

What is Working Equitation?

Working Equitation (WE) is a competition created to recognize and promote the equestrian techniques employed in countries that use the horse to work in the field. The aim is to preserve and perpetuate not only the type of equitation in each country but also the various traditions, riding attire, and tack that constitute part of the intrinsic cultural tradition of each country.

The World Association for Working Equitation (WAWÉ) governs the sport internationally and maintains a set of rules for international competition. Each country, however, has its own rules for domestic WE competitions. USA Working Equitation (USAWE) is the national working equitation association of the U.S. and maintains the rulebook for this country.

WE Trials

There are four trials that make up a Working Equitation competition:

1. **Dressage**. The Dressage trial prepares riders for the challenges presented by obstacles encountered in fieldwork. The goal is to develop the handiness of the horse, and to improve the regularity and correctness of the gaits. Great consideration is given to lightness, energy, relaxation, engagement, bend, and roundness of the topline. The WE horse in this phase should appear calm, supple, confident, responsive, and keen, thus demonstrating harmony with and understanding of its rider. These qualities are documented in the collective marks for each test.
2. **Ease of Handling (EOH)**. The EOH trial is designed to represent difficulties that a horse and rider would encounter while working in the field. The objective is to show both the rider's and horse's capacity for calmness, precision, style, and regularity in performing the obstacles, providing evidence of harmony between the horse and rider. This trial is not timed.
3. **Speed**. The Speed trial is judged solely on the time taken to complete a course of obstacles, plus any time adjustments for bonuses or penalties. The obstacles are executed as quickly as possible, without any concern for style. This trial provides evidence of the rider's coordination and anticipation, and the horse's submission, speed, and attention.
4. **Cattle**. The Cattle trial tests the ability of a horse and rider to work cattle individually and with teammates. This is a team event: 3 to 4 riders work together to cut pre-selected cows from a herd one at a time in accordance with a pre-established order, and herd them into a holding pen separate from the rest of the herd. The objective is to demonstrate the abilities of cutting/ herding/containing cattle efficiently and accurately. A show may also offer a Cattle trial for individuals that runs in the same manner, awarding individual placings.

The first three trials are mandatory for a Working Equitation competition. The Cattle trial is optional and included when location and facilities allow.

Scoring

Movements in the **Dressage** and **EOH** trials are scored on a scale of 10 (highest) to 0 to enable correct and logical placement of the competitors in each class. Marks can generally be interpreted as follows:

10	Excellent	Correctly performs the movement and fulfills the criteria with a high quality of execution.
9	Very Good	
8	Good	
7	Fairly Good	Correctly performs the movement and fulfills the requirement of the movement and judging criteria with quality of execution
6	Satisfactory	
5	Sufficient	No major problems but not a quality execution of the movement and/or judging criteria.
4	Insufficient	At least one major problem in the movement or poor quality of execution.
3	Poor	Serious and/or multiple problems with basics of the movement and/or judging criteria.
2	Bad	
1	Very Bad	
0	Not executed	

Note: Half points are allowed. Any mark below 5 is considered negative.

The **Speed** trial is scored by elapsed time, with time adjusted for bonus time or penalties.

The **Cattle** trial is scored by elapsed time plus penalty time.

In **Dressage** and **EOH**, collective marks are also given for:

- Gaits** Rhythm, freedom, and regularity.
- Impulsion** Desire to move forward; elasticity of steps; suppleness of the back; engagement of hindquarters.
- Submission** Willing cooperation, harmony, attention and confidence; acceptance of contact; straightness; lightness of the forehand; ease of the movement.
- Rider** Position: Alignment, posture, stability, weight placement, and following mechanics of the gaits. Effectiveness of the aids: Clarity, subtlety, independence, and accuracy.
- Presentation** Completeness, cleanliness, and appropriateness of horse, tack, and attire.
- Transitions/Navigation** (EOH only) Crisp, accurate, uphill transitions between gaits. Transitions should be fluid, balanced, and soft, with minimal delay. Efficiency of course lines to obstacles; correct leads and bend. Prescribed gait between obstacles.



The Fundamentals of Working Equitation in the U.S.

See U.S. Rules for Working Equitation for complete requirements.



Performance Levels

A horse-rider pair may elect to compete in one of seven levels:

Level 1 – Introductory

This is an introductory level designed for new horse-rider pairs, as well as young or green horses. There is no Speed trial or Cattle trial at this level. Walk and trot are required in the Dressage and EOH trials (i.e., canter is not allowed). Rising or sitting trot is allowed. Trot is required between obstacles in EOH. Two hands may be used on the reins.

Level 2 – Novice A

This level is designed for horse-rider pairs who are beginning their development in WE. Canter is required in the Dressage trial and between obstacles in EOH. Changes of lead are through the trot. Obstacles must be trotted, unless required or allowed to be walked. Rising or sitting trot is allowed. Two hands may be used on the reins.

Level 3 – Novice B

Rising or sitting trot is allowed in the Dressage trial. Canter is required between obstacles. Changes of lead through the trot are required. Two hands may be used on the reins.

Level 4 – Intermediate A

This level is designed for horse-rider pairs progressing in their development. Sitting trot is required in the Dressage trial. Simple changes of lead through the walk are required. Two hands may be used on the reins.

Level 5 – Intermediate B

Sitting trot is required in the Dressage trial. Flying changes are required. Two hands may be used on the reins.

Level 6 – Advanced

Sitting trot is required in the Dressage trial. Flying changes are required. One hand must be used on the reins.

Level 7 – Masters

Sitting trot is required in the Dressage trial. Changes at canter must be flying changes. One hand must be used on the reins.

A horse-rider pair may choose to self-advance to the next higher level at any time. They become established at a level when they have earned a combined Dressage-EOH score percentage of 62% at a level in three competitions with at least two different judges. Until that time, they can move back at any time to a previous level.

Tack and Attire

The objective is to honor the working traditions – working (field/ranch) disciplines of all countries. Acceptable WE tack and attire from working disciplines recognized around the world include the:

- Working Western style of the American cowboy.
- Dressage style which is used in military and working traditions throughout Europe.
- Hunt seat style.
- Working nationality styles of European countries such as Portugal and Spain, or Central/South American countries such as Mexico, Colombia, and Brazil.
- Australian style of the stockman.

Riders in U.S. competitions are allowed to compete in the working tack and attire of the nationality of their choosing; it may be the rider's nationality or the horse's historic origins, or a working discipline of their choice.

Riders may use protective headgear or a protective safety vest in any trial. All competitors under the age of 18 must wear an ASTM/SEI-approved safety helmet.

The following tack is allowed:

- Bitted bridles, bitless bridles, and sidepulls.
- Natural or authentic bosal hackamores.
- Any bit can be used regardless of tradition or discipline with the exception of the following:
 - Mechanical hackamores, including the flower or wheel hackamores
 - Gag bits
 - Twisted or wire bits

The following equipment is allowed:

- Hoof boots (i.e., boots used in lieu of shoes) are allowed in all trials
- Shin guards and protective leg wraps/boots are allowed in EOH, Speed, and Cattle trials. Bell boots are allowed in Speed and Cattle trials.
- Whip (crop)

The following equipment is not allowed:

- Tie downs, martingales
- Bearing, side, draw, or balancing reins
- Metal-core nosebands or hackamores
- Studded or spiked curb/chin straps

Horse Welfare

All horses are to be treated humanely, with dignity, respect, and compassion at all times. Rules are established and enforced that demand owners, trainers, and exhibitors be continually responsible for the well-being and humane treatment of all horses entrusted to their care.

The Judge has the authority and responsibility to disqualify any competitor whose horse shows signs of blood anywhere (e.g., mouth, sides, legs). If the blood is caused by bridle, spurs, whip, or any wounds apparently from abuse or mistreatment, the competitor will be eliminated from the competition.

A rider will be *disqualified from a trial* for any of the following:

- Rider mistreats the horse.
- Horse is unsafe.
- Failure to advance for more than 15 seconds.
- Horse shows signs of blood on its body caused by an existing unhealed wound or injury in the arena.
- Horse shows signs of lameness, pain, or severe distress.
- Excessive use of whip or spurs.

A rider will be *eliminated from the competition* for the following:

- Horse shows sign of blood anywhere caused by bridle, bit, spurs, or whip.
- Horse shows signs of blood anywhere from abuse or mistreatment.
- Use/application of foreign or caustic substance that alters the horse's natural carriage, movement, or behavior.



Summary of General Disqualifications for all Trials

- Gross disrespect or misconduct by an exhibitor.
- Use of illegal tack, attire, or equipment.
- Not using the same style tack or attire throughout the competition.
- Fall of horse or rider.
- Dismounting for any reason other than to pick up an obstacle.
- Entering the trial arena before the bell has rung. *L2 - L7 only. L1 gets 5-pt penalty.*
- Taking more than 60 seconds to start the trial after the bell has rung. *L2 - L7 only. L1 gets 5-pt penalty.*
- Switching hands on the reins when riding one handed. *L2 - L7 only. L1 gets 5-pt penalty.*
- Having two hands on the reins for longer than necessary to adjust the reins. *L6 & L7 only.*
- Stroking/touching the horse in front of the rein hand three times or using the free hand for any type of assistance. *L6 & L7 only.*
- Touching the horse with a whip or using the whip to provide any assistance. *L6 & L7 only.*
- Outside assistance. *L6 & L7 only.*

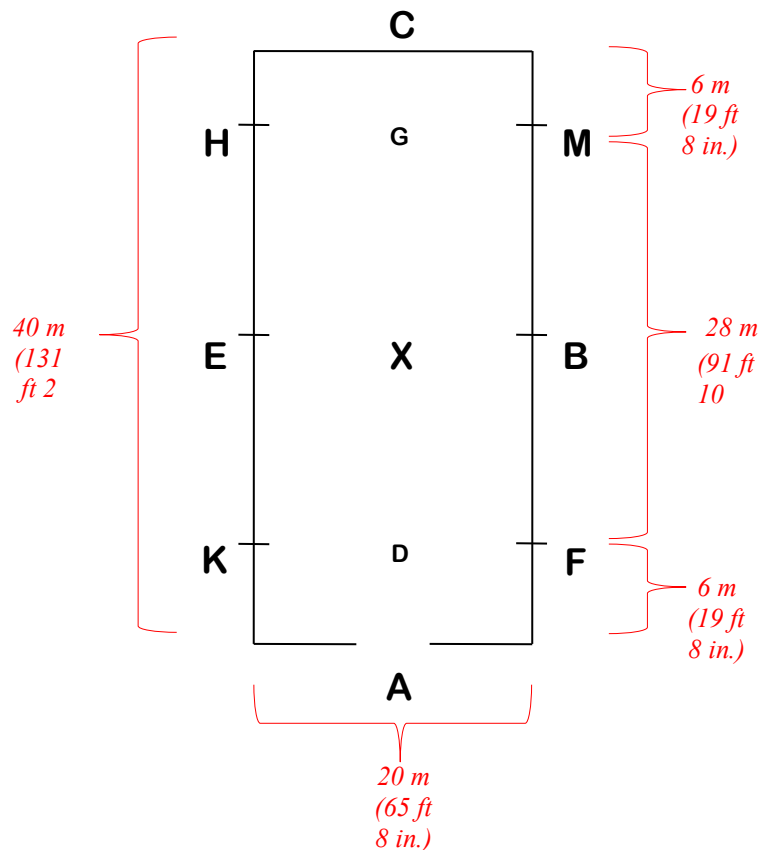
Dressage Trial

Dressage tests are ridden in a 20- by 40-meter arena. The arena is lettered in accordance with FEI requirements.

Dressage tests are designed to help the rider with the movements required to negotiate obstacles.

The tests are unique for each level. The purpose of each test is included at the top of the test forms. A summary of skills required for each test is shown on the next page.

Competitors in all levels through Advanced (L6) perform the movements in the order and arena location specified. In the Masters test (L7), the movements are ridden in the order specified, but it is the rider's choice where in the arena they are accomplished (freestyle format). The L7 test is ridden to music.



Summary of Skills Required for Dressage Tests

Skill/Movement	L1 Intro	L2 Nov A	L3 Nov B	L4 Inter A	L5 Inter B	L6 Adv	L7 Masters
Halt from walk						Δ	Δ
Halt from trot	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ		Δ	Δ
Halt from canter				Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ
Halt from extended canter						Δ	Δ
Walk, medium	Δ	Δ	Δ				Δ
Walk, collected				Δ	Δ	Δ	
Walk, extended					Δ	Δ	
Walk, free		Δ	Δ				
Trot, working	Δ	Δ	Δ				
Trot, medium				Δ	Δ		Δ
Trot, collected				Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ
Trot, lengthened			Δ				
Canter, working		Δ	Δ				
Canter, medium				Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ
Canter, collected				Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ
Canter, extended						Δ	Δ
Canter from trot		Δ	Δ				
Canter from walk				Δ	Δ		
Canter from halt						Δ	Δ
Canter from rein back						Δ	Δ
20-m circle or half circle	Δ	Δ			Δ	Δ	Δ
15-m circle or half circle			Δ	Δ		Δ	Δ
10-m circle or half circle	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ
5-m circle or half circle	Δ						
Leg yield			Δ	Δ		Δ	Δ
Half pass					Δ	Δ	Δ
Serpentine, 3 loop					Δ		Δ
Serpentine, 4 loop		Δ		Δ		Δ	Δ
Figure 8, 8 meters						Δ	
Rein back 3-5 steps	Δ	Δ	Δ				
Rein back 6-10 steps				Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ
Turn on forehand		Δ					
Turn on haunches			Δ				
Half pirouette				Δ	Δ	Δ	
Full pirouette						Δ	Δ
Lead change thru trot			Δ				
Lead change thru walk				Δ			
Flying lead change					Δ	Δ	Δ

EOH Trial

A finite set of 19 obstacles is used in Working Equitation; each obstacle has exact specifications for configuration and execution. A minimum of 8 obstacles is required for Introductory (L1), 10 obstacles for Novice (L2/L3), 12 obstacles for Intermediate (L4/L5), and 15 obstacles for Advanced (L6) and Masters level (L7). Obstacles are numbered in the order in which they have to be performed. A course map is posted or made available to competitors prior to the start of the competition. A course walk is held prior to the start of the trial.

Competitors may use either the right or left hand in completing the obstacles; however, the same hand must be used consistently for every obstacle.

The compulsory gait between obstacles is trot for L1 competitors, canter for all other levels.

Obstacles (Refer to the USAWE Rulebook for exact specifications, execution requirements, and assessment criteria.)

1. Bridge	Must be crossed at a walk for all levels in EOH. Entry-exit markers are used for this obstacle to indicate transition points.
2. Figure 8	Full circles around drums 10-feet apart, maintaining gait and showing proper bend and lead. L6 and L7 may be required to reverse through this obstacle.
3. Pen	Enclosure that simulates a small livestock pen, with a 5-foot corridor around the outside. Rider executes in one direction, exits, and re-enters in the opposite direction. Performed at walk or canter depending on level.
4. Jug	Jug sits on top of small table at least 4-ft high. Rider halts at table, raises jug above her/his head, and replaces the jug while the horse remains immobile.
5. Remove Pole	An open-topped drum and garrocha pole. Rider retrieves the pole and proceeds to the next obstacle.
6. Spear Ring	Used in conjunction with Remove Pole and Replace Pole . Rider uses the garrocha to spear a ring. Rider may travel through other obstacles before depositing the garrocha.
7. Replace Pole	Garrocha is placed in an open-topped drum.
8. Switch Cup	Two posts approximately 6.5 feet high and 4 feet apart, with a cup set on one of the posts. Rider halts between the posts and transfers the cup from one post to the other.
9. Bell Corridor	Two parallel rails (12-ft long, 5-feet apart) resting on supports. Rider enters the corridor, rings a bell positioned at the end, and reins back through the corridor to exit.
10. Reinback "L"	L-shaped corridor with same dimensions as Bell Corridor . Bell can be at the end of the corridor, or a cup set on the two end posts. Rider enters the corridor, either rings the bell or transfers the cup, and reins-back to exit.
11. Rounding Posts	Two parallel lines of three posts 8- to 10-ft apart, 5-ft wide corridor, with a cup placed on one of the end posts. Rider picks up the cup and reins back through the obstacle to place the cup on the entrance post.
12. Single Slalom	5 – 7 posts in a straight line, 20-ft apart. Rider weaves between posts showing change of bend/lead in conformity with the turn.
13. Double Slalom	Two rows of staggered posts 20-ft apart, with 20 ft between the rows. Rider performs half turns around the posts, showing changes of bend/lead in the middle of the corridor.

14. Gate	May open to the right or left. A rope between two posts may be used instead of a solid gate. Rider must open and close the gate.
15. Jump	Single jump in a progression of heights for each level. A solid wood obstacle or bales of straw may be used.
16. Sidepass Rail	1 to 3 rails, 12 feet in length, supported above the ground. Rails may be in a single line or set parallel to one another, or in an L configuration. Rider must sidepass over the rails, keeping the rails between the horse's front and hind legs. Not used for L1 riders.
17. Water	Ditch must be a minimum of 5-ft in the direction of travel (long), and a minimum of 8-ft wide. Minimum depth is 4 inches. Rider must approach and maintain gait through the water.
18. Bank	Embankment of natural substance 1- to 2-feet above ground level. Plateau at the top must be at least 6.5-ft long in the direction of travel. Rider must approach and maintain gait throughout the obstacle. Can be executed as either an up-bank or down-bank, or both. Not used for L1 riders.
19. Drums	Three drums on a triangle, 10- to 13-feet apart depending on performance level. Rider performs full circle around 1 st drum on right, passes between the 1 st and 2 nd drum to perform a half-circle around the 2 nd drum, then makes a full circle around the 3 rd drum.



EOH Obstacle Requirements Summary

Obstacles	L1 Intro	L2 Nov A	L3 Nov B	L4 Inter A	L5 Inter B	L6 Adv	L7 Masters
Minimum required	8	10	10	12	12	15	15
Gait btw obstacles	T	C	C	C	C	C	C
1. Bridge	W	W	W	W	W	W	W
2. Figure 8	W or T	T	C, CT	C, SC or FC	C, FC	C, FC	C, FC
Reverse Figure 8					W	W	W
3. Pen	W	W	W	W	W or C	W or C	W or C
4. Jug							
5. Remove Pole	W or T	T	C	C	C	C	C
6. Spear Ring	W or T	T	C	C	C	C	C
7. Replace Pole	W or T	T	C	C	C	C	C
8. Switch Cup							
9. Bell Corridor	W	W or T	W or T	W or C	W or C	W or C	W or C
10. Reinback "L"		W or T	W or T	W or C	W or C	W or C	W or C
11. Rounding Posts	W	W or T	W or T	W or C	W or C	C	C
12. Single Slalom	T	T	T	C, SC or FC	C, FC	C, FC	C, FC
13. Double Slalom	W or T	T	T	C, SC or FC	C, FC	C, FC	C, FC
14. Gate	W	W	W	W	W	W	W
15. Jump	W or T	T or C	C	C	C	C	C
16. Sidepass Rail		W	W	W	W	W or C	W or C
17. Water	W	W	W	W	W	W	W
18. Bank		T or C	C	C	C	C	C
19. Drums	W or T	T	C, CT	C, SC or FC	C, FC	C, FC	C, FC

Note:

- Obstacle numbers are for reference only; they are not intended to indicate sequential order.
- W = walk; T = trot; C = canter; CT = change of lead thru trot; SC = simple change of lead (thru walk); FC = flying change of lead.
- Any reference to gait (e.g., walk on the bridge) relates to the Ease of Handling trial only. There is no restriction on gait for any obstacle in the Speed trial unless designated by show management for the safety of horse or rider.
- If there is a choice between gaits, the rider will be scored according to degree of difficulty. The score will be higher if the more difficult gait is chosen, assuming it is performed correctly. Exception: Either SC or FC is allowed equally for L4 on the Slaloms, Figure 8, and Drums. The choice of gait belongs to the rider; it is not specified in the course design.
- Obstacles performed in an incorrect gait will result in a negative score.
- Obstacles must be approached from the numbered side.
- L1 riders are limited to carrying the garrocha pole only in Remove Pole, Spear Ring, and Replace Pole obstacles.
- L2 riders are not required to canter between any obstacles while handling the garrocha pole.

EOH Summary of Penalties and Disqualifications

<i>Note: L1 riders are not disqualified for performance-related infractions.</i>	L1 Intro	L2 Nov A	L3 Nov B	L4 Int A	L5 Int B	L6 Adv	L7 Masters
Refusals	3 allowed; negative mark. After 3, with approval, rider can move on. Mark is 0 for obstacle.			2 allowed; negative mark. 3 rd refusal is a DQ.			
Knocking over or dropping a portion of obstacle (does not include Ring)	Negative mark						
	Obstacle part reset, or handed to rider	Rider must dismount, retrieve, remount, and replace. Failure is 0.		Rider must dismount, retrieve, remount, and replace. Failure is DQ.			
0 score on 3 obstacles		Cannot compete in Speed trial					
Using 2 hands on the reins (L6/L7 and riders using spade bits)						DQ	
Outside assistance	10-pt penalty, each occurrence					DQ	
Stroking/touching the horse in front of the rein hand (max. twice)						5-pt penalty	
Stroking/touching the horse in front of the rein hand three times	May earn lower Rider mark if excessive					DQ	
Failure to salute the Judge	5-pt penalty						
Knocking over the course Start or Finish marker	5-pt penalty						
Obstacle performed in an incorrect gait	Negative mark						
Course error (if corrected before starting the next obstacle)	Negative mark						
Hitting obstacle number or course marker	May result in lower mark						
Failure to correct course error before starting next obstacle	0 mark for obstacle 5-pt penalty	DQ					
Bumping or touching an obstacle before start of the trial	5-pt penalty	DQ					
Showing obstacle to horse in overt manner	5-pt penalty	DQ					
Crossing line of obstacle before performed	5-pt penalty	DQ					
Knocking down obstacle before performed	5-pt penalty	DQ					
Going through the course Start/Finish markers in wrong direction and not correcting	5-pt penalty	DQ					
Not using the same working hand for every obstacle	0 mark for obstacle 5-pt penalty	DQ					
Going over or through an obstacle before start of trial or before it has been performed	5-pt penalty	DQ					

Speed Trial

The Speed trial includes some or all of the obstacles used in the EOH trial or may add different obstacles. Some exceptions from EOH include:

- The Jug obstacle is not used.
- A rope gate is used rather than a solid gate.
- The Pen is performed in one circuit only.

Time starts when the horse's nose passes through the Start marker and ends when the horse's nose passes through the Finish marker. Penalties are added for various infractions as shown below. A 5-second bonus is given to the rider who skewers the ring and successfully places it and the garrocha in the barrel.

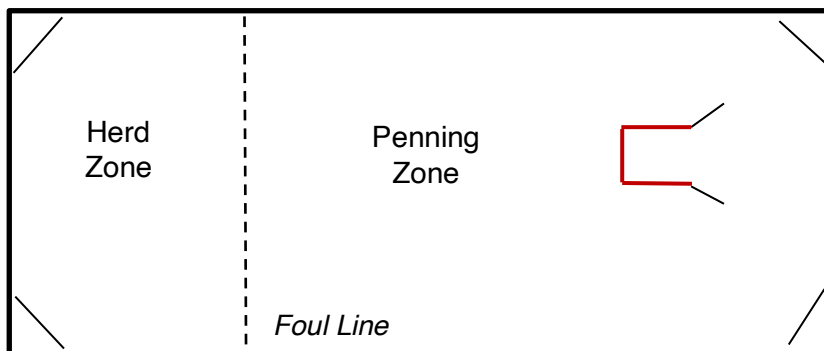
Speed Trial Summary of Time Penalties, Time Bonuses, and Disqualifications

	-5	+5	+10	+30	DQ
Placing the tip end of the pole in the drum		√			
Skewering the ring with the butt end of the pole		√			
Any leg stepping over a side pass rail (each leg)		√			
Touching horse in front of rein hand (two times max) (L6, L7)		√			
Knocking over the course Start or Finish marker		√			
Failure to salute Judge, each occurrence		√			
Outside assistance, each occurrence (L2 thru L5)			√		
Knocking over or dislodging any part of an obstacle			√		
Exiting the non-exit end of a corridor with all four feet			√		
Failure to latch gate in proper portion of obstacle				√	
Dropping and failing to replace part of an obstacle (L2, L3)				√	
After three refusals with permission of Judge (L2, L3)				√	
Skewering the ring and getting it placed with pole in drum	√				
Not entering the course within 60 seconds of bell					√
Going through the course Start/Finish markers in the wrong direction					√
Passing thru Finish marker before all obstacles are executed					√
Outside assistance (L6, L7)					√
Using 2 hands on the reins for longer than necessary (L6, L7, spade bit)					√
Three refusals at an individual obstacle (L4 thru L7)					√
Failure to advance after 15 seconds					√
Not riding the course in sequential order					√
Uncorrected mistake in execution/route of an obstacle					√
Crossing the line of an obstacle before it was performed					√
Knocking down an obstacle or part of one not yet performed					√
Failure to acknowledge a dropped item before moving on (L2, L3)					√
Failure to retrieve/reset a dropped item (L4 thru L7)					√
Failure to ride thru a water-filled ditch					√
Touching horse in front of the rein hand three times (L6, L7)					√
Not using the same working hand for every obstacle					√
Passing the rope over the rider's head in the Gate obstacle					√

Cattle Trial

A start/foul line separates the **herd** zone where the herd is settled from the **penning** zone where a holding pen is located. The **foul line** is designated by a chalk line and/or marker(s).

A holding pen is set up at the far end of the arena, away from the herd zone. The exact size and position of the holding pen can vary with the host facility. It can be either within the perimeter of the arena, attached to the perimeter fence, or set up as an attached separate pen outside the arena.



The rider has 3 minutes (180 seconds) to pen the designated cow. Time starts 60 seconds after the Judge has rung the bell or when the rider's horse's nose passes over the foul line. Time stops when the selected cow has all four feet in the holding pen, all other cattle are in the herd zone, and all horses are in the penning zone, or when the 3-minute time period is up.

Summary of Cattle Trial Penalties and Disqualifications

	+5	+10	DQ
Failure to salute Judge, each occurrence	√		
Herd cow crosses the foul line, each occurrence		√	
Team member's horse steps over the foul line into herd zone		√	
Outside assistance, each occurrence (L2 thru L5)		√	
Rider crosses the foul line before Judge permission to proceed			√
Team member crosses the foul line before the rider does			√
Team member crosses into the herd zone and stays for more than 5 sec			√
The selected cow is penned and time runs out while there are herd cows in the penning zone.			√
The selected cow is penned and time runs out while there are horses in the herd zone.			√
Roughing			√
Intentional contact with cattle by hands, feet, or any equipment			√
Any signs of injury or traces of blood on cattle caused by the rider			√
Endangering any other rider, horse, ground crew, or official			√
Any attempt to work cattle on foot			√
Using two hands on the reins other than for a brief adjustment (L6/L7)			√
Outside assistance (L6, L7)			√