



# Rules

# 2026

*\*note updates in bold\**

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# OTTAWA VALLEY TEAM PENNING ASSOCIATION

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## MISSION STATEMENT

The Ottawa Valley Team Penning Association (OVTPA) has been established to promote and develop the sport of Team Cattle Penning in Eastern Ontario. In accordance with the mission, the OVTPA seeks to classify penners according to ability and to establish rules to create a common approach to the sport and maximize participation and competition.

The OVPTA supports the view that team penning is a sport for young and old, male and female, families and individuals, and in this regard, seeks to promote a high standard of personal conduct and good sportsmanship. The OVTPA brings Team Cattle Penners together in the spirit of fun and competition, and this is of primary importance in this mission.

## GOALS

1. To promote the sport of Team Cattle Penning.
2. To establish and maintain a handicap system that encourages team cattle penners of every age and every skill level to compete in the sport.
3. To promote a pastime that fosters family involvement while setting standards for proper conduct and good sportsmanship.
4. To constantly strive to improve, enhance and enrich the sport through refinement and innovation. The OVTPA is an organization that continually seeks to improve the sport for all competitors. Regular monitoring and constant communication among participants and associations will continue to make team cattle penning a better sport and that is the utmost aim of the OVTPA.

## **PART 1 - GENERAL RULES**

The object of team cattle penning is that a team consisting of three riders in an arena must attempt to cut out from a herd and pen three head of cattle with the team's assigned number within a specified time limit. The fastest time with the most amount of penned cattle wins. It is recommended that a two-person officiating system is utilized. One official will be the Judge who is situated at the pen and the other official is the Line Official. The Line Official is responsible for starting teams and calling "trash". Both Officials are responsible for the enforcement of all rules.

### **Rule 1: Team Composition & Substitutions**

A team consists of 3 riders. When cross-entering, a team must change out one rider. After a three-person team competes in any one go-round, if one person is unable to compete for any reason in subsequent go-round(s), it is the option of the two remaining contestants to compete, if they so desire, but in no event may less than two persons compete. In the event the third rider of the team is not in the arena to begin the run when scheduled to do so, the third rider will be given a maximum of 30 seconds to enter the arena. After the 30 seconds have expired, the official will indicate to the remaining riders when the arena is ready, and they must begin the run. If the third rider enters the arena after the flag has dropped to begin the run, the team will be disqualified.

- a) If a rider is unable to continue for any reason, they may be replaced in subsequent runs with a rider of the same or lesser rating (open class does not apply). For those runs that are completed, they cannot be replaced for any second rounds. These teams must run with the remaining two riders.

### **Rule 2: Time Limits & Timekeeping**

The maximum time limit for all classes, including youth classes, is 90 seconds. Within this time limit the team must attempt to separate from the herd and pen three head of cattle with the same assigned identity number. In instances where the team has completed their run, and the flag has dropped at almost the same time as the maximum time buzzer has sounded, the judge must refer to the timekeepers to determine whether or not the maximum time limit has been exceeded. All a judge can do is drop the flag to signify the timers to stop the clock. The timer will then tell the judge and scorekeeper if the time was within the maximum time allowed. A courtesy warning may be given to the team at 30 seconds prior to the maximum time allowed.

### **Rule 3: Herd Integrity & Re-rides**

There must be an equal number of cattle in the arena when a team competes, except in the event that injured or escaped animals have been removed and management has opted to complete runs in that particular herd. If this situation occurs and the number of the injured or escaped animal has not been previously used, that number will be deleted from the order of go. The Judge will have the discretion to change the injured cow or remove it from the herd and delete that number from the order of go. In any case, all injured cattle will be removed from the pen immediately. In the event more or less than three assigned cattle are discovered within the herd, the team(s) in this situation will receive a rerun at the end of the herd on their previously assigned number. In the event a number is called twice in the same herd, the second team drawing the duplicate number must rerun on the correct number, at the end of that herd. Only the affected team will be entitled to a rerun. Teams awarded a rerun for these reasons will not carry forward any penalties to their rerun. Times for all other teams on the herd will remain the same.

#### **Rule 4: Herd Management and Rotation**

Cattle herds will be rotated after all numbers in a sequence have been called, regardless of no-shows. If a herd must be removed due to escape or safety concerns, a fresh herd will be provided. To prioritize animal welfare and ensure competitive fairness, the Judge or Show Management may, at their discretion, rotate herds more frequently to prevent overworking the livestock.

#### **Rule 5: Starting the Run & Staging**

All cattle will be unified and settled (bunched) within the POSTED markers on the cattle side of the start line before time begins. The Line Official will raise the flag to signal when the arena is ready. All team members are expected to move promptly into position to start and must proceed immediately if instructed to do so by either Official. An official may grant a short rest of not more than 30 seconds (provided there were no delays between runs) to a competitor with back-to-back runs. If a team chooses this, they must turn and face the opposite end of the arena as to not incur an unfair advantage in spotting cattle. Time begins when the nose of the first rider's horse crosses the start line. The drop of the flag to start the run deems the team is committed to their cattle. Riders will be given their cattle number as they cross the start line. Teams delaying in entering the arena within a 30 second time limit between teams will be disqualified (unless waived for good cause) from competing in that class for that day and will forfeit their entry fee. If a team is a no-show, the cattle number drawn for that run will be used for the next team so that the maximum number of teams will compete in each herd. Competitors must be ready to begin their run when the official raises the start flag. It will be the official's discretion to start time due to rider delay. The Announcer shall announce, frequently, the competing team's assigned cattle number for the benefit of the competitors and spectators.

#### **Rule 6: Responsibility and Arena Integrity**

Once committed to the cattle, the team is completely responsible for their animals. If an animal leaves the arena either over or through a fence or gate the team can be disqualified for unnecessary roughness, given a time on their remaining cattle, or awarded a rerun at the Judge's discretion.

#### **Rule 7: Unassigned Cattle (Trash) and Scoring**

If an unassigned cow (trash) crosses the cattle/start line at any time during the run, the team will be disqualified. Cattle will be judged over the cattle/start line when all four feet are over the line.

#### **Rule 8: Calling for Time (Manual and Automatic)**

Time will AUTOMATICALLY be called as soon as all four (4) feet of all three (3) cattle are in the pen, and all of the riders and horses are on the pen side of the line. This will be signified by the Pen Judge dropping the flag as soon as all of these conditions have been met.

A team may call time MANUALLY by any team member any time after one or more cattle have been penned. To call for time "manually" one team member's horse's nose must break the plane of the gate and that team member must raise a hand above their shoulder. The Pen Judge's flag will drop when the first horse's nose breaks the plane, and that rider called for time. If a team calls for time with only one or two of their cattle in the pen, the remainder of their assigned cattle do not have to be on the herd side of the cattle line. The Pen Judge signals for time to stop on the conditions that occur first, whether automatic or manual.

- a) A cow judged as penned must be completely in the pen (all 4 feet)

- b) If all 3 cattle enter the pen before all 3 riders are on the pen side of the line, time will not stop until the Line Official signals to the Pen Judge that all riders have crossed to the pen side (all 4 feet of the horse(s)). Only the Pen Judge can signal to the timer when the time stops. In this situation, if any cattle escape the pen while waiting for rider(s) to cross the line, cattle may be re-penned.
- c) If a team calls for time “manually” (see above for definition) and all riders and horses are not on the pen side of the line, the team will be disqualified.
- d) A rider whose horse totally enters the pen shall not be disqualified.

### **Rule 9: Mechanical Error and Escaped Cattle**

If a team has cattle under control and calls for time, they will receive their recorded time regardless of whether cattle subsequently escape through the back gate due to mechanical failure. If a gate failure occurs during a run and causes cattle to escape or interferes with the team's progress, the Judge shall stop the run and grant a rerun. Reruns for mechanical error will be conducted on the same cattle number, and any previously assessed penalties will be waived.

### **Rule 10: Herd Holders and Positioning**

Two herd holders will move the penned cattle back to the herd following a run. The herd holders will ensure the herd is settled and unified between the POSTED markers. Herd holders attempting to disturb the herd – splitting pairs or ‘burying’ unused numbers can be called for Unsportsmanlike Conduct. Herd holders must face the herd and control the herd in this position until the number is called. The herd holders are to exit along the outside edge of the arena immediately upon the number being called and not in front of the competing team. It is the Judge’s discretion to instruct the herd holders to walk cows in a mannerly fashion. **The function of the herd holders is to ensure that the herd is unified and settled.**

### **Rule 11: Restarts, Reruns, and Livestock Fitness**

Reruns and restarts will only be given for Mechanical Failure or Management Error. In the event a management error or mechanical failure is detected early in a run, the team will be given a restart.

Restarts differ from reruns in that a restart is something that occurs within the first few seconds of a run that unfairly impedes the team competing. Several examples of restarts may be: failure for the announcer to inform the team of their assigned number in an appropriate time, duplicate number being announced, herd holder interference, failure of the time clock, or an animal bolting from the herd. Restarts will occur immediately and on the same assigned number.

Reruns may be granted by the Judge for mechanical failures or management errors that might occur during the run. The team must declare their intention to seek a rerun before leaving the arena through polite request to the Judge. The herd is not to be released until the dispute is resolved. If a rerun is granted, it will be given at the end of the same herd of cattle using the same numbered cattle. The team cannot better the time at which the mechanical failure or management error occurred to cause the rerun and penalty seconds may be given at the Judge’s discretion, to a maximum of 5 seconds. The team may decline the rerun except in circumstances where a rerun must be taken due to duplicate numbers being used in the herd or more or less than the assigned number of cattle (3) in a misnumbered herd. If a rerun is necessary for more or less than the assigned number of cattle in the herd or a rerun is granted due to cattle numbers being obscured the team will not incur any time penalties on their rerun.

- a. If a team observes an unfit, injured or unidentified animal before committing to the cattle, the team must notify the Judge. Once committed to the cattle by crossing the start line the team is completely responsible for their animals. If a cow becomes incapacitated (injured, winded, lays down) the judge has the right to stop the run, and the team will not be given a rerun as "luck of the draw" will apply. If an animal leaves the arena, either over or through a fence or gate, the team can either be disqualified for unnecessary roughness, given a time on their remaining cattle, or can be awarded a rerun depending on the Judge's decision. If any extraneous animals such as dogs enter the arena, it will be the judge's decision whether or not to grant a rerun.
- b. Management should make sure all cattle are healthy, two-eyed, workable and properly tagged. Even so, an animal may occasionally be hurt during the contest, or a wild one may jump out. Exceptionally wild cattle should be eliminated before the contest. Injured cattle are to be removed immediately, and management may decide to go on in that particular herd with less than 30 head of cattle in the herd.

### **Rule 12: Hazing and Equipment Violations**

Any contact with cattle or hazing by a rider using hats, ropes, reins, bats, romals, or any other equipment is strictly prohibited and will result in an immediate disqualification (No-Time).

- Permitted Actions: Romals or reins may be popped against the rider's own leg or saddle.
- Prohibited Actions: Using any part of the arena structure (e.g., rattling the pen or fence) to influence the movement of cattle is prohibited. Any team using the arena equipment to encourage an unassigned animal to move shall be disqualified. This includes hitting the pen or kicking the panels."

### **Rule 13: Dismounted Riders and Fall of Horse**

The fall of a horse and/or rider shall not eliminate the entry. Any attempt by a dismounted rider to work cattle before remounting will result in automatic disqualification. A team with one or more dismounted riders may call for time providing all riders and horses are on the pen side of the line or time will end automatically once all three cattle are in the pen. Outside help for dismounted riders by anyone other than their teammates in the arena will result in disqualification. The rider calling for time must be mounted.

### **Rule 14: Intentional/Irresponsible Roughing (\$500 Fine/Liability)**

**Incidental Contact:** Incidental contact may be ruled at the Judge's discretion and will result in a "No-Time" for the run.

**Intentional or Irresponsible Roughing:** Any act of intentional or irresponsible roughing will result in automatic disqualification of the run and potential elimination from the remainder of the show.

**Rider Responsibility:** The rider is solely responsible for the positioning and control of their horse at all times. "Irresponsible roughing" includes any contact resulting from a lack of control or failure to provide "daylight" (a clear, unobstructed path of escape) for the animal.

**Strict Liability:** A ruling of roughing is based on the physical outcome of the interaction. The rider's stated intent shall not be considered a mitigating factor in the assessment of this penalty.

**Financial Penalties:** At the discretion of the Judge and Show Management, a financial penalty of \$500.00 may be assessed for roughing infractions.

**Animal Injury & Liability:** In cases of severe or intentional abuse resulting in animal injury, the rider may be held liable for all associated veterinary costs or the fair market value of the animal.

#### **Board Review and Disciplinary Action**

The OVTPA Board of Directors and Show Management reserve the right to review any roughing infraction or act of inhumane treatment, whether it occurs inside or outside the competition pen. Following a review, the Board may assess further penalties, including monetary fines or suspension of membership. All indefinite suspensions are subject to a formal hearing.

#### **Rule 15: Unsportsmanlike Conduct and Animal Welfare**

Unsportsmanlike conduct by a team and/or rider will result in disqualification. Unsportsmanlike conduct is defined as abuse of one's horse or cattle, excessive foul language, intoxication in the arena or on the grounds or any other conduct felt to be detrimental to the sport of team penning. Abuse of one's horse may include but is not limited to excessive jerking, spurring, whipping, slapping or kicking, or riding a horse that is visibly lame, sick or emaciated. Unsportsmanlike conduct may also be levied against a rider showing disrespect, physical, verbal or written abuse to a Judge, Line Official, or Show Management. The OVTPA reserves the right to suspend any rider from competing for the balance of the day and the next scheduled OVTPA event, in which the suspended rider attempts to enter, forfeiting all entry fees for the day.

Unsportsmanlike conduct may also be levied for any physical, verbal or written abuse to any member of the rating or disciplinary committees regardless of whether it occurs during or outside an event.

#### **Rule 16: Spotting**

Spotting of cattle is strictly prohibited. Spotting is defined as any assistance given to the competing team to help them locate their assigned cow at the herd end of the arena. This includes the use of coded language (e.g., 'look left', 'ride right') by persons outside the arena, or the use of electronic communication devices (e.g., earpieces, radios).

##### **Penalties:**

- Blatant spotting will result in an immediate disqualification (No-Time) for the team.
- Use of electronic aids or repeated infractions will be deemed unsportsmanlike conduct, resulting in disqualification for the remainder of the show and forfeiture of all entry fees.

This rule will be enforced by the Judge and Show Management. The OVTPA Board shall be notified of serious infractions for potential further sanctions. All decisions of the officials are final.

#### **Rule 17: Post-Run Cattle Handling**

To ensure the humane treatment of livestock and maintain show efficiency, any rider who continues to work, chase, or harass cattle after the run has ended (or after a disqualification) will be subject to a \$50.00 fine at the Official's discretion. Failure to immediately cease cattle contact is considered unsportsmanlike conduct. This fine must be paid in full before the competitor is eligible to enter the pen for their next run.

#### **Rule 18: Unattended/Tied Horses**

For the safety of all participants and the welfare of the horse, horses must not be left unattended while tied to any arena perimeter, penning panels, or temporary fencing. Tying to arena structures is strictly prohibited due to liability and equipment safety risks. If a horse is found unattended or

improperly tied, a warning will be announced; if not addressed within 5 minutes, a \$25.00 safety fine will be assessed. This fine must be settled before the rider's next scheduled run.

### **Rule 19: Official Authority**

The decisions of the Judge and Line Officials are final once a run is complete and any immediate disputes have been heard. The OVTPA maintains a *Zero-Tolerance Policy* for harassment. Any contestant who displays disrespectful behavior, foul language, or aggressive conduct toward a Judge, Line Official, or Volunteer will be *disqualified for the remainder of the day*. In such cases, all entry fees for that day will be forfeited. This rule is enforced at the sole discretion of the presiding Judge and Show Management.

### **Rule 20: Discrepancies and In-Ring Disputes**

If a discrepancy is noted by a rider, (who is competing in that class that day), they must stop the competing team from leaving the ring and approach the officials or rider rep with their complaint. If the competing team in question has left the ring unattested, no complaints will be heard. All three members of the competing team must be in the ring.

### **Rule 21: Rider Representatives and Official Communication**

Each OVTPA show will appoint a rider rep for each class. All rider disputes must be addressed to the rider rep, who will relay the information to the Judge or official. The Judge reserves the right to have direct contact with the rider, to clarify the objective or to issue a warning. All communication must be done in a civil manner.

*Note: Any verbal or physical abuse directed toward the Judge or Rider Representative will result in immediate disqualification.*

### **Rule 22: Official Conduct and Assistance**

Judges and Line Officials cannot coach or provide assistance as to which numbers have or have not been used.

### **Rule 23: Order of Go and Tie-Breaking**

Team positions for the 1<sup>st</sup> go-round and cattle numbers will be assigned by an impartial draw. Once the order of the draw is established it cannot be changed.

The second go-round shall be run in the reverse order of the 1<sup>st</sup> go-round placing (i.e., the slowest time goes first, fastest time goes last). In the event of a tie after completion of the 1<sup>st</sup> go-round, the order of the tied teams will be the reverse of how they entered in the 1<sup>st</sup> go-round.

In the event of a tie after completion of the second go-round, tied monies and points will be divided equally, except when Show Management has opted to follow the OVTPA tie-breaking rules, listed below. Teams must pen to advance.

### **Rule 24: Placing at Jackpot Pennings**

The placing in a class at jackpot pennings is determined on the aggregate scores of cattle penned and times obtained in 2 or more go-rounds. Usually only the top half of the teams are eligible to compete in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round. The number of cattle penned takes priority over the time obtained.

- **Scoring Penalties:** A No-Time or disqualification will be recorded as a no-time (the maximum time allowed for that run, as determined at the start of the class). Both scores will equal 90 seconds.

- **Precision:** Times will be recorded to the nearest hundredth of a second.
- **Records:** Times and cattle penned by all participants will be recorded.

#### **OVTPA Tie Breaking Procedure:**

- **Procedure:** In certain circumstances there is a need to break a tie between two or more riders when high point rider awards are involved. To break the tie a flip of a coin will decide which rider shall go first. Each tied rider will select one rider to pen with them in the tiebreaker.
- **Team Selection:** The selected penner must have been a team member of the tied rider on a previous team.
- **The Run:** The two-person team will have one chance to pen one cow. When the judge raises the flag to start the run, the team can elect to pen any one cow. The tied rider must be the rider to select the cow from the herd.
- **Determination of Winner:** The team with the fastest time penning one cow will be deemed to have won and the rider will be ranked higher than the other rider/s involved in the tie.

## **TEAM PENNING CLASSES**

### **1. YOUTH DIVISIONS**

**Age Requirements:** The youth classes will consist of a Junior Division of which riders are 12 years of age or under as of January 1<sup>st</sup> (a show year is from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>) and a Senior Division of which riders are 13 to 18 years of age as of January 1<sup>st</sup>. The Senior Youth class is optional and is offered at the discretion of the OVTPA.

**Team Composition:** In the Junior Youth class, two youth must ride with one adult (19+). The change out of the rider in the Junior Youth class must be a Youth. In the Senior Youth class all riders are Youth.

**Junior Youth Conduct:** A youth must enter the herd first and perform the primary work of separating the animal. Once the youth demonstrates control, the adult may assist or re-cut animals that return to the herd. **Crucial:** If calling for time manually, a youth rider must be the one to signify at the pen.

**Single Entries:** If only one team enters the Youth Class, they are still permitted to pen.

**Mandatory Safety Gear:** All youth riders (18 and under) **must wear a certified helmet**. This is a requirement of Ontario Provincial Law (Horse Riding Safety Act).

**Ratings:** All youth riders will be rated according to **OVTPA** standards, though class eligibility is strictly determined by age.

**Safety Enforcement & Compliance:** All youth riders (under the age of 18) must strictly adhere to the [Horse Riding Safety Act, 2001](#) regarding helmets and footwear.

**Official Authority:** The Judge, Line Official, or Show Management has the absolute authority to remove any rider from the arena who is not wearing an approved **ASTM/SEI certified** helmet or who is wearing inappropriate footwear (lacking a 1.5 cm heel).

**Correction Window:** If a safety violation is noted before a run begins, the rider may be granted a two-minute window to correct the equipment at the Judge's discretion. If the equipment cannot be corrected, the team must compete with two riders or forfeit the run.

**Liability Disclaimer:** Failure to comply with these safety standards will result in an immediate **No-Time** for the team, and the **OVTPA** accepts no liability for injuries sustained while a rider is in violation of these provincial safety requirements.

## 2. OPEN CLASS

This class is open to any rating combination of riders, with no maximum team limit.

## 3. RATED CLASSES

The combined rating total of all three (3) team members cannot exceed the number assigned to the class. **Example (#6 Class):** Team totals must be six (6) or less (e.g., 4-1-1, 3-2-1, or 2-2-2).

**NOTE:** At the discretion of the Executive, the classes offered may include the **#5, #6, #7, #9, or #11** divisions to maximize competition and participation.

## DRESS CODE

All contestants must maintain a professional **Western Image** while in the arena. **Required attire includes:**

- **Headwear:** A Western hat or an ASTM/SEI approved equestrian helmet.
- **Footwear:** Standard Western boots with a heel.
- **Shirts:** Long-sleeved Western shirts with a collar and cuffs. Shirts must be tucked in, and sleeves must be buttoned/fastened at the wrist.
- **Pants:** Western-style long pants (jeans) in good repair, free of holes or significant fraying.

### Exceptions and Discretion:

- At the Judge's discretion, short-sleeved Western shirts (with collars) may be permitted due to extreme heat; this will be announced prior to the start of the class.
- Accidental damage to attire (e.g., torn buttons or snaps) occurring during a run will not be penalized.

**Penalty:** Failure to comply with the dress code may result in an immediate **disqualification (No-Time)** at the Judge's discretion."

## SHOW REGULATIONS

1. All riders in an OVTPA Jackpot must show proof of rating from their affiliated association to ride in a numbered class. Any person not providing proof of rating will be treated as an open rider. For all OVTPA Club Shows, all riders must be members of the OVTPA.
2. The rules and bylaws of the OVTPA will govern all Jackpot penning. Amendments to OVTPA rules may be made by the majority of executive members present to suit local needs (i.e., pen size, herd size, etc.)
3. All Jackpot penning competitions will have the classes posted as per pre-entry. If there are insufficient teams entered to justify a class, the class may be deleted. Other classes may be added if all the aforementioned classes have been offered.

## MANDATORY LIABILITY INSURANCE

All members and guest riders must maintain a minimum of **\$5,000,000 personal liability insurance** covering equine activities.

- **Proof of Coverage:** Valid proof of insurance (e.g., a current **Ontario Equestrian** membership card or an equivalent private policy certificate) must be presented to the Show Secretary prior to competing.
- **Liability Waiver:** In addition to insurance, a signed **OVRTA Waiver and Release of Liability** must be on file for the current season.
- **Compliance:** Failure to provide proof of valid insurance will result in an immediate **disqualification** from the event with no refund of entry fees. This requirement is mandated by our insurance provider, property owners, and livestock contractors.

## CATTLE CHARGE

A cattle charge will be levied on all participants at each OVRTA event. The cattle charge may vary depending on the cost of the cattle being used and the number of participants. The cattle charge will be set at the beginning of the season unless unforeseen circumstances cause management to alter the costs. Sufficient notice will be given to members.

## GENERAL SHOW STANDARDS AND ADMINISTRATION

1. The rules will be posted at every Jackpot penning.
2. Working area in Jackpot pennings must be a minimum of 60 feet by 160 feet.
3. The OVRTA reserves the right to alter or amend any rule according to special circumstances.
4. All Judges and Line Officials will be familiar with the OVRTA official rules.
5. Numbers will be a minimum of 6 inches wide and will be from 0 to 9 and displayed on each side of the animal.

## ARENA AND PEN DIMENSIONS

The start/cattle line must be marked. Anytime a 2-person system is used in officiating the Senior Judge shall work the finish line (pen), and the Line Official will work the start/cattle line. If a 2-person Official system is used, the line will be made visible on each side of the pen.

If using the 2-person Official system the Line Official is responsible for starting teams and calling “trash” and will assist the Senior Judge in calling infractions. With the implementation of the No Trash rule, it is recommended that the commonly used foul line of 40% be increased to up to 50% depending upon the arena set up. For larger arenas, if a 30% foul line is used it is recommended that up to a 40% foul line be used.

The finish line is placed at 75% of the length of the arena from the cattle end. The “hole” is always 16 feet. Depending on the size of panels used, the pen opening will be from 8 – 12 feet, and the length of the pen sides will be from 16 to 24 feet. A banner must be placed on the back side of the pen. Banners are not to be placed on the front panel of the pen adjacent to the opening, or on the “wing” of the pen.

## **PART 2 - POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **RATINGS**

#### **Goals**

The purpose of rating each member is to provide a fair and level playing field for all members. No one should be riding with an advantage, or be disadvantaged, when competing with other members.

At any time, when determining the rating of an individual, rating committees must not consider the effect on the individual member but the effect on the membership as a whole. The individual's age, length of time penning, existing teams, or the fact they may skip a rating level altogether, simply do not enter into the equation. The penner's ability dictates what their rating should be.

When rating a penner, rating committees cannot consider personal relationships, emotions, or conflicts of interest. The decision must be based solely on the individual's ability. The rate of improvement the individual has shown, and the likelihood of significant improvement by the end of the year should also be considered. The ratings are the responsibility of the OVTPA Rating Committee.

While every effort will be made by the OVTPA Rating Committee to reach consensus on individuals' ratings, the OVTPA Rating Committee will have the final say. The biggest test of the ratings system is when penners across all associations compete in Jackpot shows. A 4 from one association should pen similar to a 4 from any other association. If even one penner competes at a large show and is incorrectly rated, he or she has been given a competitive advantage, all other penners have been disadvantaged, and the integrity of the OVTPA Ratings System is put in jeopardy.

#### **Procedure**

The rating committee will consist of seven anonymous persons. These persons shall be experienced penners. The President shall appoint a rating committee chairperson. The chairperson shall ask the committee, in writing, their rating of each member. The chairperson will then summarize the information, and the average rating will stand. Ratings will be assessed yearly.

#### **Ratings**

The OVTPA has a **5 number rating system** as follows:

**5 – This penner is proficient in all areas of penning. This competitor can make consistent above average contributions to a team's success and demonstrates a thorough understanding of the sport. This rider regularly displays an ability to be the most meaningful contributor on teams in rated classes and excels alongside their peers (other pro riders) in the open class.**

**4 – This penner is above average in most areas of penning. This penner can provide above average contributions to a team's success. Showing above average skills in pulling cows, turning cattle and likely displays an above average understanding of the sport.**

**3 – This penner is average in most areas of penning. This penner regularly consistently provides meaningful contributions to a team's success with their penning knowledge and skills and shows a solid understanding of the sport.**

**2 – This penner is developing their skills in all areas of penning where they are no longer a beginner yet are not achieving overall average penning skills. This penner can consistently contribute to the team's success.**

**1 – This penner is below average in penning skills and is likely a newer penner who needs to develop in most areas of penning. This penner can sometimes contribute to a team’s success but does so inconsistently. This penner may also be a former seasoned penner who can no longer be competitive riding above this rating because of age, health, or physical ability.**

### **Criteria**

This is a list of some criteria that should be used when evaluating a penner's rating:

1. Riding Ability
2. Ability to read a cow
3. Ability to react to a situation
4. Ability to play different positions
5. Communication Skills
6. Coaching Ability
7. Win/Loss/Money earned back percentages – **new to CTCPA**

### **NEW RIDER RATING**

New riders must be evaluated before each Jackpot penning, or they will be considered to be an open rider. New riders will be given a temporary rating, by the rating committee. Evaluation will occur as the rider attends club shows. The rider's temporary rating will be reviewed by the OVTPA Rating Committee and subsequent changes may be enforced. The rider will be given a permanent rating for the year.

### **RATING APPEALS AND PROCEDURES:**

There are two (2) types of appeals: a rider may appeal their own rating, or any member may appeal another rider's rating.

**Written Submission:** The appellant must submit a written statement to the **OVTPA** detailing why a rating is incorrect based specifically on the established **Rating Criteria**.

**Fees and Timeline:** Each appeal must be accompanied by a **\$50.00 fee**. Upon receipt, the **OVTPA** will schedule a hearing with the **Rating Committee** in a timely fashion.

**Hearing Process:** The committee will hear evidence from the appellant, after which the appellant must leave the room (or phone call) for private deliberation.

**Restricted Evidence:** The Committee is strictly prohibited from considering the following factors:

- i. Age
- ii. Effect on teams or high-point calculations
- iii. Petitions or personal reasons
- iv. Political reasons (e.g., sponsorships, threats to quit, etc.)

**Finality and Limits:** A rider's rating may only be appealed **once per season**. The Committee can only issue one rating per rider for the year, and their decision is final.

**Refund Policy:** If the appeal is successful, **\$40.00** will be returned to the appellant, and **\$10.00** will be retained by the **OVTPA** as an administration fee. If the appeal is lost, the full amount is retained.

## PENNING ETIQUETTE AND SHOW EFFICIENCY

To promote Team Penning as a spectator-friendly sport and ensure events operate efficiently, the **OVTPA** requires adherence to the following standards of etiquette:

- **Sportsmanship:** All participants must demonstrate respect toward fellow penners, officials, and volunteers at all times.
- **Deliberate Delays (Hats):** Intentionally losing a hat to stop time or delay a run adds unnecessary length to the show. The Official may issue a warning; continued abuse will result in the **disqualification** of the team.
- **Promptness and Entry/Exit:** Riders must be aware of their "Order of Go" and be at the gate when called. Upon completion of a run or herd-holding duties, teams must exit the arena immediately along the outside walls. Post-run discussions must take place outside the arena.
- **Herd Holding Protocols:** Herd holders must remain in position at the side of the herd, facing the cattle, until the number is called to avoid obscuring numbers for the competing team. Teams should coordinate their herd-holding strategy prior to entering the arena to save time. (Refer to **Rule 10** for full Herd Holder responsibilities).

## RECOMMENDED TECHNIQUES FOR HERD SETTling

To ensure cattle are properly prepared for competition and to prioritize animal welfare, the **OVTPA** recommends the following procedures for settling each herd:

- **Personnel:** A maximum of six (6) experienced cattle handlers should participate in the settling process. The selection of these riders is based on skill and is not intended to be discriminatory. No additional riders are permitted in the arena during this time.
  - **Initial Positioning:** Cattle must be settled at the designated cattle end of the arena (not the pen end). The herd should be held in a uniform manner against the back wall.
  - **Acclimatization Process:**
    - One rider should work the perimeter at a walk or trot to accustom the cattle to the horse.
    - Once settled, the rider should work through the center to the back wall, then to each side, encouraging the cattle to move toward the center of the arena.
    - "Hold back" riders should assist by "curling" any escaping animals back into the main herd.
  - **The Pen Walk-Through:** After the herd is unified, they should be coaxed through the pen to familiarize them with the gate and the "hole." Riders must prevent overcrowding or bolting during this phase.
  - **Livestock Inspection:** This process serves as the primary time to inspect cattle for lameness, illness, eye deformities, or missing tags.
  - **Time Limit:** The settling process should be completed within ten (10) minutes, depending on the disposition of the livestock.
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