

## RULES FOR JUDGING

### A. GENERAL

To rein a horse is not only to guide him, but also to control his every movement. The best reined horse should be willingly guided or controlled with little or no apparent resistance and dictated to completely. Any movement on his own must be considered a lack of control. All deviations from the exact written pattern must be considered a lack of/or temporary loss of control and therefore a fault that must be marked down according to severity of deviation. After deducting all faults, set here within, against execution of the pattern and the horse's overall performance, credit should be given for smoothness, finesse, attitude, quickness and authority of performing various maneuvers, while using controlled speed which raises the difficulty level and makes him more exciting and pleasing to watch to an audience. The official guideline for the application for the rules for judging shall be as specified in the NRHA Judges Guide.

### B. SCORING

**(1)** The scoring will be on a basis of 0 - Infinity, with 70 denoting an average performance. The individual maneuvers are scored in 1/2 point increments from a low of -1 1/2 to a high of +1 1/2 with a score of 0 denoting a maneuver that is correct with no degree of difficulty. Scores will be announced after each horse works.

**(2) TIES** - All ties for 1st place will be worked off if the tied exhibitors agree to participate in a run-off. Tied exhibitors have the alternate option of agreeing not to run-off and to be named co-champions but must determine the winner of the awards by a flip of a coin. If they do not agree, the exhibitor(s) who does not want to run-off will forfeit first place to the other. (Exceptions: Freestyle reining - see Freestyle Reining conditions to determine winner or co-champions; Category 5 Snaffle Bit or Hackamore classes - a run-off is not required for 1st place.)

If a tie occurs after the run-off, the entrants will be named co-champions; will evenly split 1st and 2nd prize money, but must determine the winner of the awards by a flip of a coin. A horse not returning for a run-off without such an agreement will forfeit 1st place prize money regardless of the added money. In the case of a run-off, the contestant(s) not winning the run-off cannot be placed lower than the lowest position for which he/she was tied, i.e., 2nd/3rd. All other ties are not worked off and will involve as many places as there are horses tied, i.e., 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, The prize money in the previously mentioned example is added together and split equally-four ways.

**(3)** Equipment:

**(a)** References to hackamore mean the use of a flexible, braided, rawhide, leather, or rope bosal, the core of which may be either rawhide or flexible cable with a maximum diameter of 3/4" at the cheek. Absolutely no rigid material will be permitted under the jaws or on the noseband in connection with the bosal, regardless of how padded or covered. Horsehair bosals are prohibited. This rule does not refer to the so-called mechanical hackamore which is illegal.

**(b)** References to snaffle bits mean conventional O-ring, egg-butt, or D-ring with a ring no larger than 4" and no smaller than 2". 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 free of wire. It may be inlaid, but smooth and/or latex wrapped. The bars must be a minimum of 5/16" in diameter, measured 1" in from the cheek with a gradual decrease to center of the snaffle. Optional curb strap is acceptable however curb chains are not acceptable. These requirements remain the same for all classes in which a rider may use a snaffle bit.

**(c)** References to a bit means the use of a curb bit that has a solid or broken mouthpiece, has shanks and acts with leverage. All curb bits must be free of mechanical device and should be considered a standard western bit. A standard western bit includes:

1. 8 1/2" maximum length shank to be measured as indicated in the judges guide. Shanks may be fixed or loose.

2. Concerning mouthpieces, bars must be round, oval or egg-shaped, smooth and free of wire of 5/16" to 3/4" in diameter, measured 1" from the cheek. They may be inlaid, but must be smooth or latex wrapped. Nothing may protrude more than 1/8" below the mouthpiece (bar).

3. The port must be no higher than 3 1/2" maximum, with rollers and covers acceptable. Broken mouthpieces, half-breeds, and spades are standard.

4. Slip or gag bits, donuts or flat polo mouthpieces are not acceptable.

**(d)** Except for Snaffle Bit and Freestyle Classes, 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. Violation of this rule results in a penalty score of zero (0).

**(e)** When a curb bit is used, a curb strap or curb chain is required, which must be at least 1/2" in width, lie flat against the jaw, and be free of barbs, wire, and/or twists.

**(4)** The following will result in no score:

**(a)** infraction of any state or federal law which exists pertaining to the exhibition, care, and custody of horses within the state or country where an NRHA reining is being held;

**(b)** abuse of an animal in the show arena and/or evidence that an act of abuse has occurred prior to or during the exhibition of a horse in competition;

**(c)** use of illegal equipment, including wire on bits, bosals or curb chains;

**(d)** use of illegal bits, bosals or curb chains;

**(e)** use of tack collars, tie downs or nose bands;

**(f)** use of whips or bats;

**(g)** use of any attachment which alters the movement of or circulation to the tail;

**(h)** failure to dismount and/or present horse and equipment to the appropriate judge for inspection;

**(i)** disrespect or misconduct by the exhibitor.

**(j)** the judge(s) may excuse a horse at any time while in the arena for unsafe conditions or improper exhibition pertaining to both the horse and/or rider.

**(k)** closed reins are not allowed except as standard romal reins and mecates on snaffle bits and bosals in classes where the use of two hands is allowed and in the Youth 10 & Under Short Stirrup class where closed reins are allowed.

**(5)** Excess rein may be straightened at any place a horse is allowed to be completely stopped during a pattern. When using a romal, no fingers between the reins are allowed. The free hand may be used to hold the romal provided it is held at least 16" from the reining hand and in a relaxed position. Use of the free hand while holding the romal to alter the tension or length of the reins from the bridle to the reining hand is considered to be the use of two hands, and a score of 0 will be applied with the exception of any place a horse is allowed to be completely stopped during a pattern.

**(6)** The following will result in a \$25 fine:

**(a)** failure to have correct exhibitor number displayed.

**(7)** The following will result in a score of 0:

**(a)** use of more than index or first finger between reins;

**(b)** use of two hands (exception in Snaffle Bit or Hackamore classes designated for two hands) or changing hands;

**(c)** use of romal other than as outlined in #5;

**(d)** failure to complete pattern as written;

**(e)** performing the maneuvers other than in specified order;

**(f)** the inclusion of maneuvers not specified, including, but not limited to

1. backing more than 2 strides

2. turning more than 90 degrees

(Exception: a complete stop in the 1st quarter of a circle after a canter departure is not to be considered an inclusion of maneuver; a 2 point break of gait penalty will apply.) (See Figure #3B page #111)

**(g)** equipment failure that delays completion of pattern;

**(h)** balking or refusal of command where performance is delayed;

**(i)** running away or failing to guide where it becomes impossible to discern whether the entry is on pattern;

**(j)** jogging in excess of one-half circle or one-half the length of the arena ;

**(k)** overspins of more than 1/4 turn;

**(l)** fall to the ground by horse or rider. A horse is deemed to have fallen when its shoulder and/or hip and/or underline touches the ground;

**(m)** dropping a rein that contacts the ground while the horse is in motion;

**(n)** failure to wear appropriate western attire as

outlined in the NRHA Handbook, Section L. in General Show Conditions 8.

**NOTE:** Neither a no score nor a 0 is eligible to place in a go round or class, but a 0 may advance in a multi-go event while a no score may not. In the event not enough horses qualify for total purse distribution, the undistributed portion of the purse will be retained by show management.

- (8)** The following will result in a penalty of 5 points:
- (a)** spurring in front of cinch;
  - (b)** use of either hand to instill fear or praise;
  - (c)** holding saddle with either hand, except in the Youth 10 & Under Short Stirrup class where holding the saddle is allowed;
  - (d)** blatant disobedience including kicking, biting, bucking, rearing and striking.
- (9)** The following will result in a 2 point penalty:
- (a)** break of gait;
  - (b)** freezing up in spins or rollbacks;
  - (c)** on walk in patterns, cantering prior to reaching the center of the arena and/or failure to stop or walk before executing a canter departure;
  - (d)** on run in patterns, failure to be in a canter prior to reaching the first marker.
  - (e)** if a horse does not completely pass the specified marker before initiating a stop position.
- (10)** Starting or performing circles or eights out of lead will be judged as follows:
- (a)** Each time a horse is out of lead, a judge is required to penalize by 1 point. The penalty for being out of lead is cumulative, and the judge will add 1 penalty point for each 1/4 of the circumference of a circle or any part thereof that a horse is out of lead.
  - (b)** A judge is required to penalize a horse 1/2 of a point for a delayed change of lead by 1 stride where the lead change is required by the pattern description.
- (11)** Deduct 1/2 point for starting circle at a jog or exiting rollbacks at a jog up to 2 strides. Jogging beyond 2 strides but less than 1/2 circle or 1/2 the length of the arena, deduct 2 points.
- (12)** Deduct 1/2 point for over or under spinning up to 1/8 of a turn; deduct 1 point for over or under spinning up to 1/4 of a turn.
- (13)** In patterns requiring a run-around, failure to be on the correct lead when rounding the end of the arena will be penalized as follows: for 1/2 the turn or less, 1 point; for more than 1/2 turn, 2 points.
- (14)** There will be a 1/2 point penalty for failure to remain a minimum of 20 feet from wall or fence when approaching a stop and/or rollback.
- (15)** Judges may not confer on any penalty or maneuver score prior to submitting a score. If a major penalty (a penalty which results in a no score, a 0, or a 5 point penalty) is unclear, a judge will submit his/her score and ask that the score be held, pending a conference or review of the official video at the

next drag or as soon as practical. Should the judges determine via conference or video replay that a penalty was incurred, it should be applied. If, however, no penalty occurred, the score will be announced as originally submitted. No judge shall be required to change his/her score following a conference or video replay. Each judge's decision is an individual call and based on individual decision from a conference or video replay. The use of video equipment by the judges is only permissible if the judge has reason to believe that all entries have been videotaped.

**(16)** The judge shall have the authority to remove any contestant from a show he is judging, should said contestant show any disrespect or misconduct so as to render himself or the show in an unprofessional manner.

**(17)** All riders must dismount and the horse must be presented and the bridle dropped by the rider or a designated representative. The horse and equipment must be checked by the designated judge in the arena or in close proximity to the arena during a pre- or post-check. Should the equipment judge detect cause for a no score the exhibitor or his/her representative, trainer or guardian may at that time accept the no score and allow the equipment judge to cause the appropriate changes to all score cards or request the other judges confer on the appropriate call. In the case of a youth exhibitor, should a parent, trainer or guardian not be present, it will be assumed that all parties are aware of this rule and agree to abide by the exhibitor's decision. If requested, the equipment judge will confer with the other judges as soon as practical. Failure to comply with this rule shall result in a no score.

**(18)** Judges shall be the sole persons responsible to determine if a rider has correctly completed the pattern as written.

**(19)** NRHA permits the judge the option of awarding a re-ride to any contestant who in the judge's opinion is unable to complete a pattern for reasons that are out of the rider's control. In the instance where a re-ride is warranted in the judge's opinion, the judge should advise the NRHA Representative and/or horse show management of such as soon as is possible.

**(20)** The NRHA Judges Committee will evaluate individual requests from challenged riders regarding the use of aids when exhibiting. In the event an individual is granted special privileges, he or she will be presented said privileges in writing and must provide a copy to the show committee each time he or she exhibits. The Show Committee is required to present said privileges to the Judge(s) as well as the individual's draw number and exhibitor number prior to the class in which he or she will be competing.

# REINING

the Fundamentals  
of Judging



**\$64.97**

per 2-video set  
(includes sales tax)

Shipping:

\$5.00 (US)

\$10.00 (Can)

Current Rates

(Int'l/Epress)

The Most Respected  
Judging Program in  
the Equine Industry.

The NRHA Judging Fundamentals Video  
will help you assess and understand.



Definition of Reining



Maneuver Scoring



Penalty Application



Scoring Live Runs

Mail to: NRHA - Judging Video

3000 NW 10th Street

Oklahoma City, OK 73107-5302

Phone: 405-946-7400 Fax: 405-946-8425

## PATTERNS

1. The following patterns are to be worked as stated, not as drawn. The drawn pattern is just to give the general idea of what the pattern will look like in the arena.

2. Markers will be placed on the wall or fence of the arena as follows:

- (i) at the center of the arena
- (ii) at least 50' (15 meters) from each end

wall

3. Where designated in the pattern for stops to be beyond a marker, the horse should begin his stop after he passes the specified marker.

4. Each pattern is drawn so that the bottom of the page represents the end of the arena entered by contestants and must be run as such. In the event that an arena has only one gate and it be in the exact middle of the side, that side shall represent the right side of the page the pattern is drawn on.

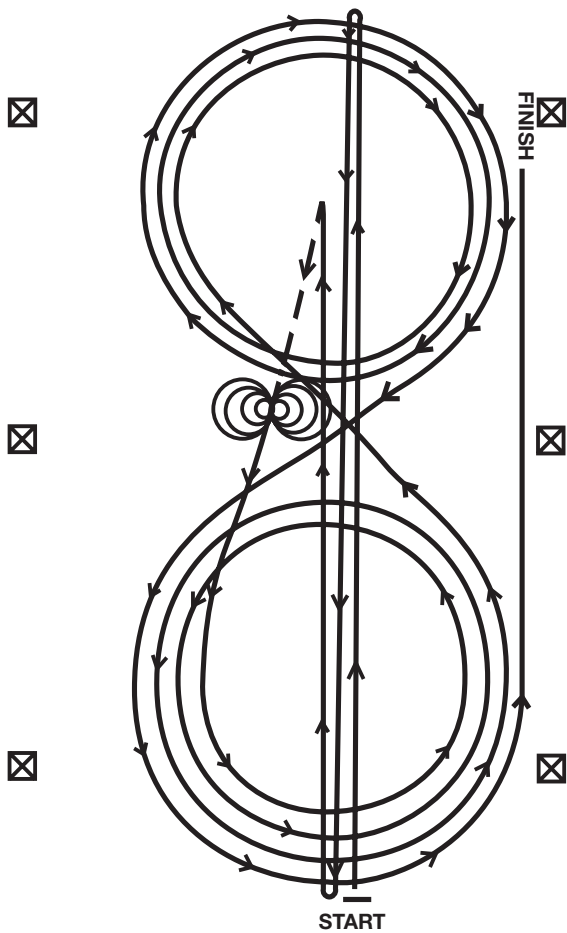
5. All horses will be judged immediately upon entering the arena and judging will cease after the last maneuver. Any fault incurred prior to the commencement of a pattern will be scored according to the rules for judging.

6. All judges' decisions are final.

Patterns to follow,

indicates markers

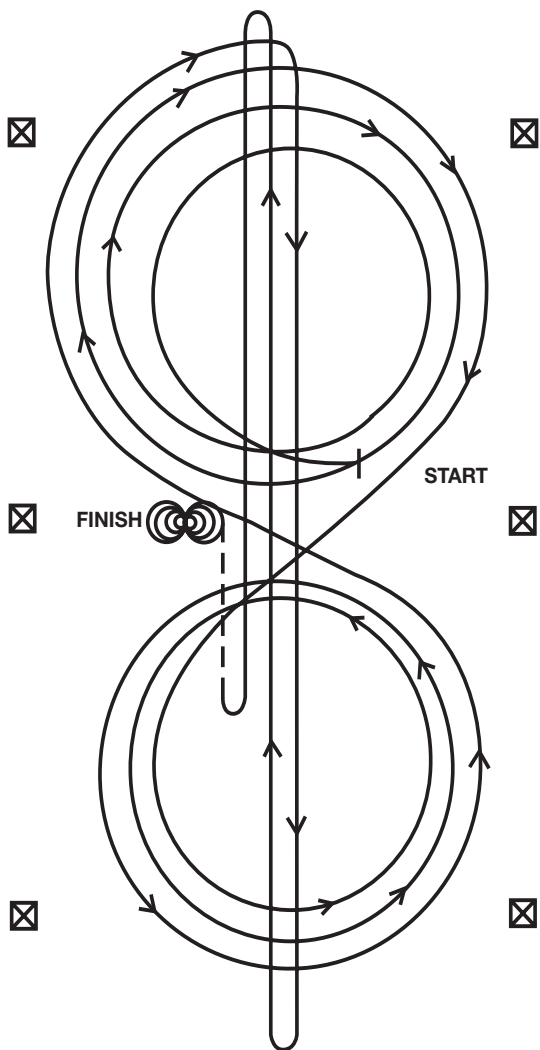
# PATTERN 1



## Pattern 1

1. Run at speed to the far end of the arena past the end marker and do a left rollback – no hesitation.
2. Run to the opposite end of the arena past the end marker and do a right rollback – no hesitation.
3. Run past the center marker and do a sliding stop. Back up to center of the arena or at least ten feet (three meters). Hesitate.
4. Complete four spins to the right. Hesitate.
5. Complete four and one-quarter spins to the left so that horse is facing left wall or fence. Hesitate.
6. Beginning on the left lead, complete three circles to the left: the first circle large and fast; the second circle small and slow; the third circle large and fast. Change leads at the center of the arena.
7. Complete three circles to the right: the first circle large and fast; the second circle small and slow; the third circle large and fast. Change leads at the center of the arena.
8. Begin a large fast circle to the left but do not close this circle. Run straight up the right side of the arena past the center marker and do a sliding stop at least twenty feet (six meters) from wall or fence. Hesitate to demonstrate the completion of the pattern.

# PATTERN 2

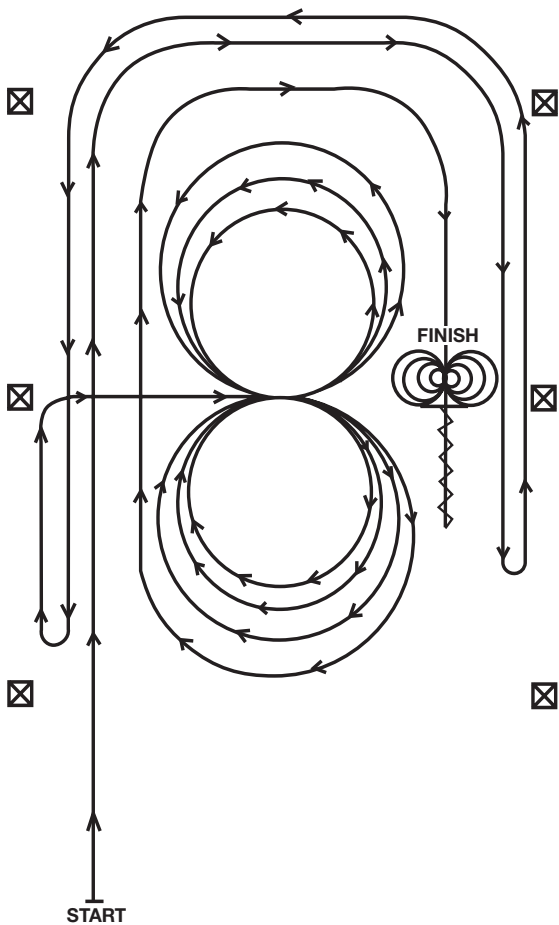


## Pattern 2

Horses may walk or trot to the center of arena.  
Horses must walk or stop prior to starting pattern.  
Beginning at the center of the arena facing the left wall or fence.

1. Beginning on the right lead, complete three circles to the right: the first circle small and slow; the next two circles large and fast. Change leads at the center of the arena.
2. Complete three circles to the left: the first circle small and slow; the next two circles large and fast. Change leads at the center of the arena.
3. Continue around previous circle to the right. At the top of the circle, run down the middle to the far end of the arena past the end marker and do a right rollback – no hesitation.
4. Run up the middle to the opposite end of the arena past the end marker and do a left rollback – no hesitation.
5. Run past the center marker and do a sliding stop. Back up to the center of the arena or at least ten feet (three meters). Hesitate.
6. Complete four spins to the right. Hesitate.
7. Complete four spins to the left. Hesitate to demonstrate the completion of the pattern.

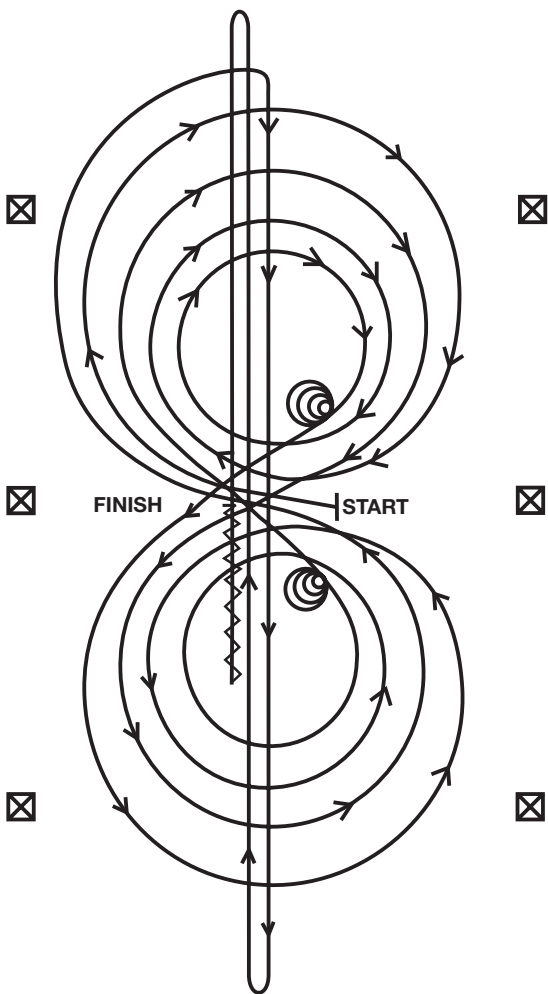
# PATTERN 3



### Pattern 3

1. Beginning, lope straight up the left side of the arena, circle the top end of the arena, and staying at least twenty feet (six meters) from the walls or fence, run straight down the opposite or right side of the arena past the center marker and do a left rollback – no hesitation.
2. Continue straight up the right side of the arena circle back around the top of the arena, and staying at least twenty feet (six meters) from the walls or fence, run straight down the left side of the arena past the center marker and do a right rollback – no hesitation.
3. Continue up the left side of the arena to the center marker. AT the center marker, the horse should be on the right lead. Guide the horse to the center of the arena on the right lead and complete three circles to the right: the first two circles large and fast; the third circle small and slow. Change leads at the center of the arena.
4. Complete three circles to the left: the first two circles large and fast; the third circle small and slow. Change leads in the center of the arena.
5. Begin a large fast circle to the right but do not close this circle. Continue up the left side of the arena, circle the top of the arena, and staying at least twenty feet (six meters) from the walls or fence, run straight down the opposite or right side of the arena past the center marker and do a sliding stop. Back up at least ten feet (three meters). Hesitate.
6. Complete four spins to the right. Hesitate.
7. Complete four spins to the left. Hesitate to demonstrate completion of the pattern.

# PATTERN 4



## Pattern 4

Horses may walk or trot to the center of the arena. Horses must walk or stop prior to starting pattern. Beginning at the center of the arena facing the left wall or fence.

1. Beginning on the right lead, complete three circles to the right: the first two large and fast; the third circle small and slow. Stop at the center of the arena. Hesitate.
2. Complete four spins to the right. Hesitate.
3. Beginning on the left lead, complete three circles to the left: the first two circles large and fast; the third circle small and slow. Stop at the center of the arena. Hesitate.
4. Complete four spins to the left. Hesitate.
5. Beginning on the right lead, run a large fast circle to the right, change leads at the center of the arena, run a large fast circle to the left, and change leads at the center of the arena. (Figure 8)
6. Continue around previous circle to the right. At the top of the circle, run down the middle to the far end of the arena past the end marker and do a right rollback – no hesitation.
7. Run up the middle to the opposite end of the arena past the end marker and do a left rollback – no hesitation.
8. Run past the center marker and do a sliding stop. Back up to the center of the arena or at least ten feet (three meters). Hesitate to demonstrate completion of the pattern.

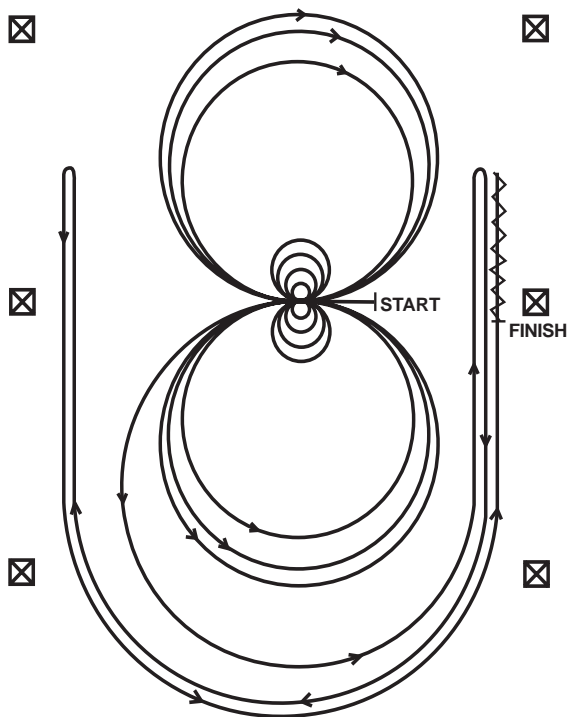


## Pattern 5

Horses may walk or trot to the center of arena.  
Horses must walk or stop prior to starting pattern.  
Beginning at the center of the arena facing the left wall or fence.

1. Beginning on the left lead, complete three circles to the left: the first two circles large and fast; the third circle small and slow. Stop at the center of the arena. Hesitate.
2. Complete four spins to the left. Hesitate.
3. Beginning on the right lead, complete three circles to the right: the first two circles large and fast; the third circle small and slow. Stop at the center of the arena. Hesitate.
4. Complete four spins to the right. Hesitate.
5. Beginning on the left lead, run a large fast circle to the left, change leads at the center of the arena, run a large fast circle to the right, and change leads at the center of the arena. (Figure 8)
6. Continue around previous circle to the left but do not close this circle. Run up the right side of the arena past the center marker and do a right rollback at least twenty feet (six meters) from the wall or fence – no hesitation.
7. Continue around previous circle but do not close this circle. Run up the left side of the arena past the center marker and do a left rollback at least twenty feet (six meters) from the wall or fence – no hesitation.
8. Continue back around previous circle but do not close this circle. Run up the right side of the arena past the center marker and do a sliding stop at least twenty feet (six meters) from the wall or fence. Back up at least ten feet (three meters). Hesitate to demonstrate completion of the pattern.

# PATTERN 6

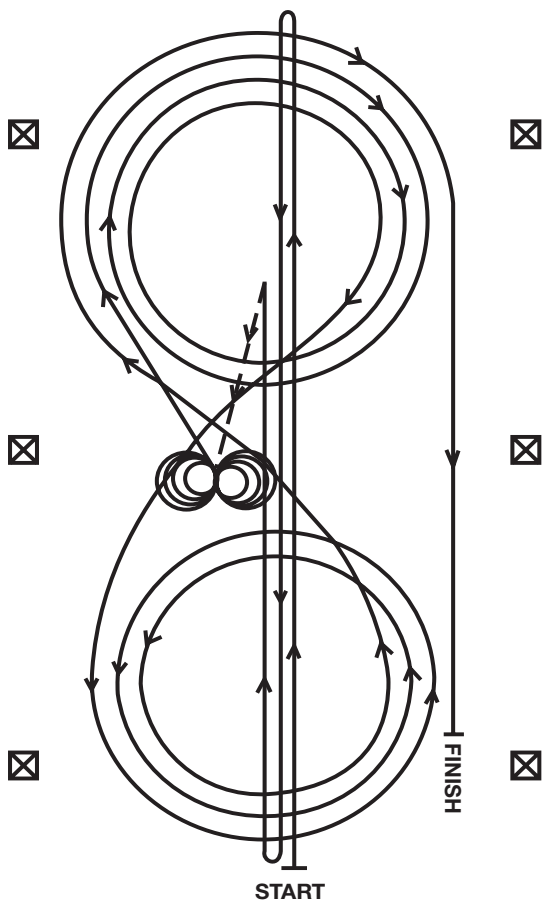


## Pattern 6

Horses may walk or trot to the center of arena.  
Horses must walk or stop prior to starting pattern.  
Beginning at the center of the arena facing the left wall or fence.

1. Complete four spins to the right. Hesitate.
2. Complete four spins to the left. Hesitate.
3. Beginning on the left lead, complete three circles to the left: the first two circles large and fast; the third circle small and slow. Change leads at the center of the arena.
4. Complete three circles to the right: the first two circles large and fast; the third circle small and slow. Change leads at the center of the arena.
5. Begin a large fast circle to the left but do not close this circle. Run up the right side of the arena past the center marker and do a right rollback at least twenty feet (six meters) from the wall or fence – no hesitation.
6. Continue back around previous circle but do not close this circle. Run up the left side of the arena past the center marker and do a left rollback at least twenty feet (six meters) from the wall or fence – no hesitation.
7. Continue back around previous circle but do not close this circle. Run up the right side of the arena past the center marker and do a sliding stop at least twenty feet (six meters) from the wall or fence. Back up at least ten feet (three meters). Hesitate to demonstrate the completion of the pattern.

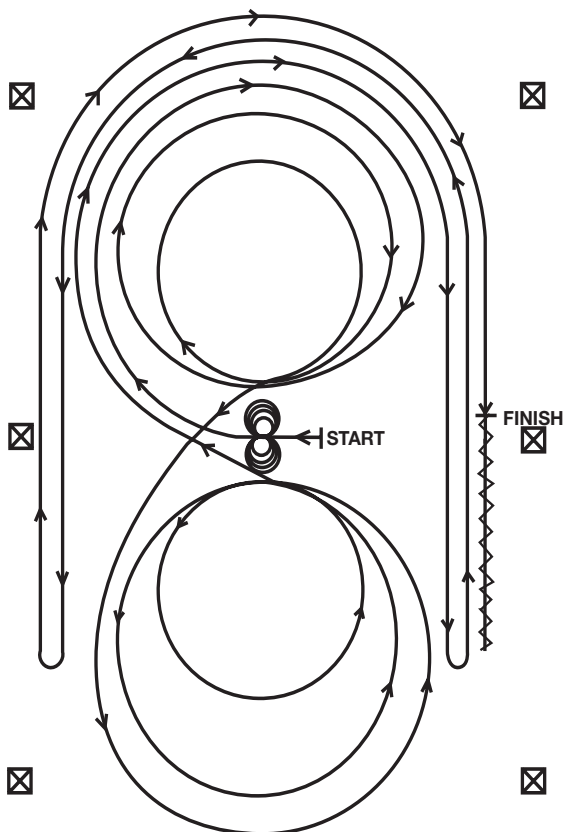
# PATTERN 7



## Pattern 7

1. Run at speed to the far end of the arena past the end marker and do a left rollback – no hesitation.
2. Run to the opposite end of the arena past the end marker and do a right rollback – no hesitation.
3. Run past the center marker and do a sliding stop. Back up to the center of the arena or at least ten feet (three meters). Hesitate.
4. Complete four spins to the right. Hesitate.
5. Complete four and one-quarter spins to the left so that horse is facing left wall or fence. Hesitate.
6. Beginning on the right lead, complete three circles to the right: the first two circles large fast; the third circle small and slow. Change leads at the center of the arena.
7. Complete three circles to the left: the first two circles large fast; the third circle small and slow. Change leads at the center of the arena.
8. Begin a large fast circle to the right but do not close this circle. Run straight down the right side of the arena past the center marker and do a sliding stop at least twenty feet (six meters) from the wall or fence. Hesitate to demonstrate completion of the pattern.

# PATTERN 8

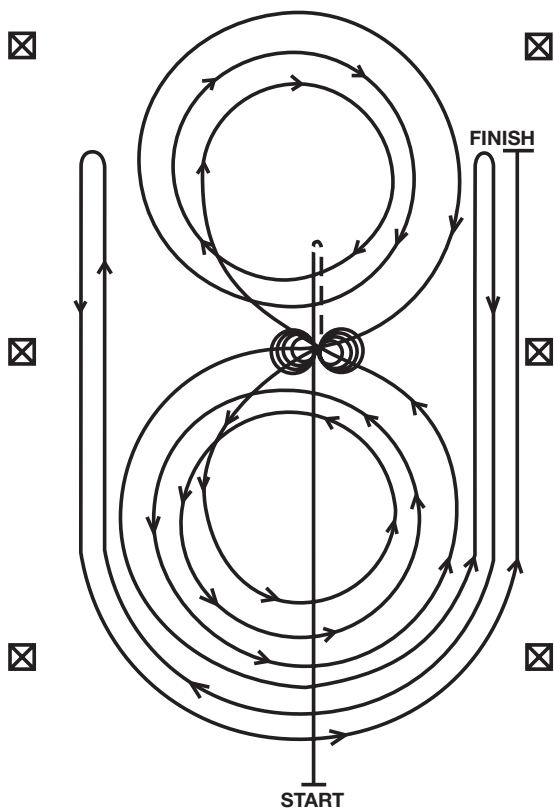


## Pattern 8

Horses may walk or trot to the center of arena.  
Horses must walk or stop prior to starting pattern.  
Beginning at the center of arena facing the left wall or fence.

1. Complete four spins to the left. Hesitate.
2. Complete four spins to the right. Hesitate.
3. Beginning on the right lead, complete three circles to the right: the first circle large and fast; the second circle small and slow; the third circle large and fast. Change leads at the center of the arena.
4. Complete three circles to the left: the first circle large and fast; the second circle small and slow; the third circle large and fast. Change leads at the center of the arena.
5. Begin a large fast circle to the right but do not close this circle. Run straight down the right side of the arena past the center marker and do a left rollback at least twenty feet (six meters) from the wall or fence – no hesitation.
6. Continue back around the previous circle but do not close this circle. Run down the left side of the arena past the center marker and do a right rollback at least twenty feet (six meters) from the wall or fence – no hesitation.
7. Continue back around the previous circle but do not close this circle. Run down the right side of the arena past the center marker and do a sliding stop at least twenty feet (six meters) from the wall or fence. Back up at least ten feet (three meters). Hesitate to demonstrate completion of the pattern.

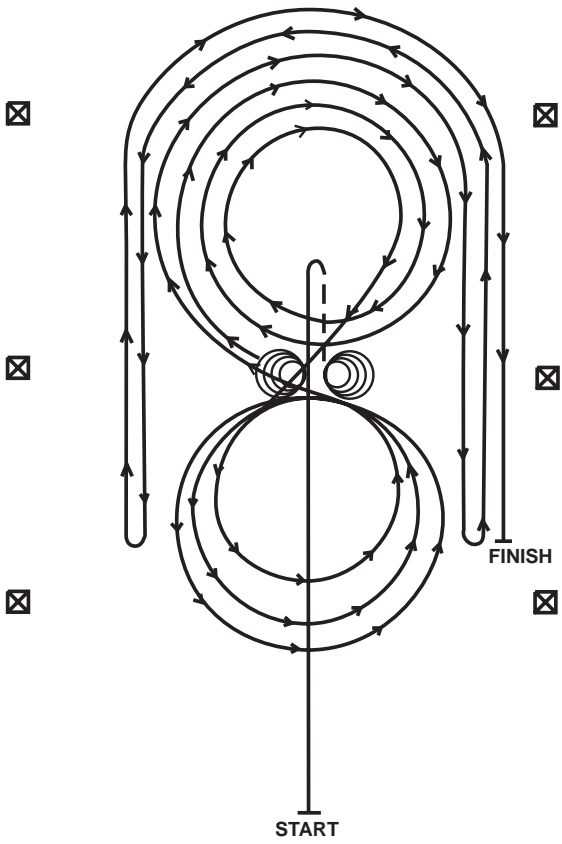
# PATTERN 9



## Pattern 9

1. Run past the center marker and do a sliding stop. Back up to the center of the arena or at least ten feet (three meters). Hesitate.
2. Complete four spins to the right. Hesitate.
3. Complete four and one-quarter spins to the left so that horse is facing the left wall or fence. Hesitate.
4. Beginning on the left lead, complete three circles to the left: the first circle small and slow; the next two circles large and fast. Change leads at the center of the arena.
5. Complete three circles to the right: the first circle small and slow; the next two circles large and fast. Change leads at the center of the arena.
6. Begin a large fast circle to the left but do not close this circle. Run up the right side of the arena past the center marker and do a right rollback at least twenty feet (six meters) from the wall or fence – no hesitation.
7. Continue back around the previous circle but do not close this circle. Run up the left side of the arena past the center marker and do a left rollback at least twenty feet (six meters) from the wall or fence – no hesitation.
8. Continue back around previous circle but do not close this circle. Run up right side of the arena past the center marker and do a sliding stop at least twenty feet (six meters) from the wall or fence. Hesitate to demonstrate completion of the pattern.

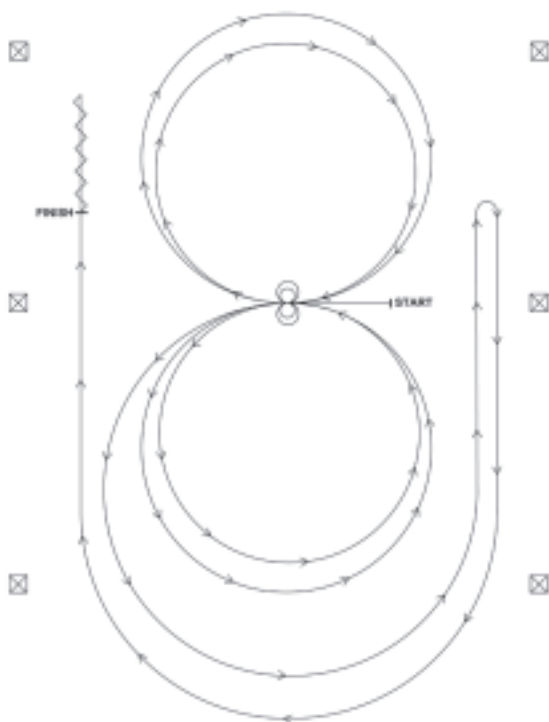
# PATTERN 10



## Pattern 10

1. Run past the center marker and do a sliding stop. Back up to the center of the arena or at least ten feet (three meters). Hesitate.
2. Complete four spins to the right. Hesitate.
3. Complete four and one-quarter spins to the left so that the horse is facing the left wall or fence. Hesitate.
4. Beginning on the right lead, complete three circles to the right: the first two circles large and fast, the third circle small and slow. Change leads at the center of the arena.
5. Complete three circles to the left: the first circle small and slow, the next two circles large and fast. Change leads at the center of the arena.
6. Begin a large fast circle to the right but do not close this circle. Run down the right side of the arena past the center marker and do a left rollback at least twenty feet (six meters) from the wall or fence – no hesitation.
7. Continue back around the previous circle but do not close this circle. Run down the left side of the arena past the center and do a right rollback at least twenty feet (six meters) from the wall or fence – no hesitation.
8. Continue back around previous circle but do not close this circle. Run down the right side of the arena past the center marker and do a sliding stop at least twenty feet (six meters) from the wall or fence. Hesitate to demonstrate completion of the pattern.

# PATTERN 11



**Pattern 11** – to be used for the Youth 10 & Under Short Stirrup class only.

Horses may walk or trot to the center of the arena. Horses must walk or stop prior to starting the pattern. Beginning at the center of the arena facing the left wall or fence.

1. Beginning on the left lead, complete two circles to the left. Stop at the center of the arena. Hesitate.
2. Complete two spins to the left. Hesitate
3. Beginning on the right lead complete two circles to the right. Stop at the center of the arena. Hesitate.
4. Complete two spins to the right. Hesitate.
5. Beginning on the left lead, go around the end of the arena, run down the right side of the arena past center marker, stop and roll back right.
6. Continue around the end of the arena to run down the left side of the arena past the center marker. Stop. Back up.

## **NOTES**