacles is acceptable.

SHW475. Mandatory Ranch Trail obstacles include:

SHW475.1 Ride over obstacles on the ground (usually logs). Walk, trot or lope may be used but only one gait is required. - Walk-overs: Walk over no more than five logs no more than 10 inches high and spacing between 26 – 30 inches. The formation may be straight, curved, zig-zagged or raised.

Trot-overs: Trot over no more than five logs no more than 10 inches high. The space between logs or poles should be 36-42 inches. The formation can also be straight, curved, zigzagged or raised. - Lope-overs: Lope over no more than five logs no more than 10 inches high. The space between logs should be 6 to 7 feet. The formation can also be straight, curved, zig-zagged or raised.

SHW475.2 Opening, passing through and closing a hinged swinging gate (not a rope gate): Use gate that will not endanger horse or rider and requires minimum side-passing.

SHW475.3 Ride over wooden bridge: Bridge should be sturdy, safe and negotiated at a walk only. Heavy plywood lying flat on the ground is an acceptable simulation of a bridge. Suggested minimum width shall be 36 inches wide and at least 6 feet long.

SHW475.4 Backing obstacles: Backing obstacles are to be spaced at a minimum of 28 inches. If elevated, 30 inch spacing is required. Back through and around at least three markers. Back through L, V, U or straight or similarly shaped course which may be elevated no more than 24 inches.

SHW475.5 Side-pass obstacle: Any object which is safe and of any length may be used to demonstrate responsiveness of the horse to leg signals.

Raised side pass obstacles should not exceed 12 inches.

SHW475.6 Drag an object: For open and amateur classes ONLY. The drag is not to be used in youth classes. Drag may be a complete figure eight and may begin in either direction. The exhibitor must have the rope dallied on the saddle horn (half or full dally) for the duration of the drag.

**SHW476. Optional Ranch Trail obstacles may be used provided the obstacles can be found in everyday ranch work. Optional obstacles from which selections can be made include, but not limited to:**

**SHW476.1 A jump obstacle whose center height is not less than 14 inches high or more than 25 inches high. Holding the saddle horn is permissible for this obstacle.**

**SHW476.2 Only live or stuffed animals which would normally be encountered in an outdoor setting may be used but not to be used in an attempt to spook a horse.**

**SHW476.3 Carry object from one part of the arena to another.**

**SHW476.4 Remove and replace materials from a mailbox.**

**SHW476.5 Trot through cones spaced a minimum of 6 feet apart.**

**SHW476.6 Cross natural ditches or ride up embankments.**

**SHW476.7 Swing rope or throw rope at a dummy steer head.**

**SHW476.8 Step in and out of obstacle.**

**SHW476.9 Put on a slicker or coat.**

**SHW476.10 Stand to mount with mounting block.**

**SHW476.11 Walk through water obstacle.**

**SHW476.12 Open gate on foot.**

**SHW476.13 Pick up feet.**

**SHW476.14 Walk through brush.**

**SHW476.15 Ground tie. (Hobbles are allowed)**

**SHW476.16 Lead at the trot.**

**SHW477 Unacceptable Ranch Trail course obstacles include:**

**tarps**

**water obstacles with slick bottoms**

**PVC pipe used as a jump or walk over**

**tires**

**rocking or moving bridges**

**logs elevated in a manner that permits such to roll in a dangerous manner**

SHW509.1.6 The use of 'two rein equipment' is allowed as recognized by our NRCHA alliance in AQHA working cow horse, boxing, ranch riding, **ranch trail**, all VRH classes, and all RHC classes. The purpose of the two rein option is the transition between the hackamore and bridle and can be used on any aged horse in the youth, amateur, junior, senior or all age working cow horse class, amateur or youth boxing, or ranch riding, **ranch trail**, all VRH classes and all RHC classes for one year only. The bit and bosal combination must be approved in accordance with NRCHA rules, below. Only one hand may be used on the reins and hands must not be changed. Any number of fingers between reins will be permitted. Both mecate and bridle reins are to be held in the rein hand.

SHW556.11 The use of two-rein equipment is allowed in working cow horse, boxing, ranch riding, **ranch trail**, all VRH classes and all RHC classes for one year only.

SHW561.1 No horse may cross enter **Trail and Ranch Trail** or Trail and Versatility Ranch Horse Trail regardless of division.

**SHW805. ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS.**

**Ranch Trail to be added to Category II**

**SHW808.2** At least 20 of those points must have been won in performance events at AQHA-approved shows or in races with at least eight of the 20 performance points earned in one or more of the following events:

Reining	Ranch Riding
<b><u>Ranch Trail</u></b>	Western Pleasure
Western Riding	Trail
Jumping	Working Hunter
Hunter Under Saddle	Hunter Hack

**SHW912.2** judge two consecutive years at the same show, set of shows or circuit except when judging cutting, working cow horse, roping, team penning, ranch sorting, speed events, ranch riding, **ranch trail**, or versatility ranch horse where they may judge up to two consecutive years.

