



# Handbook

Version 2024

## Contents

Code of Conduct .....	4
Western Riding .....	5
Riding Arena.....	5
Gaits.....	5
Walk:.....	5
Jog (slow trot):.....	5
Lope (slow canter):.....	5
Manoeuvres .....	5
Flying/lead change, changing leads: .....	5
Leg yield: .....	5
Line up: .....	6
Railwork: .....	6
Shoulder-out / haunches-in: .....	6
Side pass:.....	6
Stop, halt:.....	6
Disciplines .....	6
Horsemanship .....	6
Level 1:.....	7
Level 2:.....	7
Level 3:.....	7
Individual Pattern .....	7
Railwork .....	7
Judging.....	8
Offence 1-2 penalty points:.....	8
Fault: 3-5 penalty points: .....	8
Disqualification:.....	8
Barrel Racing.....	9
Distances .....	9

Judging.....	10
Eliminations & Re-runs .....	10
Western Trail .....	11
Obstacles.....	11
Judging.....	11
Offence 1-2 penalty points:.....	12
Fault: 3-5 penalty points: .....	12
Disqualification:.....	12

## Code of Conduct

Anyone taking part in an activity hosted by or affiliated with the British Hobbyhorse Association including, but not limited to riders, show organisers, judges, trainers, or any other volunteer, shall:

- a) Conduct themselves in a manner which does not offend the public.
- b) Behave in any way appropriate to other riders and officials.
- c) Use official channels for any form of complaint, instead of using social media.
- d) Respect the privacy of other riders and their personal data when using social media channels or any other form of publicly available documentation.

With any type of complaint, please contact:  
[contact@british-hobbyhorse-association.co.uk](mailto:contact@british-hobbyhorse-association.co.uk)

# Western Riding

## Riding Arena

Recommended size of the riding arena depending on the event is about 7x14 meters. The arena must be big enough especially in classes including trailwork (pleasure, horsemanship), depending on the number of the competitors. The surface needs to be safe and suitable for hobbyhorse riders. Especially in events including fast turns etc. it's not recommended to use slippery surfaces that have for example gravel on top of it. Suggested platforms are sand, grass and sports flooring. Asphalt is not recommended to use in hobbyhorse sports. Outdoor surfaces must be even/flat.

## Gaits

**Walk:** In walk the horse walks forward relaxed, and the steps are forward going. In most western events the ideal is a slow and collected walk.

**Jog (slow trot):** The jog is slow and soft. There is less impulsion than in (dressage) trot. Steps are short and low. The steps are still clear trot, and not for example fast walk. In extended jog the step stretches longer but the pace remains as normal.

**Lope (slow canter):** is slow and soft. Steps are short and slow. One should ride right lead lope (the right leg leads) when riding clockwise and vice versa, unless requested otherwise.

## Manoeuvres

**Please not that all manoeuvres are listed in alphabetical order, and not according to their difficulty.**

**Flying/lead change, changing leads:** The rider switches the leading leg of the canter. With snaffle bit rider changes also the leading rein. Unlike in dressage, the steps in a flying change are quite low.

**Leg yield:** The horse moves both forward and sideways. The horse is slightly flexed away from the movement. The hobbyhorse's front (the head) and back (the stick) should move in the same line: not head or stick first.

**Line up:** All competitors stand in a line in the middle of the riding arena, face towards the same long sideline of the arena. The judge can ask for back up in line.

**Railwork:** Group section in western horsemanship, where all riders are at the riding arena at the same time.

**Shoulder-out / haunches-in:** Feet are positioned away from the inside of the riding arena, flexion towards the inside of the arena.

**Side pass:** Side pass is leg yield directly sideways. The horse does not move forwards at all, only sideways. The position and flexion are the same as in leg yield.

**Spin** A spin is a 360 degree turn on the haunches. The rider performs a 180-degree movement with the end of the hobbyhorse's stick as a pivot point inside the motion. The horse can be slightly flexed in the direction of the movement.

**Stop, halt:** In western riding the horse usually backs up a few steps at a stop. However, in a competition one should not take steps backwards unless it says so in the pattern. A good halt is performed both feet together with a good posture.

## Disciplines

### Horsemanship

In this event, the rider and the horse's ability to perform different movements smoothly is judged according to the course prepared by the judge. The horse is presented with loose reins.

All competitors enter the ring at the same time and perform in two phases: first the individual pattern and then railwork. The individual performance includes a short pattern which consists of performing different gaits, stops, turns, flying changes or other movements. Railwork is like a short western pleasure class: all competitors ride on the rail together in designated gait.

**Levels:** To make it easier to host western riding competitions, there are three difficulty levels of horsemanship classes. In the lower difficulty classes the required movements are easier and there are less of them. In the higher difficulty classes, there are more difficult changes between gaits, more difficult movements, and the pattern is usually also longer. The judge decides what they want to see in the railwork section. Every railwork must include all gaits (walk, jog, and lope), at least in one direction of the arena. If the individual pattern doesn't include a stop, it must be included in the railwork. A back-up can be included into the individual pattern, railwork or it can be

asked to be performed at the line-up. The pattern can include level 7 Western riding rules 2020 defined movements or movements of the same difficulty, but not movements of higher level. The pattern doesn't have to include all level defined movements.

**Level 1:** Walk, jog and lope at least in one direction, circles, figure eights, other curved lines, stop, back-up in a straight line, max. 180 degree turn on the haunches/forehand, easy transitions, simple change of lead (through jog).

**Level 2:** Level 1 movements, extended jog, max. 360 degree turn on the haunches/forehand, mediocre transitions, one flying change, back-up in a curved line, leg yield.

**Level 3:** Level 1 & 2 movements, extended lope, max. 900 degree (2,5 rounds) turn on the haunches/forehand, challenging transitions, several flying changes (but not in a row), two-track (haunches or shoulder in), sidepass.

## Individual Pattern

The rider must perform the pattern accurately, precisely, smoothly, and with a reasonable pace (AQHA; SRL 2020). Before starting the individual pattern, the rider must greet the judge with a nod. The judge will grant permission to start the performance by nodding back. For clarity, a spoken permission can be used. The movements are performed according to the markers at the arena. In a good performance the rider maintains the same distance (i.e. 1 meter) from the markers during the whole performance. Varying distance lowers the score.

## Railwork

In the railwork all riders work at the same time in the arena. The judge determines the riding direction and the gait and judges all the competitors. The judge is not greeted in the railwork. The judge can ask for walk, jog, lope, stop, back-up and to change the riding direction. If someone in front of you moves slower than you, you must pass them from the inside: crossing the arena or riding circles isn't allowed. After the railwork all competitors are asked to fall into a line-up. The judge can ask a competitor to show the horse's bit or to back up a couple of steps.

## Judging

Exhibitors will be scored on a basis of 0-100 with 70 denoting an average performance. Points will be added or subtracted from the manoeuvres on the following bases, ranging from plus 1,5 to minus 1,5:

- 1,5 extremely poor,
- 1 very poor,
- 0,5 poor,
- 0 average,
- +0,5 good,
- +1 very good,
- +1,5 excellent

Errors are divided into offences and faults based on how serious they are. The judge evaluates it based on how serious and continuing the error is.

**Offence 1-2 penalty points:** break of gait up to two strides, touching the log, poor rider, or horse position, early or late lead change, incorrect way to lope over a log (the leading leg steps over first)

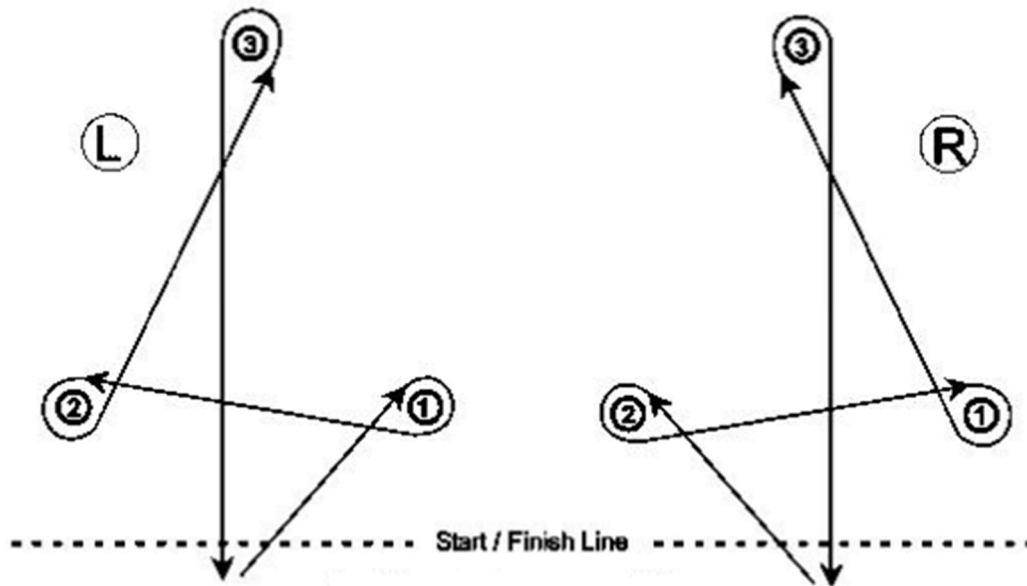
**Fault: 3-5 penalty points:** wrong gait, lead change through jog, touching the horse, touching the reins with the stick hand, touching the markers

**Disqualification:** wrong course, knocking over marker or passing it on the wrong side, completely missing a log, falling off/down (knee or hand touches the ground or the stick doesn't stay between legs), wrong rein hold (wrong rein hold for the used bit, smaller faults aren't punished), starting the performance without the judge's consent, disturbing others' performances, a visible or serious injury, illegal equipment



## Barrel Racing

Barrel racing is an electronically timed event using three barrels/obstacles set in a cloverleaf pattern. Those must remain in the same position throughout any event.



The start/finish must be clearly marked and remain the same throughout the entire event.

## Distances

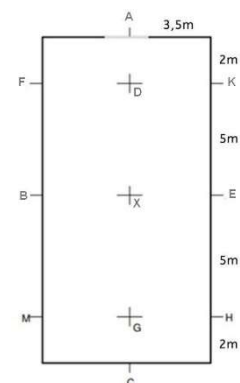
The pattern is suitable for a 7 x 14 hobbyhorse dressage arena:

Start/Finish at Marker G

Barrel 1 between H and E (4.5m from the corner) and 1m away from the track

Barrel 2 between M and B (4.5m from the corner) and 1m away from the track

Barrel 3 at Marker D



The pattern may be enlarged to any size, as long as the shown diagram is kept the same.

## Judging

The time will start with the first foot landing behind the start line and stop with the last foot landing behind the finish line.

## Eliminations & Re-runs

A contestant will get eliminated if one of the barrels/obstacles is knocked over, while touching is permitted without any penalty.

If a competitor has a fall, it is up to the show organiser's discretion to offer a re-run.

In the event, the timer has failed to record, the competitor is granted a re-run.

## Western Trail

The trail ride must be finely tuned, and in this class, judges want to see a team that displays brains and skill to master the obstacles of the western trail class with skill and elegance.

## Obstacles

All trail courses consist of at least six obstacles, including:

- 1) **Gate:** arrive parallel to the gate and stop close enough to reach the rope to open the gate. Reach for the rope with one hand and step back, far enough to open the gate. Walk through the gate and back up once more to a halt parallel to the gate. Close the gate.
- 2) **Poles:** walk-over, trot-over, or lope-over riding over at least four poles on the ground (or elevated in advanced classes)
- 3) **Backing up:** through poles, around cones
- 4) **Wooden bridge**
- 5) **Turning around in square box**
- 6) **Slalom**
- 7) **Side pass**
- 8) **Pull an obstacle**
- 9) **Carry an object**

## Judging

Exhibitors will be scored on a basis of 0-100 with 70 denoting an average performance. Points will be added or subtracted from each obstacle on the following bases, ranging from plus 1,5 to minus 1,5:

- 1,5 extremely poor,
- 1 very poor,
- 0,5 poor,

0 average,  
+0,5 good,  
+1 very good,  
+1,5 excellent

Errors are divided into offences and faults based on how serious they are. The judge evaluates it based on how serious and continuing the error is.

**Offence 1-2 penalty points:** break of gait up to two strides, touching a pole or an obstacle, incorrect way to lope over a pole (the leading leg steps over first)

**Fault: 3-5 penalty points:** Hitting a pole or stepping on a pole, wrong gait, breaking gait for more than two strides, knocking down an elevated pole or a cone are penalized three points; dropping an object to be carried, letting go of the gate are penalized five points.

**Disqualification:** wrong course, knocking over marker or passing it on the wrong side, completely missing a pole, falling off/down (knee or hand touches the ground or the stick doesn't stay between legs), starting the performance without the judge's consent, disturbing others' performances, a visible or serious injury, illegal equipment.