

## **REINED COW HORSE**

### **General Rules:**

REINED COW HORSE will use NRCHA rules when not in conflict with NHSRA rules. Contestant may change horses in the Reined Cow Horse.

1. Reined Cow Horse must be offered at all State/Province Finals. States/Provinces will have two options in conducting their qualify 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 option II is used, only points earned at State/Province and District Finals will be applied to the All Around.
  - 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 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 Horses 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 Horses 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, first go-round will be drawn. Working order positions within the pre-drawn performance of the second go-round will be randomly drawn. Positions will be drawn for final go-round.
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 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 score card and the rodeo secretary shall post same 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.
5. 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 zero to eighty. The two scores are added together for the final score. A total score of more than sixty will be required to receive placing or points.

- a) 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) 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 case will be reviewed by the appropriate committee.
- c) 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.

## Equipment

1. No choke ropes, tiedowns, or wire around the horse's neck will be permitted. Horse must be ridden with a bridle (with bits in the mouth and no noseband or bosal), or hackamore. Hackamore must be 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 romel reins or split reins and must not be made of nylon (no roping reins). 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.
2. 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, halfbreeds 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;
3. A horse of any age may be shown two handed 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 hackmore) may be shown with 2 hands without penalty, however a bridle horse shown one handed will receive more credit than a bridle horse shown two handed.
  4. 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. 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. A major penalty is defined as a 2 point penalty or greater in the rein and cow work.
2. Show management has the right to consult the NRCHA Director of Judges at any time with regard to the Self-Adjusted Monitor System.

**Reined Work - Maneuver Scores for Reined Work:** Score sheets and reining patterns are available from the NRCHA or NHSRA websites. 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 1/2	Extremely Poor
-1	Very Poor
-1/2	Poor
0	Correct
+1/2	Good
+1	Very Good
+1 1/2	Excellent

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 exact printed pattern due to arena conditions. The judging ends when the rider indicates he/she is finished by coming to a complete stop. 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 must be considered a loss of control 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 may be a flying lead change or a simple lead change. The simple lead change may 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, one time.

**Jogging:** Jogging beyond 3 strides will incur a 1 point penalty. Jogging in excess of one-half circle or one-half the length of the arena will result incur a 3 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 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.

**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 horses 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
- Jogging for more than 3 strides
- 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
- Failure to run by marker before stop is initiated
- Freezing up in turn
- 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 departure
- A stop in the first one-quarter of the circle, after a lope departure, is a break of gait

##### 3 Point Penalties:

- Jogging in excess of one-half circle or one-half the length of the arena
- Failure to complete the pattern as given (i.e. over or under spin more than 1/4)
- 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

-0- Score:

- Bloody Mouth (inside)

- Illegal Equipment

- Leaving the working area before pattern is complete

- Fall of horse or rider

- 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

No Score

- Abuse

- Lameness of the horse

### **Cow Work**

Cattle will be chute run, not drawn.

**Cow Work:** Score sheets are available from the NRCHA or NHSRA websites. Judging begins when the contestant enters the arena. 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.

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. Then the contestant shall take the cow to an open part of the arena and circle the animal at least once in each direction. The cow work is performed after the rein work. The required pattern for the cow work is: boxing, fence turns, and circles, in that order.

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 exhibitors, they may inform the judge who may elect to alter the required cattle work for safety reasons.

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. When enough cows are available the contestant should receive a new cow if the cow drawn is unreasonably difficult or unworkable. Allowing the horse to quit working before the judge signals for a new cow will result in a zero score. 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. **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 has the option to refuse the new cow by continuing to work. 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 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.

**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. 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.

**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 actually 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:** Maneuvering 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. The circles should be completed before the cow is exhausted.

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)
- 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.
- 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.

3 point penalties:

- 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
- C. Blatant disobedience, defined as kicking, biting, bucking, rearing, striking, or obviously insubordinate
- D. Turn tail

-0- score:

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

No Score

- A. Lameness of the horse
- B. Abuse

Credits:

- A. Maintaining control of cow at all times
- B. Maintaining proper position
- C. Degree of difficulty
- D. Eye appeal
- E. Time worked

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.) with no horns over 2 inches.