Ranch Versatility Trail Rules for 2010

1. This class is designed to show the horse’s ability to navigate and cope with the various situations and obstacles encountered in everyday ranch work. It is designed to show a horse’s ability to perform these obstacles with a willing attitude. The horse is judged on cleanness and promptness with which the obstacles are negotiated, ability to negotiate obstacles correctly, and attitude and mannerisms exhibited by the horse while negotiating the course.

2. Whenever possible, realistic or natural obstacles should be used. The course can be laid outside of the arena using natural terrain. However, if a ground tie is specified in the course, the course must be set up in an enclosed arena.

3. The judge must 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 non-negotiable prior to the start of the class. 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. At least two or three obstacles will be designated as tie breakers and shall be selected prior to the beginning of the competition. One of the mandatory obstacles should be used as the first tie breaker.

5. Tack and Equipment:
   A. Ranch work equipment and attire is recommended, but show equipment and attire will not be penalized.
   B. Wearing gloves, leather or fabric, is optional. Roping gloves may be worn for the duration of the class or may be worn only for the roping and log drag obstacles.
   C. Roping reins or reins with romal are permitted, but must be used with a snap attachment if a ground tie is in the course.

6. Use of hands: Only one hand may be used on reins and hands must not be changed, except to work with an obstacle. Hand must be around reins. One finger between reins is permitted except with romal. Two hands may be used when using a snaffle bit or bosal on a horse or pony 5 years of age or younger.

7. The horse will be shown at a ground-covering walk, trot (or natural gait), and lope between the obstacles and credit will be given for performing these gaits on the correct lead with an alert attitude. The walk may be judged as part of an obstacle. Between obstacles, at least 30 feet should be allowed for the trot, and at least 50 feet for the lope. Gaits between obstacles will be scored as part of the next obstacle.

8. Extending the trot or natural gait may also be asked. The extended trot may be ridden with the rider either posting or standing in the stirrups to the front of the saddle. Holding the saddle horn is permissible, at this gait, as might be done in open terrain.

9. No additional credit will be given for unnecessary/additional maneuvers (such as sidepassing to and from an obstacle).
10. The judge may ask a rider to move on to the next obstacle if the horse/rider is unable to complete the maneuver in a reasonable time or if the judge deems that the rider is, or will be, in an unsafe situation. The judge may also ask the rider to move on after a third refusal at an obstacle.

A. A rider will lose 15 points if an obstacle is attempted and not completed.

B. The maximum points a rider can lose on any one attempted obstacle is 15 points.

11. A rider may elect to skip an obstacle without disqualification. He/she may do so with the judge assigning a 20 point penalty.

12. Scoring will be on the basis of 0-infinity, with 70 denoting an average performance. Each obstacle will receive an obstacle score that should be added or subtracted from 70 and is subject to a penalty that should be subtracted. Each obstacle will be scored on the following basis, ranging from plus 1 ½ to minus 1 ½: -1 ½ extremely poor, -1 very poor, -½ needs improvement, 0 correct, +½ good, +1 very good, +1 ½ excellent. Obstacle scores are to be determined and assessed independently of penalty points. Penalties should be assessed per occurrence as follows:

A. One-half (½) Point
   (1) Each tick of log, pole, cone, plant, or any component of the obstacle.

B. One (1) Point
   (1) Each bite of or hit of or stepping on a log, cone, plant or any component of the obstacle.
   (2) Incorrect or break of gait at walk or jog for two strides or less.
   (3) Both front or hind feet in a single-strided slot or space at a walk or jog.
   (4) Skipping over or failing to step into required space.
   (5) Split pole in lope-over.
   (6) Incorrect number of strides, if specified
   (7) Each step, up to three steps, moved during ground tie or picking up hooves.

C. Three (3) Points
   (1) Incorrect or break of gait at walk or jog for more than 2 strides.
   (2) Out of lead or break of gait at lope (except when correcting an incorrect lead).
   (3) Knocking down an elevated pole, cone, barrel, plant, obstacle, or severely disturbing an obstacle.
   (4) Stepping outside the confines of, falling or jumping off or out of obstacle, with designated boundaries, with one foot.

D. Five (5) Points
   (1) Dropping slicker, log rope, or object required to be carried on course.
   (2) Dropping lariat anywhere on course other than after completion of roping obstacle.
   (3) Each refusal, balk, or evading an obstacle by shying or backing.
   (4) Letting go of gate.
   (5) Use of either hand to instill fear or praise.
(6) Stepping outside the confines of, falling or jumping off or out of obstacle, with designated boundaries, with more than one foot.
(7) Blatant disobedience (including kicking out, bucking, rearing, striking).
(8) Moving more than 3 steps during ground tie or picking up hooves.

E. One (1) to Five (5) Points
Faults, which occur on the line of travel between obstacles, scored according to severity:

(1) head carried too high
(2) head carried too low (tip of ear below the withers)
(3) over-flexing or straining neck in head carriage so the nose is carried behind the vertical
(4) excessive nosing out
(5) opening mouth excessively

F. Fifteen (15) Points

(1) Use of two hands (except for junior horses shown with hackamore or snaffle bit) or changing hands on reins. But it is permissible to change hands to work an obstacle.
(2) Excessively or repeatedly touching the horse on the neck to lower the head.
(3) Failure to ever demonstrate correct gait between obstacles as designated.
(4) Failure to complete an obstacle once attempted.
(5) Maximum number of points that can be lost on any one attempted obstacle.

G. Twenty (20) Points

(1) No attempt to work an obstacle.

H. Disqualified 0 – Score

(1) Use of romal other than as allowed in Contest Rules, Regulations, and Procedures.
(2) Performing the obstacle incorrectly or other than in specified order.
(3) Equipment failure that delays completion of pattern.
(4) Entering or exiting an obstacle from the incorrect side or direction.
(5) Working obstacle the incorrect direction.
(6) Riding outside designated boundary marker of the arena or course area.
(7) Significant deviation from correct line of travel between obstacles.

13. Six to ten obstacles will be used. Three will be mandatory, and the remaining will be selected from the optional list.

A. Mandatory Obstacles:

(1) Opening, passing through, and closing a gate. This gate may not be a rope gate.
(2) Log Drag - Horse must be willing to drag a log for a short distance in a straight line. Rider to pick up rope while mounted at point A, and drop rope at point B. Rope may not be tied hard and fast to the saddle horn; dallying is optional. Log size should be roughly the size of a small fence post, suggested maximum weight ~30 lbs. Rope should be securely attached to one end of the post by either drilling a hole through the post and tying a bowline (or other non-slip knot), or attaching an O-ring and tying a non-slip knot through the ring.
(3) 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. Rider must provide the rope for this obstacle; rope may be carried in hand, over saddle horn, or affixed to saddle. At the completion of this obstacle, contestant may coil rope and keep for remainder of class, or drop rope at obstacle without penalty.

B. Optional Obstacles:

(1) Mailbox – Rider will open and close a mailbox when mounted.

(2) Bridge – Horse should walk willingly over a stationary bridge.

(3) Slicker – The rider shall show their ability to handle the horse while simulating putting on a slicker. The rider may also be asked to carry the slicker from point A to point B.

(4) Walk-over log-L obstacle – Walk over 90° log “L”. Log should be no less than 6” and no more than 12” in diameter. Riders should negotiate this obstacle in a straight line.

(5) Step-overs at a walk, trot, or lope – Natural branches, logs, fence posts, etc. which are laid out in seemingly random angles and distances. Distances should be measured only so the set-up is repeatable, but not for uniform spacing or stride length. Obstacles may not be raised and the maximum height of any step-over is 8”.

(6) Water hazard – The horse should enter and exit the water hazard in a quiet manner.

(7) Back through obstacle – Straight, “L”, or into/out of a marked location.

(8) Sidepass – Straight, one direction, may or may not be elevated.

(9) Ground Tie – Rider must be able to dismount and walk a minimum of 5 paces away with the horse in a designated spot. If used, this must be the last obstacle of the course (no remount) and class must be held in an enclosed arena. If a rider is using a one-piece rein (romal, roping rein, etc.), it should be unsnapped from the bit on one side while ground-tying.

(10) Pick up front feet – The rider must be able to dismount and pick up both front feet in an easy, time efficient manner. If used, this must be the last obstacle of the course (no remount). May be used in succession with ground tie so rider only dismounts once per course.

(11) Any other safe and negotiable obstacle which could reasonably be found in everyday ranch work and meets the approval of the judge.

C. If disrupted, the course shall be reset. In the case that an obstacle is used in combination, the obstacle cannot be reset until the contestant finishes the entire combination.
Start at trot.
1. Trot over logs to gate.
2. Open & close gate.
   - Trot to “chute.”
3. Back into corner of “chute.”
   - Lope, right lead, to steer rope.
4. Rope steer.
   - Lope, right lead, to branches.
5. Walk over branches.
6. Simulate putting on slicker.
7. Walk though Log-L.
   - Extended trot to log drag.
8. Drag log to 2nd standard.
   - Lope left lead to sidepass log.
9. Sidepass left.
   - Trot to last obstacle.
10. Dismount, pick up each front foot.
    Exit leading horse at a walk.