



**COWBOY CHALLENGE BC**

*2024*

## *About*

Founded by Tabatha Hepworth of New Foundation Natural Horsemanship in 2020. Since coming to the Island from the lower mainland, Tabatha noticed that there were limited competitions that put the focus on partnerships. Her famous saying “Find the try” soon became the vocabulary that started a trend. It’s helped changed the mindset of many as shifts happened and focus switched to celebrating the journey between two beings, Horse and rider. And with that, Cowboy Challenge BC was born.

With Cowboy Challenge BC coming into its third year, it has taken on a life of its own and truly belongs to the people; It will always remain about the successes between horse and rider. Striving to be an all inclusive competition that welcomes all ages, levels and disciplines. Where partnerships and horsemanship will always take priority.

## ***Cowboy Challenge BC Mission Statement***


*To provide the opportunity for horse and rider to grow their partnership in a supportive and inclusive environment.. If you build the foundation , then the sky’s the limit.*

*Your success is our joy.*

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## **Rules**

Cowboy Challenge BC recognizes only those events that are conducted under the rules and guidelines set forth in this rulebook.

- BC Cowboy challenge is an equestrian sport that requires the riders to demonstrate both speed and horsemanship.
- BC cowboy challenge does not discriminate against breed or rider disciplines. We accept english and western riders.
- The safety and welfare of the rider and the horse are always most important when it comes to this competition.
- All Cowboy Challenge BC competitors shall sign the "Participation and Liability Release Agreement". Youth members shall have their parent and/or legal guardian sign their Participation and Liability Release. See Participation and Liability Release section for the approved form.
- Horse care is paramount. All horses are to be treated with dignity and respect. Horses may be used a maximum of 4 times in any one challenge event per each rider. Only 2 riders per horse allowed.
- A rider may ride a maximum of two horses in any division at any challenge
- A horse and rider constitute a 'Partnership'. Challenge-day payouts, point totals are awarded to, and tracked for, each team.
- Only one run will be allowed to be used for the payout, points, and overall score; this will be the competitor's choice of which run is looked at.
- Riders can compete only in one division on the same horse but can-do multiple horses in the same division or multiple horses in different divisions.
- The rider must pay an entry fees for each horse. Each horse must be tacked and ready to compete when called.
- **Any confrontational behaviour towards the judges and or confronting a judge and questioning the way the judges score any particular participant will be an immediate disqualification and a ban at future events. If you have won money it**

*will not be paid out to you as you will be stripped of your placement and it will be passed down in the appropriate order of winner. If there is a question that needs to be answered a written email can be sent to [BCcowboychallenge@gmail.com](mailto:BCcowboychallenge@gmail.com) and a review board will take a look at the situation. The review board consists of the judges and founder Tabatha Hepworth.*

- *Any poor sportsmanship will also get you banned at the event and future events including being stripped of your winnings.*
- *If you are disqualified you are allowed to finish your run. Scoring will be discontinued and will not be given after the moment of disqualification.*
- *If no winner in any particular category the winnings will be retained for future events.*
- *You will be starting in the start area behind the timers and finish in that same area behind the timers.*
- *Strides will be counted as a single coordinated movement of all 4 legs. Strides will begin counting on departure as first foot departs the obstacle until up into gait, and on approach as soon as break gait until first foot is at/on obstacle.*

## **Safety**

- *All riders under 18 must be wearing a helmet*
- *Parent(s) or their designate may be on the course when a young rider under 10 is competing. The purpose of the parent or designate is for safety, **not coaching** the rider through the obstacles. The parent(s) / legal guardian must be on foot. The rider or the parent(s) / legal guardian in the case of riders under the age of 12 assumes all responsibility for participation in a Cowboy Challenge BC event.*
- *All riders are expected to compete within their and their horse's individual capabilities. The Judges will be allowed to DQ a rider if there is concern for the horse or the rider.*
- *A rider may not be tied or attached to their saddle in any manner*
- *If a horse is over faced and the judges feel that you have pushed your horse past what their level of skill is you will be asked to stop competing and leave the ring. We have 4 separate categories for all levels of riders and horses to ensure the horse and rider can show the best of their abilities !*
- *All bridges/wood obstacles and water must be walked over for horses safety.*

- If you refuse to do an obstacle due to concern for your horse you will not be disqualified but you must stay on course and pass the obstacle as per the order of go. You will not be given any points as there was not an attempt at the obstacle. You must tell the judges before you start that you will not be doing a particular obstacle.
- Cones are in all four corners, as you make your way around the course you must stay on the outside of the cone closest to the obstacle for safety

## **Jumps**

- No permanent "fixed" jumps over 22".

## **Obstacles**

- Each Division has a specific level of difficulty for the obstacles that they are allowed to attempt. It is the riders' responsibility to have a clear understanding of their own ability as well as their horse's ability. Should any rider approach an obstacle that he/she feels is beyond their ability, he/she is expected to skip that obstacle and go to the next obstacle.
- Each obstacle shall have a 2-refusal limit refusal begins when the rider approaches the obstacle and the horse backs away or takes a sideways step away from the obstacle. If the horse refuses the obstacle, a whistle will be blown and the rider must move on to the next obstacle. The judges may allow the rider to continue provided the horse/rider team was making forward progress toward completing the obstacle when the whistle was blown.
- If the rider does not complete the obstacle, points will be given or deducted based on his/her attempt. A valid attempt may be scored 1 point. The judges shall not give a 0 (zero) if a valid attempt is made.
- If a rider skips an obstacle and begins the next, he/she may not go back to the obstacle that was skipped.
- For safety obstacles that are wood constructed and any water obstacle must be done at a walk.
- With the exception to the obstacles that state otherwise (Wooden obstacles, Water, Spool, Carousel, Spool, Flag, Drag), obstacles may be done at the speed of 1 division below the one you are competing in. For example the Trot division may walk through an obstacle, or Lope division may trot through an obstacle. Dropping down a gait

when permitted may result in a lower score but not a disqualification. Remember you must transition within 3 strides approaching and departing the obstacle.

- The drag; must be done at the speed you are competing at.
- Side pass; must be entered at the end of the obstacle. No walking over the obstacle to start it. You should be showcasing turn on the forehand and turn on the haunches.
- Back through ;for rules please check the division you are competing in.
- All obstacles picked off the barrel must be put back on the barrel.
- Any obstacles that you circle must be done at the speed that you are competing at. (spool, carousel) For example walk is done at a walk, trot division is done at the trot, lope is the exception, and it can be at a lope or trot. Walk, in hand and kids divisions are to complete one time around any circle obstacle, trot and lope division must complete 2 x around any circle obstacle.
- Spool; in the trot and lope division the horses must be up to speed within 3 strides of the rider dismounting.
- Flag is to be carried once around the whole arena on the outside of the cones and is to be carried into the finish area. The flag must be done in the speed of the division you are competing in. You must be up to speed within 3 strides of grabbing the flag. Rider must put the flag back after their run.
- Obstacles should be numbered.
- If you go off course at any point you will be automatically DQ
- All obstacles must be constructed with safety for the rider and horse in mind. Obstacles that are being used must be approved by Tabatha Hepworth (president) of the Cowboy Challenge BC.

## **Horses**

- Horses can be any breed
- All riders are expected to make certain their horse is in condition to compete in the Cowboy Challenge BC
- Should the judges determine a horse to be lame or unfit, the judges may withdraw the horse from the challenge.



- Any blatant abuse or mistreatment of a horse at a challenge event, on or off the course, will result in disqualification. This includes raw or bleeding mouths, spur or whip marks.

### **Dress code**

- Traditional western attire or english attire is required.
- Dress jeans or coloured jeans are acceptable.
- Riders shall wear long sleeve button up shirts.
- Shirts must be tucked in when the rider begins competition.
- Riders must wear riding boots with a heel. Tennis shoes are not acceptable.
- Riders shall wear a western style hat or certified riding helmet. Caps are not allowed.  
(All children 18 and under must be wearing a helmet)

### **Equipment**

- Allowed, western round ring, D-ring or Eggbutt and snaffles are allowed. Use of a shank bit is allowed.
- A shank bit accompanied by western tack should be ridden one-handed. Riding two-handed will result in a lowered score. A shank bit accompanied by english tack may be ridden one or two-handed.
- A rawhide bosal is allowed. Mechanical hackamore is allowed. Bitless sidepulls are allowed.
- A chinstrap is required with a western snaffle bit. Any chinstrap must be smooth, flat or braided, no metal acceptable.

**•Not allowed;** none of the following equipment shall be used

-Martingale (running, standing, or German)

-Tie-down of any type

-Halter used as a bridle

-Gag bits

-Shanks that measure over 8.5 inches measured from the top of the shank where it attaches to headstall to the bottom where reins attach

-Any bit unanimously considered inhumane by the judges.

• Chaps and spurs are optional.

## **Competition Divisions**

**Kids (Under 16 as of January of that year)** Kids are under the category of Junior, Dust Kickers and or Young Guns.

• The course may be completed at any speed they feel comfortable in but they must maintain that speed all the way through the course. Transitions from walk to trot, walk to lope through the obstacles must be within 3 strides of entering the obstacle or departing the obstacle.

• The kids division does not require the rider to enter into the back through obstacle backwards but instead ride through the back through obstacle and then back through it. Once the front end has passed the entrance of the back through you then may ride through it to the next obstacle.

• There shall be no more than 7 obstacles over all

• Horsemanship points still apply and the faster time will receive 1 extra point if there is a tie.

• Kids 10 and under may have a parent on course for safety (Please read description of duties of that parent or guardian roll under safety)

**In Hand** was created to allow young horses, horses that are not rideable, or a rider who's not ready to compete in the saddle the opportunity to still compete. An in hand competitor needs to showcase their handling skills. We are looking for the horse to be

sent through the obstacles but you will not be disqualified if you have to lead your horse through the obstacles. A send will score better for the obstacle.

- The handler must showcase ease of handling on the ground. The horse and rider pair should look like a partnership.
- This must be competed at a walk gait
- The in-hand division does not require the rider to enter into the back through obstacle backwards, but instead walk through the back through obstacle and then back through it. Once the front end has passed the entrance of the back through you then may walk through it to the next obstacle.
- There shall be no more than 6 obstacles over all
- Horsemanship points still apply and the faster time will receive 1 extra point if there is a tie.

**Walk Division** is designed for beginner level riders and horses who have developed only the basic riding skills, such as walk trot and lope, backing , etc. The Walk Division is considered a beginner level division that will allow the rider and horse to develop their confidence, their horse's confidence to allow the rider to move into the Trot Division. The purpose of the Walk Division is to provide a division that is fair to all beginner level riders. Walk riders shall not be required to jump.

- The course must be completed at the walk any break of gait to a higher gait will be a disqualification.
- The walk division does not require the rider to enter into the back through obstacle backwards but instead ride through the back through obstacle and then back through it. Once the front end has passed the entrance of the back through you then may ride through it to the next obstacle.
- The walk course shall have beginner-based obstacles.
- The walk course shall have up to 7 obstacles plus overall horsemanship points and time points if there is a tie.

**Trot Division** The rider is for an individual who is ready to move out of the Walk division but is not yet ready to compete in the lope division. The trot rider has increased skills such as increased speed, side pass and jumping skills and is ready for the challenges of this higher level.

- The course must be completed at the trot any break of gait to a higher gait or lower gate between obstacles will be a disqualification.
- Trot division riders may be required to jump and to side pass. Trot division will be required to enter into back through obstacles backwards instead of riding through them and then backing up.
- The Trot course shall contain up to 10 obstacles plus overall horsemanship points as well as time points if there is a tie.
- Transitions to trot and must occur within 3 strides, approaching the obstacles and leaving the obstacle

**Lope Division** The rider is an individual who is ready to move out of the trot class. A lope rider has increased horsemanship skills such as increased speed and confidence in their basic skills and is prepared for the challenges of this higher level and is ready to compete with more challenging obstacles.

- The course must be completed at the lope; any break of gait to a lower gait will be a disqualification.
- Lope division riders may be required to jump and to side pass.
- Lope division will be required to enter into back through obstacles backwards instead of riding through them and then backing up.
- The lope course shall contain up to 12 obstacles plus overall horsemanship points and time points if there is a tie.
- Transitions to a lope must occur within 3 strides, approaching the obstacles and leaving the obstacle

## **Scoring**

The following is an explanation of the Cowboy Challenge BC scoring system. This is how judges will be looking at each obstacle. It is included to help riders learn how the judges are scoring. The judging of each obstacle will be done on a scale of 1 – 10, with 5 1/2 being considered an average score. There are three basic components to each obstacle: the Approach (+1 or -1 point), the Obstacle itself (0 - 10 points) and the Departure (+1 or -1 point). Although there are three components to consider, the judge only records one number for each obstacle score. The purpose of this is to improve horsemanship and to allow the judge to provide a more accurate score for each

obstacle, as well as pinpoint areas for improvement. The following is a breakdown of the scoring system defining each phase as well as what the judge will be looking for on each obstacle.

If you transition into a faster or slower gait than you are competing in it will be an automatic disqualification.

### **The Approach**

Every rider will start the approach with a score of 5, and receive 1-point increments or 1-point deductions, based on performance. The approach to any obstacle might involve a downward transition to a trot or walk from a lope or even a gallop. Riders are scored on riding with a loose rein. The judge will be scoring on what happens when the reins are picked up to make a transition or start the manoeuvre.

The downward transition should be smooth, soft and balanced within 3 strides of the obstacle. The horse should be in a natural frame and willingly respond to cues from the rider. The horse should act as if it knows how to do the transitions, and that they are following the cues they were taught. The horse should not act as if being pulled down by strength, gaping its mouth, or throwing its head up in the air to resist to the point of notice. The horse should not be swapping leads on the way in. The approach should be as straight as possible.

### **Penalties (-1) point per incident**

*Incorrect gait (Transitioning into a faster/slower gait than you are competing in will be an automatic disqualification)*

- *Gaping mouth*
- *Improper lead or trot diagonal*
- *Excessive spurring*
- *Hanging or balancing on your reins to maintain balance*
- *Going too fast when conditions make footing unstable*
- *Being heavy handed*
- *Having excessive speed going into an obstacle creating an unnecessary risk for the horse and rider*

- *Not keeping the horses' hind leg planted during a turn around*
- *On a turn around, hopping and not crossing over correctly on the front end*
- *Horse hesitates coming up to the obstacle*

### **Awards (+1) point per incident**

- *Starting on and maintaining the proper gait you are competing in*
- *Horse does not hesitate coming up to the obstacle*
- *Riding on a loose rein*
- *Keeping the horse's inside leg planted during a turn around*
- *The horse does not hesitate at the approach to the obstacle*
- *Good speed control with lots of rate*
- *Backing through an obstacle with straightness, cadence and speed.*
- *Keeping the horse straight on the approach to obstacle*

### **The Obstacle**

*The rider shall start the obstacle portion with an average score of 5. A judge may award up to 5 additional points for the execution of the obstacle and may deduct to a score as low as 0. The maximum score of an obstacle shall be 10. Riders shall be awarded or penalized using 1 point increments as shown below.*

*After transitioning down to the appropriate safe speed, the horse should act as if it has seen and done the obstacle before and is looking to find their way through the challenge. On the obstacle, Cowboy Challenge BC judges are looking for a horse working on a loose or soft rein. For example, does the rider know where the horses' feet are? Ideally, the horse and rider should look confident and even a little relaxed.*

### **Penalties (-1) point per incident**

- *Incorrect gait on the obstacle (You will be advised of the gait of the obstacle prior to competition)*
- *Gaping mouth*
- *Not taking the obstacle straight*
- *Excessive spurring or yanking on the bit*
- *Hanging or balancing on your reins*
- *Having excessive speed going into an obstacle without control in a way that could endanger horse or rider*
- *Horse hesitates on obstacle*
- *Horse rushes over obstacle*
- *Horse 4 feet does not stay on or in obstacle*
- *Refusal of obstacle (Maximum 2 refusal before you are asked to move on)*

### **Awards (+1) point per incident**

- *Starting on and maintaining the correct gait on and through the obstacle*
- *Riding on a loose rein through or on obstacle*
- *Horse keeps a steady rhythm while taking the obstacle*
- *On a turn around, showing correctness, crossing over in the front without hopping.*
- *Backing through an obstacle with straightness, cadence and speed*
- *Straightness through or on the obstacle*
- *All feet stay on or in obstacle*
- *Horse has a confident demeanour while taking obstacle*

## **The Departure**

*In the departure the rider shall end the obstacle portion with an average score of 5, the rider shall be awarded 1 point or deducted 1 point depending on his performance*

*Leaving an obstacle is probably a little easier to do and judge. How the actual obstacle is accomplished will have a lot to do with how the horse and rider leaves. If an obstacle went well, the Cowboy Challenge BC would expect to see a smooth exit and an efficient line being established to the next obstacle.*

*If competing in the trot, lope or canter class, the upward transition should be smooth and on the correct lead (lope/canter class) as the line of travel and the transition must be made within 3 strides of leaving the obstacle. The lope/canter leads are really important here but may not always happen within the parameters of the obstacle. A lot of riders trot out and acquire the new lead on the way to the next obstacle.*

*Balance, cadence and confidence are what Cowboy Challenge BC judges want to see coming into, and out of obstacles. Smoothness up and down through the gait transitions will get you noticed by the judges.*

### **Penalties (-1) point per incident**

- *Incorrect gait (Transitioning into a faster or slower gait that you are competing in will be an automatic disqualification)*
- *Incorrect lead (lope/canter)*
- *Gaping mouth*
- *Rushing off or out of an obstacle*
- *Excessive spurring*
- *Hanging or balancing on the reins*
- *Going too fast when conditions make the footing unstable*
- *Being heavy handed*
- *Having excessive speed leaving an obstacle*
- *On a turn around, hopping and not crossing over correctly on the front end*



### **Awards (+1) point per incident**

- Starting on and maintaining the correct lead when leaving obstacle (lope/canter class)
- Riding on a loose rein
- On a turn around, showing speed and crossing over in front without hopping
- Good speed control with lots of rate
- Leaving the backing through an obstacle with cadence and speed
- Ease of transition of upward gait when leaving the obstacle

### **Horsemanship points**

Each judge will be allowed to award 4 horsemanship points judged on relationship, communication and handling even when things don't necessarily go well. Show boating is allowed to a degree as long as the horses or riders safety is not jeopardized. It's recommended to keep it to 1 or maybe 2 obstacles. Standing ontop of the saddle will result in immediate disqualification.

If there is 2 participants with the same score in the same division then the one with the fastest time will be awarded 1 extra point.

### **Walking the Course**

- Riders will walk the course with the Judges prior to the event. No horses are allowed on the course during the walk through event.
- Obstacles and course rules will be reviewed prior to the competition. Riders are allowed to ask questions during this time.
- The rider **MUST** do there due their diligence to learn the rules and what is required of them in regards to the event, obstacles, horse safety, and the order of obstacles prior to the beginning of their run.

### **Tie Breaker**

*If there is a tie at the division that involves 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th , the winner is determined by the fastest time.*

### **Timing**

*· Events shall use either electronic timers or hand timers.*

### **Fraternization**

*· Riders may not fraternize with Cowboy Challenge BC staff or officials during the event or away from the event course until the entire event is completed.*

### **Insurance**

- The hosting landowner is covered by their own insurance*
- All riders must carry a valid Horse Council BC membership and current number.*
- No competitor may ride on the grounds or in the competition without proper waivers signed. It's up to the competitors to know what is required for insurance as well as waiver ahead of time.*

### **Judges**

- All judges must have worked closely with, and are approved by Cowboy Challenge BC president Tabatha Hepworth. They have been to and co-judged clinics or competitions.*
- Judges must be 18 and older*
- The judge will always put the welfare of the horse and rider first before any competition. If a horse is looking stressed or has been put in and above its training level the judge will DQ the rider.*
- The judge will always put the safety of the rider first.*

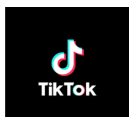
### **Obstacles**

- Obstacles must be approved by president Tabatha Hepworth. Non approved obstacles will not be permitted.*

## CONNECT WITH US

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