



## RULES AND GUIDELINES

January 2021

### **General Show Rules**

1. The East Coast Stock Horse Association (ECSHA) shows are open to all breeds of horses. Horses must be sound and in good condition. The judge and Association officers have the right to eliminate any contestant if a horse does not appear to be sound, in good condition, or if the contestant is abusive to their horse.
2. Classes will be judged according to American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA) rules when possible.
3. For all classes, a horse may only be ridden once in a class, with the exception of the Cattle Drive class. A rider may ride more than one horse per class, with the exception of ranch rail pleasure.
4. Holding the saddle horn is acceptable in any class.
5. Posting at the extended trot is acceptable.
6. Divisions
  - a. Open: Any horse or rider may compete in classes in this division.
  - b. Amateur/Limited Amateur: An Amateur shall be defined as any person, regardless of age, who in the last three years has not shown, ridden, judged, trained or assisted in training a horse for ANY remuneration, either directly or indirectly; not received ANY remuneration for instructing another person in riding, driving or instructing another person in showing a horse in competition. An individual may not have accepted remuneration in the previous three years for having conducted seminars, clinics, given instruction in equitation or horse training or judging. Premium money won is not considered remuneration.
  - c. Youth/Limited Youth: A youth competitor shall be defined as any person who is age 18 or younger as of January 1<sup>st</sup> of the show year.
  - d. Limited Class Eligibility: The same horse-and-rider combination may not cross-enter amateur and limited amateur at the same show. The same horse-and-rider combination may not cross-enter youth and limited youth at the same show. There are no eligibility restrictions, including no earnings or point caps, on limited amateur and limited youth classes for horses or riders.
    - i. Amateur and youth exhibitors are required to go down the fence and are given the option to circle or rope in their cow work.
    - ii. Limited amateur and limited youth exhibitors are required to box-drive-box-drive in the cow work.
7. Exhibitors must be current members of the ECSHA.
8. To be eligible for yearend awards, an exhibitor must show in at least three of the year's scheduled shows where points are awarded. Point accumulations for awards will run from January 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup> of the same year. A year end award is presented for each ECSHA class, excluding Cattle Drive and Virginia Bred classes. A minimum of 15 points must be accumulated in each class for awards to be presented.

9. In the Amateur/Limited Amateur and Youth/Limited Youth divisions, points accumulate per horse/rider per class. In the Open division, points accumulate for the horse only.
10. For the ECSHA Amateur or Limited Amateur Versatility Horse of the Year awards, points are accumulated on rider/horse combinations in any or all of the 7 ECSHA ranch horse classes in their division. Declaration of Intent form must be filled out for points to accumulate. A minimum of 100 points for rider/horse combination must be accumulated for award to be presented.
11. For the ECSHA Open Versatility Horse of the Year award, points are accumulated in any or all of the 7 ECSHA Open ranch horse classes. Declaration of Intent form must be filled out for points to accumulate. A minimum of 100 points for horse must be accumulated for award to be presented.

### **Dress Code and Equipment**

The East Coast Stock Horse Association (ECSHA) follows all AQHA rules pertaining to Dress Code and Equipment with the exception that in any ECSHA class, horses of any age may be ridden with two hands when using a snaffle bit or bosal. The following is to give you an overview of the general rules. For complete rules, a pdf copy of the AQHA rules may be provided upon request.

1. Boots, cowboy hat or helmet, and a long sleeve western shirt are required. The wearing of leggings, chinks, chaps, kerchief/bolo, spurs, gloves, vest, jacket, etc. is at the rider's discretion.
2. Saddles: Entries are to be shown in a Western saddle with a horn, with neat and serviceable working tack. Equipment with silver should not count over a good working outfit. Excessive silver on bridles and saddles is discouraged.
3. Bridles and Bits:  
Standard snaffle bits are permitted in any class on any age horse. Snaffle bits in western performance classes mean the conventional O-ring, egg-butt or D-ring with a ring no larger than 4" in diameter. 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. The bars must be a minimum of 5/16" 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. Optional leather strap attached below the reins on a snaffle bit is acceptable.

Hackamores or bosals are permitted in any class on any age horse. Hackamore means the use of a flexible, braided rawhide, leather or rope bosal, the core of which must be flexible. A hackamore must use a complete mecate rein, which must include a tie-rein. Absolutely no rigid material will be permitted under the jaws, regardless of how padded or covered. Horse hair bosals are prohibited. This rule does not refer to a mechanical hackamore.

A curb bit in western performance classes means the use of a bit that has a solid or broken mouthpiece, has shanks and acts with leverage. A standard western bit is defined as having a shank with a maximum length overall of 8 1/2". The mouthpiece will consist of a metal bar 5/16" to 3/4" in diameter as measured one inch from the shank. The port must be no higher than 3 1/2" maximum. Jointed mouthpieces, half-breeds, and spade bits are standard and acceptable. All curb bits must be free of mechanical devices.

Curb chains and leather chinstraps must be flat and at least ½” in width. No wire, rawhide, metal or other substance can be used as part of the leather chinstrap or curb chain. A curb bit must be used with a curb strap or curb chain properly attached so as to make contact with horse’s chin.

Except for horses ridden in hackamore or snaffle bit, only one hand may be used on the reins, and the hand must not be changed. The hand is to be around the reins: index finger only between split reins is permitted. In trail, it is permissible to change hands to work an obstacle. Violation of this rule is an automatic disqualification.

Exhibitors will not be allowed to use tie downs, mechanical hackamores, quick stops, martingales, gag bits, wire on the curb device or any part of the headstall. Nothing may be around the horse’s nose. Bits must be free of any mechanical device. Nothing may extend below the bars of the bits.

## **Class Descriptions**

### **Ranch Riding:**

The Ranch Riding horse should reflect the versatility, attitude, and movement of a working horse. The horse’s performance should simulate a horse riding outside the confines of an arena and that of a working ranch horse, with light contact or on a relatively loose rein. Horses shall be shown individually, performing the required maneuvers that include the walk, trot, and lope both directions; the extended trot and extended lope in at least one direction; as well as stopping and backing. The ranch riding horse should make timely transitions in a smooth and correct manner, as well as display quality of the movement.

### **Ranch Trail:**

The Ranch Trail class contains a course with 6-9 obstacles and is designed to show a horse’s ability and willingness to perform several tasks that might be asked of him during a normal day’s ranch work. It is mandatory that the horse be asked to walk, trot and lope during the course. Mandatory obstacles include ride overs at the walk, trot, or lope (usually logs), working a gate, bridge, backing obstacle, side-pass, and drag (open & amateur only).

### **Ranch Reining:**

Ranch Reining maneuvers should reflect those performed on a ranch during normal work. The ranch reining horse should be willfully guided with no apparent resistance. Each maneuver may receive plus points or penalty points. All deviations from the exact written pattern must be considered a lack of control and therefore a fault that must be marked down according to severity. Performance should be credited for smoothness, finesse, attitude, quickness and authority of performing various maneuvers.

### **Ranch Cutting:**

The purpose of the ranch cutting class is to demonstrate the ranch horse’s ability to separate a single cow from the herd and control the cow ideally in the center of the arena with minimal disturbance to the herd. Exhibitor will cut two cows from the herd and work the cows with the assistance of two turn-back riders and two herd holders. For all divisions, there will be a two minute time limit. Each exhibitor must work two head and has the option of ending their run before the two minute limit or working the full two minutes. There is no penalty for reining.

### **Cow Work:**

All of the cow work classes intend to display the working ability of a horse suitable for cow work.

Exhibitors in the open, amateur and youth divisions are allotted three minutes to complete the work. There are three parts to the class: boxing, fence work and roping or circling. For ideal cow work, each contestant, upon receiving a cow in the arena, shall hold the cow, demonstrate control of the cow, and contain it on the prescribed end of the arena (boxing). After a reasonable amount of time, the contestant shall take the cow down the fence and make at least one turn each way on the fence. The first run out for a turn shall be past the half-way mark of the arena. All turns down the side shall be completed before reaching the end fence. The amateur and youth exhibitor has the option of circling the cow in the middle of the arena in both directions in lieu of roping. To circle the cow, the exhibitor will take the cow to an open part of the arena and circle it at least once in each direction (circles). Open exhibitors must rope the cow and bring it to a stop. In the roping portion of the class, two throws are permitted and the horse will be judged on tracking/rating and stopping the cow. It is not necessary that the exhibitor catch to receive a score in the roping portion. The catch is legal as long as the cow looks through the loop and the rope pulls tight on any part of the animal's body except the tail. The rope may be tied on or dallied.

### **Limited Cow Work (Box-Drive-Box-Drive):**

Exhibitors in the limited amateur and limited youth ranch cow are allotted one minute and forty five seconds to complete the work. Exhibitors are not required to use all of the allotted time, but must ride until the judge whistles the end of the run or time expires, whichever occurs first. There are four parts to the work: boxing the cow; setting up the cow and driving it down the fence to the opposite end of the arena; and boxing it at the opposite end of the arena, and then driving the cow back down the fence past the middle marker (on the original side).

### **Ranch Roping:**

This class has a two-and-a-half minute time limit. A breakaway lariat must be used. The contestant will enter the herd quietly, rope a cow and drive the cow across the time line, without breaking the honda. Once the cow is across the time line, the contestant must dally and break the honda. Three attempts to rope the cow are allowed. If the honda breaks as a result of another cow running through the rope, the contestant will be allowed to rebuild their loop, and that will be counted as one of their three loops. If the contestant has dallied to the horn or holds tension on the rope resulting in the honda breaking prior to the cow crossing the line, that will count as a catch, and the run is complete. The rope must be thrown. Any attempt by the exhibitor to trap, snare, or collar a cow by holding on to the loop will be cause for disqualification.

**Ranch Rail Pleasure:** Horses are to be shown in a group, on the rail, at a walk, jog or trot, and lope on a reasonably loose rein or light contact without undue restraint. Horses must work, as announced, both ways of the ring at all three gaits to demonstrate their ability with different leads. At the option of the judge, horses may be asked to extend the gaits, one or both ways of the ring. The extended jog is a definite two-beat lengthening of the stride, covering more ground. Cadence and balance with smoothness are more essential than speed. Passing is permissible and should not be penalized as long as the horse maintains a proper and even cadence and rhythm. Horses are required to back easily and stand quietly. Horses are to be

reversed to the inside (away from the rail). They may be required to reverse at the walk or jog at the discretion of the judge, but shall not be asked to reverse at the lope.

### **Special Classes:**

**Jackpot Cattle Drive:** This is a judged class with a total time limit of three minutes. Teams of two horses and riders will cut out two head of cattle from a holding pen, and then control and correctly maneuver cattle through a set of obstacles. Cattle should be kept as calm as possible. Excessive running or rushing of cattle will not be tolerated, and may result in teams being disqualified. One horse/rider must follow the cattle completely through each obstacle. Time starts when a rider's hand touches gate to open it. Time stops when cattle are in corral and gate is shut. Scoring on each obstacle will be based on a scale of 0 to 10, and includes a teamwork score. Riders may enter with multiple partners. 50% payback + added money at each show

**Virginia Bred Classes:** Payback classes specifically for horses foaled in Virginia. See VA Bred Rules for more information on nominating and entering.