

ShoMe The Money FREESTYLE REINING Rules

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 and Michigan 4-H rules will apply except where the following rules pre-empt same.
- (3) Required Maneuvers. Will be defined as follows:
 - (a) A minimum of 4 consecutive spins to the right (4-H Youth Riders, Minimum 1 spin to right.)
 - (b) A minimum of 4 consecutive spins to the left (4-H Youth Riders, Minimum 1 spin to left.)
 - (c) A minimum of 3 stops
 - (d) A minimum of 1 lead change at the canter from right to left
 - (e) A minimum of 1 lead change at the canter from left to right
- (4) Exhibitors will only be judged astride.
- (5) Exhibitors are allowed to use two 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 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 nonabusive to the horse.
- (9) Time Limit. A maximum of 4 minutes including any introductions. The time limit will be from the beginning of the music or from the beginning of the introduction (whichever is first) and will end with the music.
- (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 sheets 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 to a +2 evaluation. (See Figure #9.)
- (2) Number of Judges. One or Two judges may be selected depending upon show format.
- (3) In the case of one or two judges being used, they will 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) Ties – In the event of a tie, at the discretion of the judges the tied exhibitors may be required to complete a run-off pattern. The pattern will be chosen by show management. In the event a tie still occurs (or the tie occurs with one judge), the maneuver 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) 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 or two hands. The emphasis in the design of any eliminations should be on quality of competition.
- (7) Artistic impression judge or applause meter should not represent more than 20 percent of the combined score and should only be used in conjunction with (minimum) two 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.
- (8) 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.