

FREESTYLE REINING

A. GENERAL RULES

(1) Reining maneuvers originated from moves that a cow horse must use in performing its duties and have been refined to the high level of competition existing today. Freestyle Reining not only provides an opportunity to use these maneuvers creatively, but also to expand them to music by means of choreography. Riders are encouraged to use musical scores which permit them to show the athletic ability of the horse in a crowd appealing way.

(2) NRHA rules will apply except where the following rules preempt same.

(3) Required Maneuvers. Will be defined as follows:

(a) A minimum of four (4) consecutive spins to the right

(b) A minimum of four (4) consecutive spins to the left

(c) A minimum of three (3) stops

(d) A minimum of one (1) lead change at the lope from right to left

(e) A minimum of one (1) lead change at the lope from left to right

(4) Exhibitors will only be judged astride.

(5) Exhibitors are allowed to use two (2) hands (as well as one or no hands) and any bit approved by the *NRHA Handbook*, including snaffle bits and bosals approved for use in the Snaffle Bit or Hackamore classes.

(6) Failure to perform all the required maneuvers or failure to complete the performance within the time limit will result in a score of zero (0).

(7) Additional maneuvers such as rollbacks, backups, speed variations, and non-classical reining maneuvers such as half pass and side pass are appropriate in Freestyle and shall be given appropriate credit. Additional repetitions of required maneuvers are appropriate, but will only add or subtract from the existing scores already given for the required maneuvers, not as additional scores.

(8) Equipment used in Freestyle must adhere to the following standards:

(a) All equipment must be non-abusive and humane based on NRHA Rules and Guidelines.

(b) Any equipment not specifically covered by or in conflict with standard equipment guidelines must be non-abusive to the horse.

(9) **Time Limit.** A maximum of four (4) minutes including any introductions. The time limit will begin when the horse enters the arena and will end when the music stops.

(10) **Costumes.** Permitted but not required. Emphasis is placed on performing the reining maneuvers to music.

(11) **Props.** Permitted but at no time may hinder the judges' view of the horse. The use of props will not add to the score.

B. JUDGING OF FREESTYLE REINING

(1) Required maneuvers in Freestyle will receive a score based on technical merit from the technical judges utilizing judges score cards specifically designed for the Freestyle. Transitional maneuvers and other maneuvers not specified as reining maneuvers will be evaluated and scored accordingly in a specified box and counted as a single maneuver score. If an artistic impression judge is used, they must use the score sheet provided by NRHA and are encouraged to include remarks regarding performance. In the event an artistic judge is not used, the technical judges will assess an artistic impression score in the box specified using a -2 (two) to a +2 (two) evaluation. (See Figure #9.)

(2) **Number of Judges.** Two or more NRHA approved judges must be used in any Freestyle class that offers \$2,000 or more in added money.

(3) In the case of one or two (2) judges being used, they would be required to be NRHA approved. They would judge the technical merit of the ride. As part of the overall score, each judge would weigh the artistic impression of the ride as 10 percent of the overall ride.

(4) **Tie Breaker Judge.** One (1) judge (not to be an artistic impression judge) shall be designated as the tiebreaker prior to the Freestyle class. In the event a tie still occurs (or the tie occurs with one judge), the technical merit scores will be tallied to break the tie. In the event a tie remains, the exhibitors tied will be declared co-champions.

(5) Validating required maneuvers will be the responsibility of the judges. However, at least one scribe will be used to assist in verifying the required maneuvers for each horse as they are completed in the pattern.

(6) All five (5) point penalties may apply except holding the saddle or saddle horn with either hand or touching the horse with the freehand, which are allowed.

(7) Eliminations are to be used at the discretion of show management and must use NRHA patterns, NRHA judging rules as applied to Category 1 classes, and NRHA judges. Eliminations may be held without music or costuming, but must allow the use of either one (1) or two (2) hands. The emphasis in the design of any elimination should be on quality of competition.

(8) Artistic impression judge or applause meter should not represent more than twenty percent (20%) of the combined score and should only be used in conjunction with (minimum) two NRHA approved judges. When used in scoring, the following formulas should be applied to properly weigh the scores according to the above percentage and still produce a comparable numerical score as when three judges are used.

(a) Score for Judge 1 should be multiplied by 1.2

(b) Score for Judge 2 should be multiplied by 1.2

- (c) Score for the Applause Meter should be multiplied by .6. All three scores should then be added to determine the final score for placing.
- (9) Freestyle Reining may offer both an Open and a Non Pro Freestyle class. Show management will reserve the right to run them concurrently or separately.
- (10) Show management will reserve the right to rule on music or dress which may be inappropriate or offensive to the spirit and nature of the show. Show management may also determine the use of special lighting.