

SNOHOMISH COUNTY 4-H

Ranch Riding

1 PURPOSE

The 4-H Ranch Riding program was established to help preserve the skills and traditions of the ranch horse.

In ranch riding division, the horse is judged on its ability to work at a forward, working speed while performing required and optional maneuvers. The ranch riding horse should simulate a horse riding outside the confines of an arena and reflect the versatility, attitude and movement of a working horse.

Like all 4-H projects, Ranch Riding members will develop the qualities of leadership and responsibility that come with being engaged in 4-H. In today's world, managing cattle from horseback is a disappearing tradition. Ranches are increasingly automated, using four-wheelers and other machines instead of horses. Many of the skills once learned for necessity are being lost. The 4-H Ranch Riding Division is designed to teach and preserve the age-old skills and traditions.

2 RANCH RIDING GUIDELINES

To participate in Ranch Riding classes at the County Fair youth must have attended one County Ranch Riding event with the same horse they are taking to the County Fair.

At least one of those events must be for the class they want to participate (ranch riding and/or Ranch Trail). Youth may not enter two Ranch Riding classes and then enter Ranch Trail at Fair; they must have successfully completed one Ranch Riding and one Ranch Trail qualifier.

Top ranch horses are good at many things. They are all-around horses, not specialized for certain events. Perhaps most importantly, they stay calm and relaxed no matter what the situation. They can work quietly around cows, cross bridges, drag objects, open gates, and they don't shy when they encounter a strange obstacle.

More characteristics of a good ranch horse include:

- Good manners
- Soft mouth
- Responds well to a light rein, especially when turning
- Holds head in a natural position
- Stays under control of the rider, even when working at speed

These characteristics would be considered faults:

- Exaggerated opening of the mouth
- Hard or heavy mouth
- Throwing the head
- Pulling on the bit
- Halting or hesitating when approaching cattle or obstacles
- Rearing, bucking, kicking
- Disobedience

2.1.1 Ranch Riding Maneuvers

A good ranch horse keeps its feet under it at all times. It can stop well and perform rollbacks and turns on the haunches. It does not necessarily need to be able to perform sliding stops and spins, because these are not usually part of everyday ranch work.

Following are descriptions of specific maneuvers that might be required in a Ranch Riding class.

2.1.2 Gaits at various speeds

4-H members may be asked to perform fast or slow circles at the jog or lope. The phrase “with energy” may also be used. Members are expected to demonstrate true and natural gaits and may be asked to lengthen or shorten stride or pace. Posting at the extended trot and holding the horn are allowed with all increases in speed. The horse must remain controlled and obedient. The rider’s ability to demonstrate a decrease in speed is also an important element in scoring.

2.1.3 Back up

The backup should be resistance-free, fluid, and smooth. It should be done with enough energy to appear as if there is somewhere to go, but not fast enough to cause injury. The horse should back freely until the rider tells it to stop.

2.1.4 Circles/Figure eights

Circles should be done on the correct lead and well off the arena wall. In a figure 8, right and left circles should be the same size with a common center line. The horse should lope freely with minimal rein contact.

2.1.5 Haunch turns

Haunch turns are not spins, but they should be done with energy and impulsion. The haunch turn must have forward motion, with the non-pivot hind foot moving around in front of the pivot foot.

2.1.6 Rollbacks

Rollbacks are the 180-degree reversal of forward motion. From an increased speed, the horse comes to a stop, rolls (turns) the shoulders back to the opposite direction over the hocks, and departs at a lope, all as one continuous motion with no hesitation. A slight pause is acceptable and should not be judged as hesitation. The horse should not step ahead or back up before rolling back.

2.1.7 Stops

Perform a proper, balanced stop with the rear of the horse engaged and ready to carry out the next maneuver. An exhibitor could receive a serious penalty for a horse stopping on the front. Stopping should be done in response to a light rein.

2.1.8 Flying lead changes

Junior and Intermediate members are not required to perform flying lead changes. Senior members may be required to perform a flying lead change. The change should be done at the point indicated in the pattern, with no change in speed, and the horse should change front and back in one stride.

2.1.9 Open and close a gate “In-hand” or “Mounted”

Gates in all disciplines are considered to be right hand push unless otherwise specified.. Under no circumstances in Ranch Riding would it be acceptable to remove a hand from a gate while operating it from the ground or horseback. It is assumed that animals are always present and the ranch hand never knows where they may come from at any time.

2.1.10 Backing and leading straight/around/ through obstacles

Unless the pattern calls for leading from a specific side of the horse, the handler shall determine which side is appropriate for leading, the near side or the off side, by the positioning of the obstacle and the safest place for the handler to place themselves in relation to that obstacle.

For example, if you are to back between logs that simulate two steep banks or large fallen trees, then you must figure out a way to stay with your horse between the logs and be as safe as possible.

2.1.11 Ground tying

Ground tying is when you drop your lead rope or reins on the ground and the horse stands quietly, without moving, when you leave. Your horse must stay put until you are done.

3 GENERAL RULES AND REQUIREMENTS

3.1.1 Clothing and Tack Requirements

Tack and Attire to follow the Western Performance Divisions of the PNW 4-H Contest Guide and the Snohomish County Reference Guide with some exceptions as listed:

Emphasis should be put on ranch type attire that might be worn on a working ranch versus the Western show arena. 'Bling' and heavy adornment is discouraged.

Chaps or Chinks are allowed in all Ranch Riding classes.

Equipment follows Western Tack requirements found in the PNW 4-H Contest Guide and the Snohomish County 4-H Reference Guide, however, protective leg gear is allowed. Also, for Ranch Riding classes a properly fitted rear cinch (attached to the front cinch) and Breast Collar are highly recommended.

While closed roping reins or mecate reins are allowed, split or romal reins are preferred. Either a curb or snaffle bit are allowed; use one hand on the reins with a curb bit and two hands with a snaffle or Bosal

In any class where dragging, roping or dallying is required it is recommended that the horn be wrapped, but not required.

3.1.2 Grooming

Horses should be neatly groomed for all classes however clipping is not required. Natural manes are preferred without braiding or banding but will not be penalized.

3.1.3 Judging

The Danish Merit system of judging is used in all classes. Exhibitors receive score sheets with constructive comments after every event.

Each maneuver has 10 points possible and there can be 8 to 15 maneuvers in a class.

3.1.4 Divisions

Age divisions for 4-H Ranch Riding are the same as for the 4-H Horse Project:

- Junior — 8-10 yrs of age
- Intermediate — 11-13 yrs of age
- Senior — 14 yrs of age until the end of 4-H eligibility.

Each division will be divided into 2 classes;

- WALK/JOG
- WALK/JOG/LOPE

3.1.5 Eligibility

Ranch riding is open to all horses and riders except Green Horses.

A rider may select either class level, WJ or WJL, based on their own ability and comfort level. A rider exhibiting in Walk/Jog may remain at that level until they are ready to move themselves up to WJL.

3.1.6 Awards

In addition to the blue, red, and white recognition of the Danish Merit system, all classes will be placed to 8th.

The Ranch Riding Division offers a Show High Point and a Year End High Point at both levels in all age groups.

4 RANCH RIDING

-Ranch Riding is a pattern class where each horse and rider team performs the pattern individually. There is no rail work – only pattern.

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 show 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 shall have a natural head carriage at each gait.

The class is a pattern that may include, but is not limited to, walk, trot, lope, lead changes, rollbacks, and turns on the haunches. Members individually demonstrate their horsemanship skills at natural gaits and controlled speed when specified.

4.1.1 Basis of judging

This class is judged on the rider's control of the horse and the horse's suitability as a ranch horse. The horse should respond to a light rein and show little resistance. Speeds should be distinct, and the horse should be under total control at all speeds. The pattern should be ridden as diagrammed and deviations marked down.

Part of the evaluation of this class is on smoothness of transitions. A horse may be collected from the extended trot as the horse moves into the lope. The transition from the extended lope down to the trot is a transition to the seated trot not the extended trot. Therefore, an extra cue to achieve this gait is expected. Horses that complete this total transition within three strides calmly and obediently should be rewarded. Horses that attempt to stop or do stop prior to trotting will be penalized. Judges expect to see horses that have been trained to respond to cues. To see these cues applied discretely and the horse responding correctly could be a credit-earning situation. A horse in Ranch Riding should be a willing, compliant partner with their rider but should never seem intimidated while performing any of the gaits or maneuvers.

See sample patterns and the score sheet in this guide

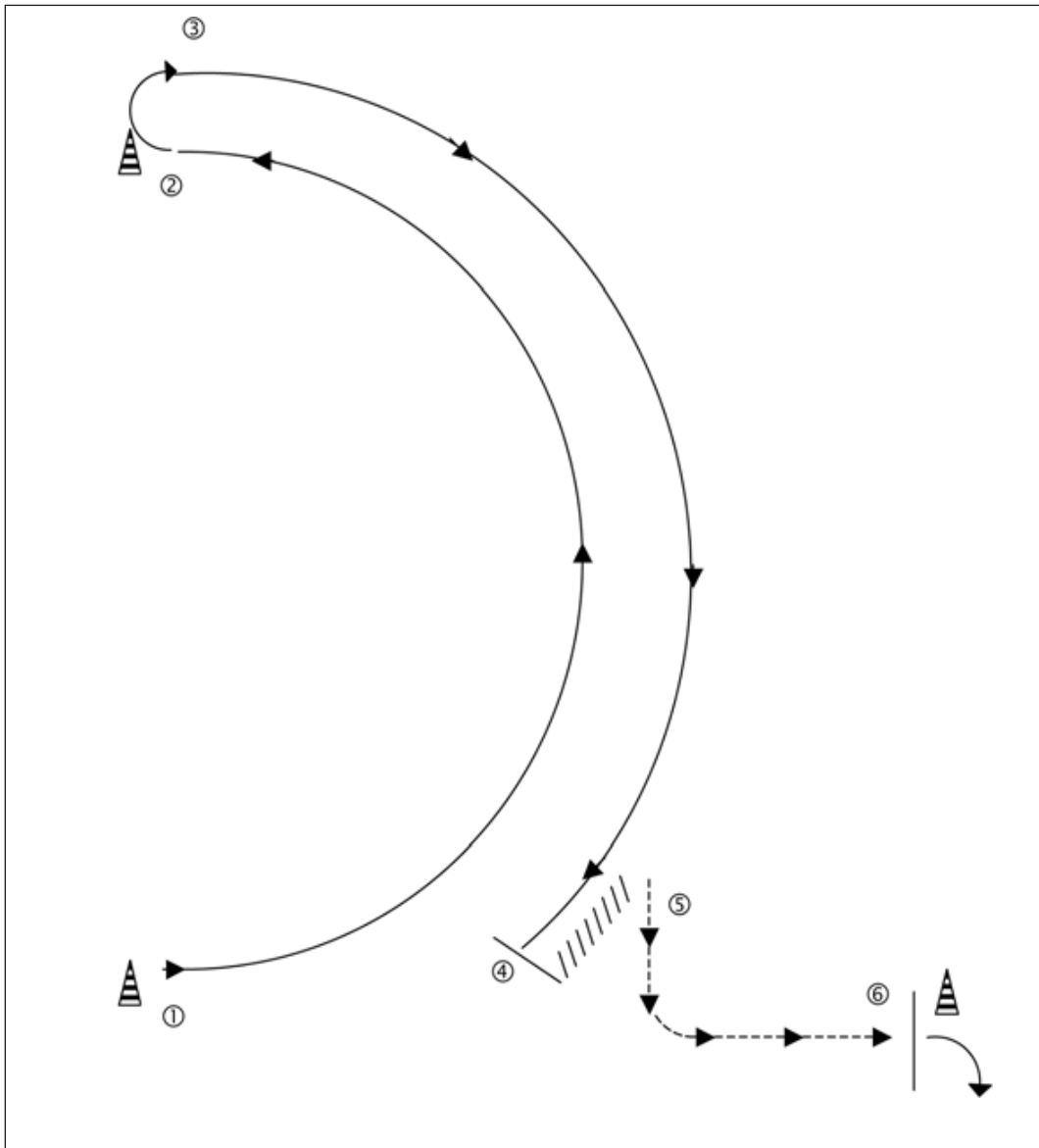
Possible tests:

- Walk, trot, lope both directions at various speeds (posting is allowed at the extended jog and riders may touch or hold the saddle horn)
- Back up

- Turn on the haunches
- Side Pass
- Rollback (Juniors are not required to perform rollbacks.)
- Balanced stop
- Interrupted, simple, or flying lead changes (Juniors are not required to perform flying changes.)
- Circles, serpentines, straight lines
- Rope handling/roping
- Riding over logs/poles at various gaits

Sample pattern

Ranch Riding



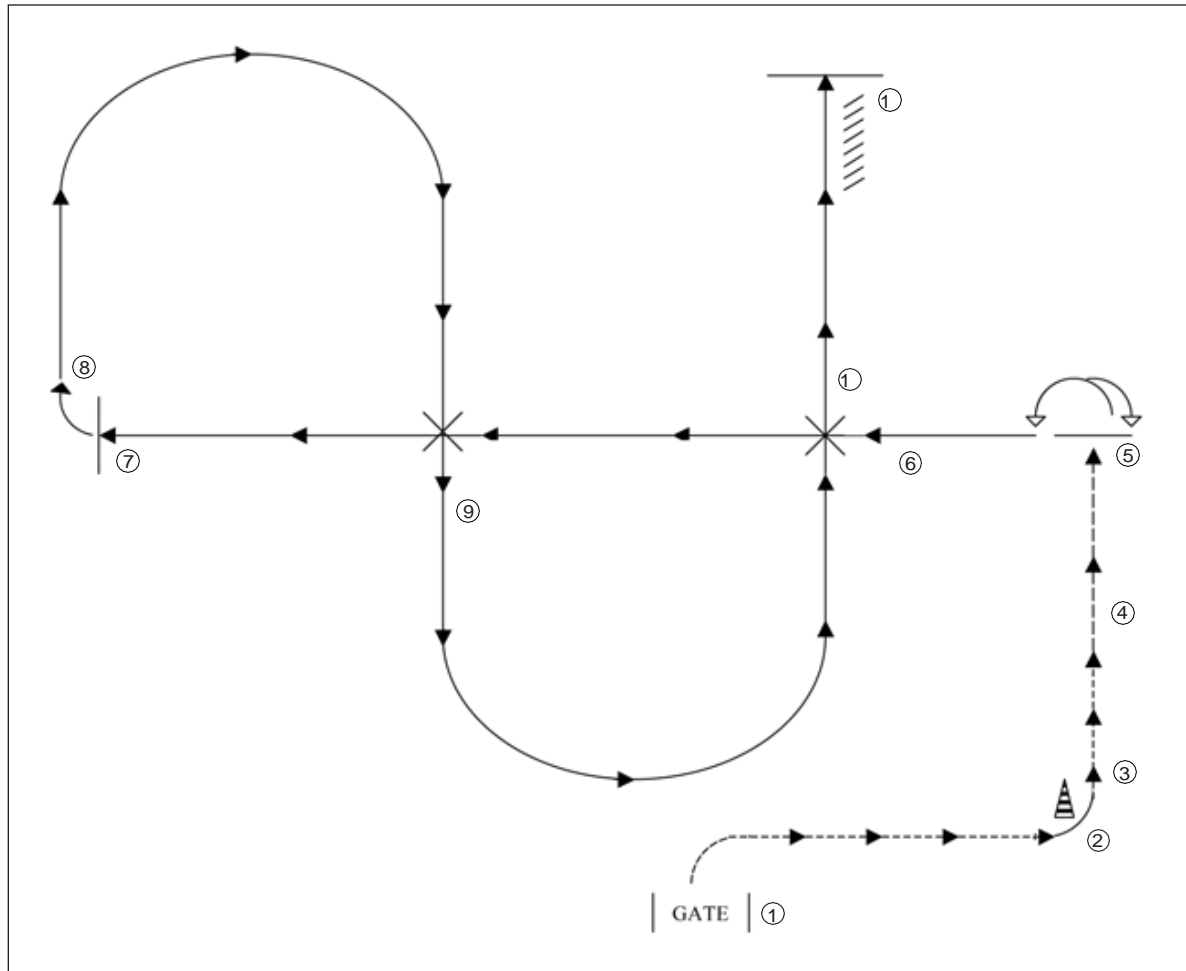
- 1. Left lead lope with energy
- 2. Roll back right at cone
- 3. Lope right lead with energy
- 4. Halt, back at least two lengths with energy
- 5. Jog out of back to cone

Legend

- Jog - - - - ->
- Lope - - - - ->
- Back // // // //





Sample pattern

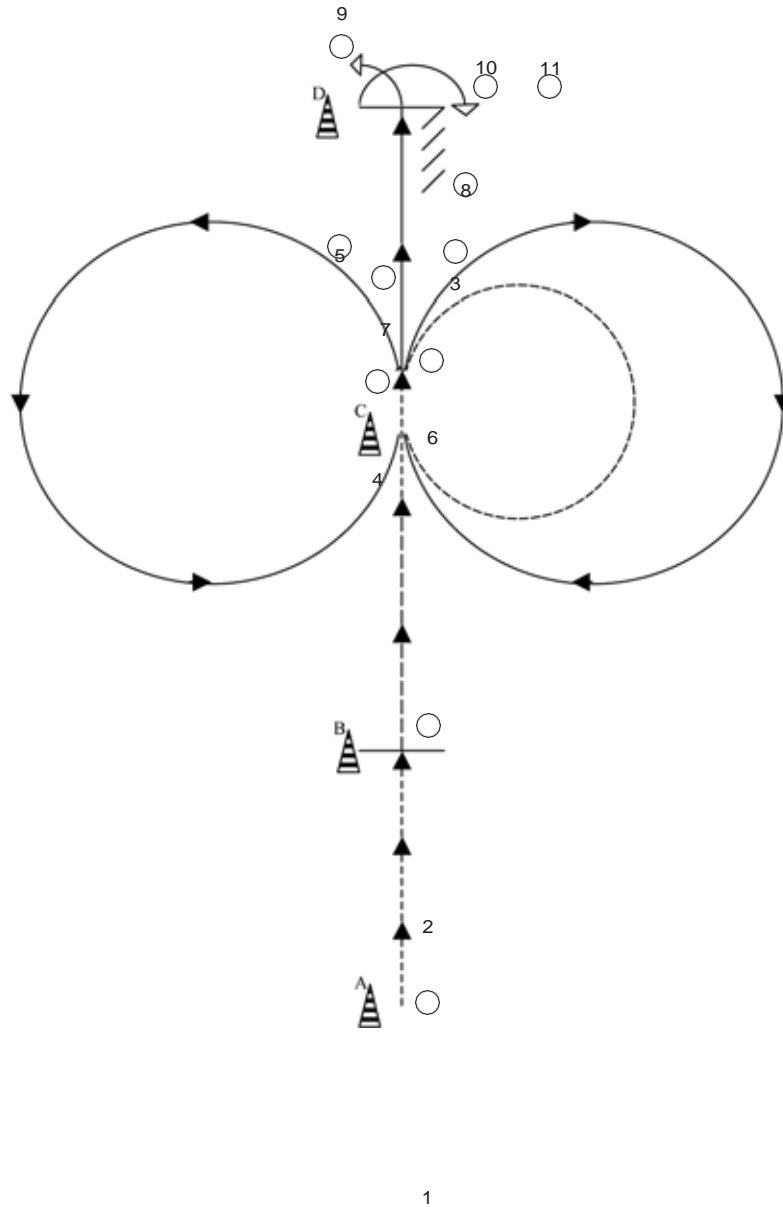
Ranch Riding



1. Enter through gate, jog to cone
2. Halt, wait for judge's nod
3. Then jog
4. Extend the trot
5. a. Balanced stop. Then:
 - b. Do a 90° right hanchturn.
 - c. Do a 180° left hanchturn.
6. Lope left lead

Legend

- Jog 
- Extended Trot 
- Lope 
- Back 



1. Jog from cone A to cone B
2. Extended trot from cone B to cone C, then stop
3. Lope a large circle to the right
4. At cone C, simple or flying (preferred) lead change
5. Lope an equal-size circle to the left
6. At cone C, jog a circle to the right
7. At cone C, lope straight on the left lead to cone D, stop
8. Back 4 steps with energy and close
9. Do a 90° left haunch turn
10. Do a 180° right haunch turn
11. Wait to be excused, jog to exit

Legend

- Jog - - - - ->
- Extended Trot - - - - ->
- Lope ———>
- Back \ / \ / \ / \ / \ /

Date:

NUMBER:

JR/INT/SR:

WJ WJL

POINTS	RATING	JUDGE'S OPINION - PATTERN SCORING
10 points	Excellent	Perfect, no improvements possible (rarely given)
9 points	Very Good	Movement hard to fault, but not quite perfect (rarely given)
8 points	Good	Outstanding; lovely to watch (occasionally given)
7 points	Fairly Good	Performed nicely, movement above average
6 points	Satisfactory	Movement correct
5 points	Sufficient	Okay, neither good or bad, noncommittal score
4 points	Insufficient	Performed but lacking in precision and/or control No precision, little control or response
3 points	Fairly Bad	No response to aids
2 points	Bad	No control
1 point	Very Bad	Rarely given
0 points	Not Performed	

#	Element Judged	Comments	Score
1	Side pass right over pole until off the pole.		
2	Jog serpentine as shown to gate.		
3	Right hand push - open and close gate.		
4	Right lead lope into box, halt.		
5	360 degree left turn in box. Walk out of box to pole.		
6	Prepare rope, rope (artificial) cow/calf/object		
7	Turn left, lope right lead around calf into chute. Halt.		
8	Back out of chute to right, 180-degree left haunch turn.		
9	Extended jog to poles, walk over poles - halt.		
10	Overall horsemanship.		

5 RANCH TRAIL

The horse and rider performing in a ranch trail class are asked to maneuver through six to nine obstacles that resemble the things that would be encountered during everyday riding on a ranch. The horse will be asked to walk, trot and lope (for WJL Division) during the pattern, and obstacles include riding over obstacles (such as logs), passing through a gate, backing, riding over a bridge, side-passing and dragging. The horse is judged on a natural ranch horse appearance, and credit is given for a horse that performs the pattern smoothly, with willingness and efficiency.

5.1 BASIS OF JUDGING

The horse should approach each obstacle calmly and willingly. Credit should be given to a horse with ground-covering gaits between obstacles. Riders and horses should negotiate obstacles effectively and safely.

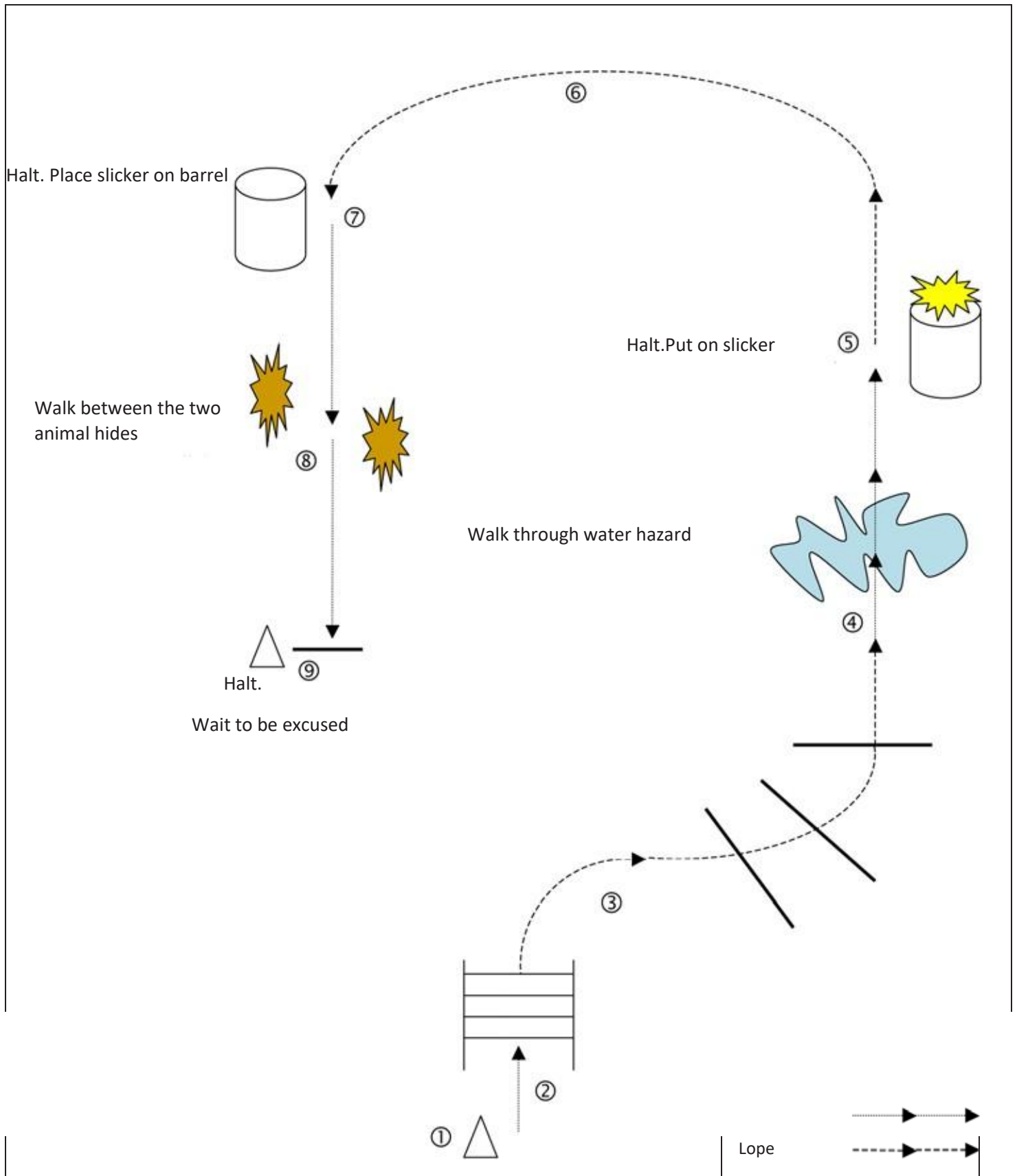
Time is not a criterion for judging. This is not a speed event. However, if the exhibitor cannot complete the tasks in a reasonable time, they may receive zero points for the unfinished obstacle(s).

The standard trail scoresheet is used for this class. See sample patterns for examples of possible courses.

Possible tests:

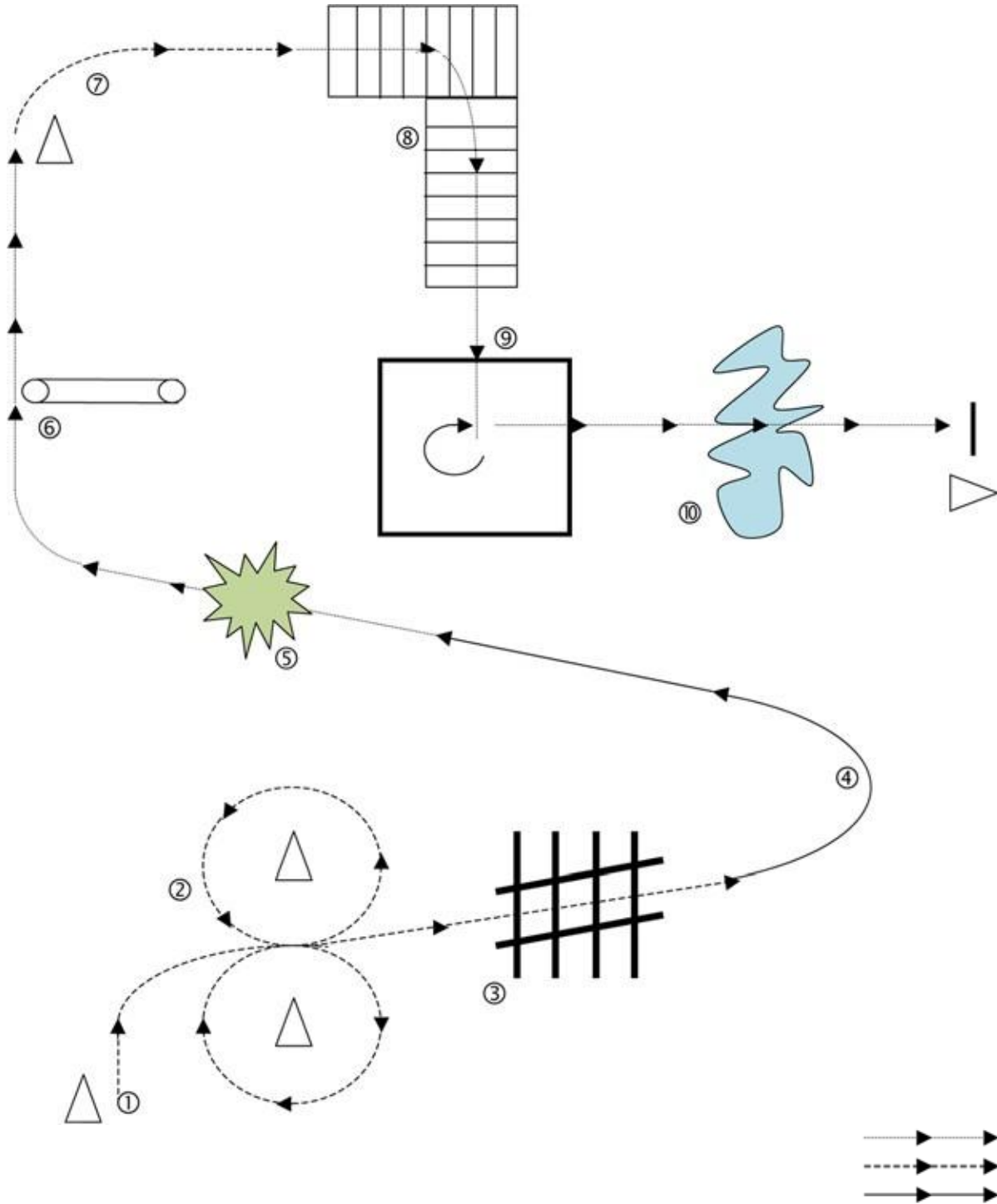
- Walk, trot, or lope at various speeds (WJ level not required to lope)
- Back up over/near/through various obstacles (mounted or unmounted)
- Turn on the haunches
- Walk/jog over/near/through various obstacles
- Carry various items, including weighted bags, buckets, coats, or others
- Open and close a gate (mounted or unmounted)
- Walk past or near unusual items, including, hides, tents, signs
- Answer 4-H Horse project questions
- Mount and dismount
- Drag hides, trees, logs, or similar items
- Negotiate challenging terrain
- Negotiate a water hazard
- Clean out hoof
- Put on a slicker
- Cross a bridge
- Hobble or ground tie your horse

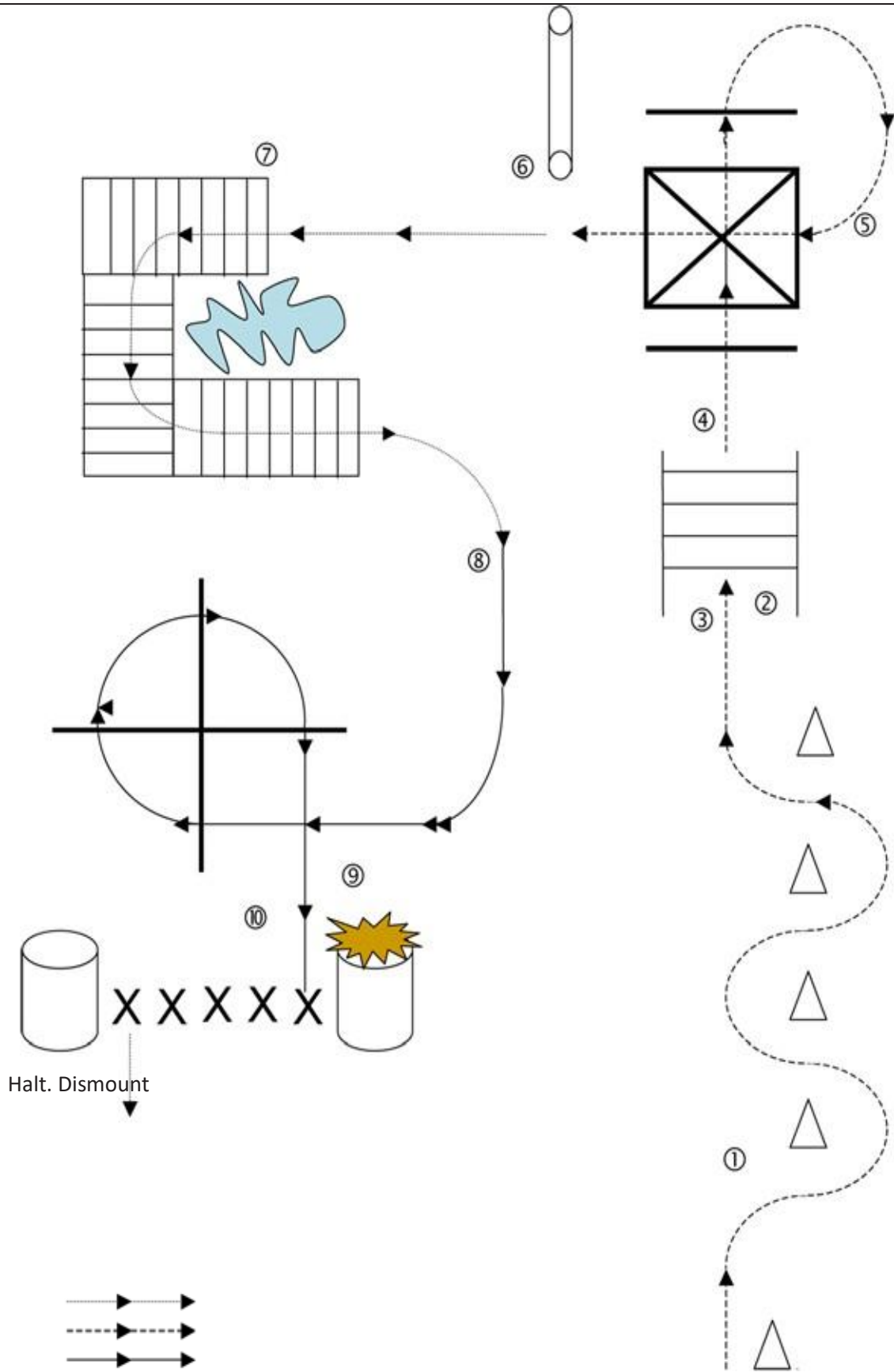
All obstacles must meet safety criteria listed in the PNW [4-H Horse Contest Guide](#), PNW 574.



Sample pattern

Ranch Trail





RANCH TRAIL SAMPLE SCORE SHEET

Date: _____	NUMBER: WJ WJL
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POINTS	RATING	JUDGE'S OPINION
10 points	Excellent	Perfect, no improvements possible (rarely given)
9 points	Very Good	Movement hard to fault, but not quite perfect (rarely given)
8 points	Good	Outstanding; lovely to watch (occasionally given)
7 points	Fairly Good	Performed nicely, movement above average
6 points	Satisfactory	movement correct
5 points	Sufficient	Okay, neither good or bad, noncommittal score
4 points	Insufficient	Performed but lacking in precision and/or control
3 points	Fairly Bad	No precision, little control or response
2 points	Bad	No response to aids
1 point	Very Bad	No control
0 points	Not Performed	Rarely given

#	Element Judged	Comments	Score
1	Side pass to the left until off the pole.		
2	Jog serpentine as shown, jog to bridge.		
3	Walk over bridge. Lope right lead to box.		
4	Lope through box on right lead as shown.		
5	Halt in box, 180 degree turn to left.		
6	Walk out of box, past calf to brush box—halt, 90-degree left haunch turn.		
7	Back into brush box. Wait 5 seconds.		
8	Lope left lead out of brush box to poles.		
9	Walk over raised poles. Jog to cone. halt. Wait to be excused.		
10	Overall horsemanship.		