



2026



California State Horsemen's Association

TRAIL TRIALS

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Trail Trials is an obstacle course competition that tests the trail skills of horse and rider. Courses are several miles in length and reflect the diversity of California trials whether they are located on a ranch, public park, wilderness, beach, desert or urban setting. Obstacles are natural to their Region and are ones typically encountered while on a trail ride. Trail obstacles are not composed of artificial arena-style tests. A judge at each obstacle evaluates the way both horse and rider negotiates these obstacles by keeping common sense and safety in mind. Trail trials is not a race and can be ridden at your own pace, with any breed of horse or any style of riding.

SEC. 1.0 State Committee and Responsibilities

- 1.1** The State Committee will administer this program. If necessary, in addition to the members prescribed in the bylaws, additional committee members may be appointed by the chairman to carry out specific duties, however, they will not have voting privileges, nor are they counted in obtaining a quorum.
 - 1.1.1** The State chairman shall appoint an event chairman for purposes of managing the SCE.
- 1.2** It is the State chairman's responsibility to ascertain that Regions requesting sanctioning are provided with necessary information such as sanctioning forms, program guidelines, result forms, etc.
- 1.3** The State chairman, will keep accurate record of all Trail Trials throughout CSHA. This task may be delegated to the State committee chairman in charge of memberships.

SEC. 2.0 General Rules

- 2.1** Whenever the term horse is used, it also applies to ponies and mules.
- 2.2** Whenever the male gender is used, it also applies to the female gender.
- 2.3** All Trail Trials are to be performed on a clearly marked trail.
 - 2.3.1** At each obstacle event management shall, wherever possible and feasible, provide for a suitable and safe means of bypassing the obstacle while providing a smooth transition to the next obstacle.
 - 2.3.2** All obstacles must be those that might naturally occur on a trail ride. Obstacles should reflect the riding conditions typical of the local environment with the goal being to maintain the character of an authentic trail ride.
 - 2.3.3** Indiscriminate overuse of inappropriately placed man-made materials designed only to increase the challenge (spook or startle) will not be allowed.

- 2.4** Horses may be of any breed or age. It is strongly recommended that horses be at least three [3] years of age. It is the rider's responsibility to ascertain if his horse is capable of competing.
- 2.5** No special consideration will be given to unsound or handicapped horses.
- 2.6** Ownership of a horse is not required.
- 2.7** Any type of cruelty to animals such as excessive use of spurs, crops, etc. will be penalized.
- 2.8** All horses are subject to the State of California Department of Agriculture's drug testing and drug use laws. If an event manager is notified by the California Department of Agriculture that a horse tested positive, the event manager must notify both the Region and State chairmen.
 - 2.8.1** The combination will lose all points and/or awards earned at the event.
 - 2.8.2** If the offense is repeated, the rider, owner and/or trainer will be barred from further participation in any *CSHA Trail Trials* events.
- 2.9** Events are open to non-*CSHA* members.
- 2.10** Each rider is responsible for his own safety and the safety of his mount. Earned points and resulting awards are to be considered secondary to safety.
- 2.11** Each participant must maintain control of their mount throughout the ride.
- 2.12** Riding double, ponying an animal with or without a rider, or a loose foal on the side is not allowed.
 - 2.12.1** Ponying a horse as part of an obstacle shall not be allowed.
 - 2.12.2** A Sanctioned Back Country Horsemen Trail Trial with a specified "Packing Class" shall be the exception to rule 2.12.1.
- 2.13** Any person under eighteen [18] years must have written consent of a parent or guardian in order to participate in Trail Trials.
 - 2.13.1** A Junior rider must be accompanied by an adult rider throughout the ride.
- 2.14** The participant is judged only while negotiating obstacles.
 - 2.14.1** Judging shall start when told "you are now being judged" or as soon as the giving of obstacle directions has been completed, and the rider has acknowledged their understanding of the directions. The phrase "you may proceed" is mandatory and competitors must enter the obstacle only after it is given. Judging will stop as soon as the participant completes the last task given in the obstacle instructions. Competitors may be asked to proceed to a given point to wait for their co-riders but will not be judged between the obstacle and the area given for waiting.

II sanctioned Trail Trials shall be conducted according to the State rules and guidelines.

2.15 Trail Trials is a mounted event. Should a rider choose to dismount when not instructed to within the obstacle directions, they shall be disqualified.

2.15.1 It is allowed should a rider dismount to retrieve a prop they may have dropped which is necessary to complete the obstacle and they immediately remount and complete the obstacle but the dismount/remount will be judged accordingly.

2.15.2 If at any time a rider comes off their horse, whether being bucked off or simply falling off unexpectedly, that will end their obstacle judging and the obstacle judge will assess disqualifying points.

2.16 A horse at any event may only be ridden by one rider in the event. Should a horse qualify for the SCE under multiple riders, only one rider will be allowed to ride that qualified horse and enter the SCE.

2.17 Riders may compete in a sanctioned Trail Trials that is not in their Region. If the rider's home Region has a high point program, that Region's program rules will determine how points and placing are earned for "out of Region" rides.

2.18 No contestant shall in any manner challenge an obstacle judge in any way that devalues their integrity. Any contestant doing so will be disqualified for that event and lose that ride counting toward SCE qualification.

2.19 Tailing shall not be used as an obstacle

2.20 Emergency dismount shall not be used as an obstacle.

2.21 The ride year is defined as the third weekend in September through the second weekend in September. For new members, rides ridden from the third weekend of September through December 31st will count for the following year as long as the rider pays their CSHA membership dues by January 31st of the following year.

2.22 Any person or persons that have participated on the pre-ride with the Senior Judge or assisted in design or assembly of obstacles may not compete for points or awards except in a schooling class.

SEC. 3.0 Program Registration

3.1 CSHA membership is required and must be kept current.

3.2 Each horse and rider combination competing at a sanctioned Trail Trials will be charged a \$3.00 State Trail Trials Rider fee.

3.3 In order to participate in a Region highpoint program, a rider shall submit a Region program registration form and fees to the Region chairman.

- 3.4** All fees are due and payable prior to any ride at which the program member desires to receive credit towards SCE eligibility.
- 3.5** There is no limit as to the number of animals an individual may qualify on; however, only one horse and rider combination may qualify per ride.
 - 3.5.1** A participant must specify which combination will be used at the SCE.
- 3.6** If the Region in which an individual lives does not have a Region Trail Trials high point program, the individual may contact another Region's chairman and request a crossover into that Region. The chairman will contact both Region Presidents to obtain approval for the crossover.
- 3.7** Out of state members wishing to participate in this program should review Bylaws and Administrative Practices for appropriate procedure.

SEC. 4.0 Categories and Divisions

- 4.1** There will be three categories, Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced.

4.1.1 Definition of Categories:

- 4.1.1.1** Novice: Team can accomplish all skills listed in Obstacle Skills except hobbling, ground tying, and high lining. Skills are elementary and performed on mostly undemanding terrain, in a calm environment. Dragging and pulling shall be performed in a straight line, on even footing, for short distances.
- 4.1.1.2** Intermediate: Team is ready to begin taking on more challenging obstacles and can accomplish all skills listed in Obstacle Skills except hobbling, ground tying, and high lining. The intermediate competitor will ride approximately half of the obstacles following the Novice directions with remainder to follow the Advanced directions. The ride manager and Senior Judge will determine which obstacles are chosen to be ridden as Novice and/or Advanced and will inform the rider appropriately.
- 4.1.1.3** Advanced: Team can accomplish all skills listed in Obstacle Skills and can accomplish combined skills in succession, and/or can accomplish skills on demanding terrain, and/or in a challenging environment.

- 4.1.2** Ride managers shall endeavor to design the majority of obstacles with both Novice and Advanced directions and they shall design obstacles that are category appropriate. Obstacle instructions should be written clearly and concisely, using short sentences with simple and specific information.

- 4.2** At the SCE each category will have the following divisions.

17 and under	Junior
18-59	Adult
60 and over	Senior

4.2.1 A rider's age, for the purpose of determining category, shall be the rider's age as of January 1st of the current ride year.

4.3 At the SCE combining of divisions or categories shall not be allowed.

4.4 Novice, defined for SCE, must not have ridden the same horse and placed first or second place at the SCE in the Novice Division, except for the junior rider 13 & under who may continue to compete in the Novice Division and are not required to move up unless approved by a parent. Intermediate Division riders must not have ridden the same horse and placed first or second at the SCE for more than two (2) years in the Intermediate Division.

4.4.1 For the above "Move Up" rule to apply, there must be 5 or more riders in the division/category at SCE.

4.5 Once a horse/rider combination competes three times at a higher level they may not drop back down.

SEC. 5.0 Equipment and Attire

5.1 Equipment

5.1.1 Any type saddle and any type bridle or bosal with mecate, side-pull, hackamore, "natural" hackamore with properly tied mecate as shown in Appendix B, are mandatory. No bareback pads are allowed. It is the rider's responsibility to determine the appropriateness of his tack and to ensure that such tack is fitted and used properly.

5.1.2 A halter with lead rope or halter bridle and hoof pick must be carried on the ride. The natural or Spanish hackamore will count as a halter and lead rope

5.1.3 A knife capable of cutting a lead rope or tack must be carried by all adult riders on their person. Junior riders 17 and under shall not be asked to carry or use a knife.

5.1.4 Advanced riders must carry official hobbles while riding in a Trail Trial.

5.2 Attire

5.2.1 Any type clothing suitable for riding is acceptable. Appropriate riding footwear, **with a heel**, is required. Helmets are recommended.

5.2.2 At all CSHA Trail Trials an ASTM/SEI certified equestrian helmet is required for all riders under the age of 18 when they are mounted.

SEC. 6.0 Sanctioning

- 6.1** All sanctioned CSHA Trail Trials must have a Senior Judge who must be a CSHA licensed Trail Trials Judge.
- 6.2** The approximate mileage and/or duration of each sanctioned event must be published.
- 6.3** All sanctioned events will endeavor to be listed for two (2) consecutive months on the TrailTrials.com web site, and in the Host Region newsletter, if published.
- 6.4** The sanctioning fee will be \$25.00 for each event.
- 6.5** Event sanctioning will not be granted for Trail Trials scheduled to be held during a Quarterly meeting weekend, or the weekend of the Annual Convention.

SEC. 7.0 Senior Judge Responsibilities

- 7.1** He will interpret State rules and will have the responsibility of making the final ruling.
- 7.2** He shall ride, on horseback, the course and obstacles with each obstacle judge present the day before or the day of the event prior to the first competing rider. Should a Senior Judge's horse become ill, lame or die prior to fulfilling their responsibilities in rule 7.2, it shall be the Senior Judge's responsibility to secure a substitute horse.
 - 7.2.1** Approval of the course design is contingent upon the obstacles being category appropriate.
 - 7.2.2** The Senior Judge shall approve the less challenging advanced obstacles for the Intermediate category.
- 7.3** He shall be available for instructing judges on their respective obstacles.
- 7.4** Prior to signing the Official Ride Results Form, his/her initials/signature on each judges score sheet shall certify his/her review of the obstacle judge's addition of point(s) total for said obstacle, including using the appropriate scoring category and assigning points (0-3), (0 or 2) or (24/26). He/she shall be responsible for signing the Official Ride Results Form, which will be submitted to the State Trail Trials Sanctioning Chair.
- 7.5** He shall have the authority to disqualify any participant from an obstacle, or if appropriate, from the entire ride for unsportsmanlike conduct, or conduct that may reasonably result in physical harm to any person, animal or property.
- 7.6** The Senior Judge shall evaluate the course and obstacles as to the following:
 - 7.6.1** The evaluation of the course shall endeavor to allow adequate space for multiple horses waiting to negotiate the obstacle.

- 7.6.2** The evaluation of the obstacles will include appraising the terrain, especially as it pertains to the skills of the Novice participant.
- 7.6.3** Placement of the Obstacles Judge's belongings so that they do not become part of the obstacle or impact the way of going of the participant, unless so intended.

SEC. 8.0 Region Responsibilities

- 8.1** To request sanctioning of an event, the Region chairman must submit the appropriate sanction forms and fees to the State sanctioning person.
- 8.2** In Regions without a Trail Trials Chairman, the sponsoring person or club must submit appropriate sanction forms and fees to the State Trail Trials sanctioning person and provide a copy to the Region President.
 - 8.2.1** Region chairmen may charge their program members a Region Trail Trials program registration fee for the Region's Trail Trials high point awards program. Each Region may charge what is necessary to accommodate the needs of its program members.
- 8.3** After a sanctioned Trail Trial the Region Chair shall provide the State Trail Trials Sanctioning Chair with the following:
 - 8.3.1** Within 14 days, a copy of the Official Ride Results Form with information filled out completely.
 - 8.3.2** Within 30 days one check for all Trail Trial Riders Fees collected. The check shall be made payable to CSHA Trail Trials.
 - 8.3.3** Failure to submit forms and fees postmarked by the required time period shall result in penalties equal to double the amount of the original fees.
 - 8.3.4** In the event it becomes necessary to assess penalty fees and these fees are not paid, the club or Region holding this ride shall not acquire Sanction Status on future rides until said fees are paid in full.
- 8.4** Each Region may design and hold as many rides as are needed to accommodate the needs of the Region.
- 8.5** Regions shall not make changes to the State Trail Trials rules. However, Region programs are encouraged to develop rules that govern their year-end high point program.
- 8.6** Each Region chairman will endeavor to prepare the participants in their Region to compete at the SCE.

8.7 By September 1st of the ride year, the Region chairman shall provide a list of their qualified riders, including their category and division, to the SCE chairman.

SEC. 9.0 State Championship Event (SCE)

9.1 The SCE Chairman shall be appointed on an Area rotating basis when possible and when resources, a willing chair and a location to accommodate our needs are available.

9.1.1 The SCE Chairman will appoint a Senior Judge, other than themselves or the State chairman, for purposes of the SCE.

9.1.2 The SCE chairman shall endeavor to hold the championship at a location that is suitable for championship level competition.

9.2 Champion and Reserve Champion buckles shall be awarded to qualified riders placing first and second place in each category and division as set forth in rule 4.2.

9.3 Appropriate awards shall be given to qualified riders placing third through sixth.

9.4 Eligibility

9.4.1 Every rider must be a member of CSHA (see CSHA Bylaws for a definition of member).

9.4.1.1 Each rider who is not competing must be sponsored by a qualified competitor.

9.4.2 The rider must be registered in a Region Trail Trial Program.

9.4.2.1 A Region Registered Combination is defined as a combination that has filled out a Region's Trail Trial Program registration form and paid any and all registration fees set by the Region. The Region registration form must inform the rider of the CSHA membership requirement.

9.4.2.2 If a rider's Region does not have a Trail Trial Program, the rider shall contact the State Trail Trial Chairman for information regarding registration in another region's program. The State Chairman must contact the President of each involved Region to obtain approval of the request.

9.4.2.3 A rider can only register and qualify in one Region Trail Trial program. A club member may register in the Trail Trial program sponsored by the Region in which his club is based regardless of where the member actually lives. For SCE purposes only, the rider will be considered a member of the Region in whose program the rider was registered.

9.4.3 The rider must complete three (3) CSHA sanctioned Trail Trials with the same horse in the same category and age division within the ride year, and must contribute one entire event of volunteer service at a regular season Trail Trial as

a Ride Manager, Judge, Reader, Scorer, Starter, Ride Secretary, Raffle lead, or other helper role, during a day in which the volunteer does not compete in that event, in order to be eligible to compete in the year end State Championship Event (SCE). Working the previous year's SCE counts for the next ride year. Region chairs are responsible for tracking work credit and notifying Sanction Chair by September 1st. One event of volunteer service may be satisfied by volunteering at a Trail Trial Clinic listed on the CSHA Trail Trials Calendar.

9.4.3.1 A Trail Trials Senior Judge may receive ride credit for riding a ride in order to qualify for SCE when they work as the Senior Judge at an event for up to two rides. A Senior Judge may also receive work credit for working as Senior Judge at an event where they do not charge a fee. Credit is one or the other, a Trail Trials Senior Judge shall not receive a ride credit and a work credit at the same ride. In either case, no fee will be charged by the Senior Judge.

9.5 The ride year is defined as the third weekend in September through the second weekend in September.

9.6 There is no limit as to the number of times a horse and rider combination may become a CSHA State Trail Trials champion, subject to the limitations in rule 4.4.

9.7 The SCE chairman shall publish the tie breaker protocol prior to the start of the SCE.

9.8 The State Chairman will remain in a neutral position in order to mediate any potential protest(s) that might arise from the SCE.

SEC. 10.0 Protests

10.1 All protests relating to a CSHA licensed Trail Trials Judge will be addressed to and handled by the Judges Commission as set forth in the Judges Commission chapter.

10.2 All other protests must be filed in writing to the entity holding the Trail Trials within forty-eight [48] hours after the conclusion of the event.

10.2.1 A fee of \$50.00 must accompany the protest.

10.2.2 The organization holding the Trail Trials will immediately notify the Region Trail Trials chairman of the protest.

10.3 The Region Trail Trials chairman may form a committee to hear the protest or refer the protest to the State Trail Trials committee.

10.3.1 The Region chairman must inform the State chairman of the protest.

10.3.2 If the Region has no Trail Trials committee, the Region President will refer the protest to the CSHA State Trail Trials committee. The Region President will attend the hearing.

10.4 The committee will meet in person to conduct a hearing on the protest.

- 10.5 If the protest is upheld, the deposit will be returned. If the protest is overruled, the deposit will be forfeited to the State Trail Trials program.
- 10.6 The decision of the protest will be final and may not be appealed.

SEC. 11.0 Obstacle Skills

This section provides riders with some general guidelines for executing obstacles.

- 11.1 **Leading or Sending:** When leading, horse to follow willingly, not crowding or lagging. Excess rope shall be held in the non-leading hand. The send is defined as: From a designated position, the horse moves as directed ahead of the rider without the rider moving position and with slack in the lead rope. Hand position should never be in front of the horse after the initial send.
 - 11.1.1 The horse must be lead **or sent** with a halter and lead rope, not the reins, with the following exceptions:
 - 11.1.1.1 Horses wearing a halter-bridle do not have to be lead with a separate halter. The rein must be unclipped from the bit rings and correctly fastened to the leading-ring of the halter bridle.
 - 11.1.1.2 If a horse is wearing a bosal [Spanish hackamore] and a mecate, or snaffle bridle and a mecate, the rider may tie the mecate into a leading-hitch (see Appendix A). Riders will not be penalized for using the mecate, so hitched, in lieu of a halter and lead rope. A horse wearing the Natural Hackamore as defined in the appendix is not required to tie the leading hitch and may simply apply rule 12.1.2.
 - 11.1.1.3 Horses wearing a Western bridle with a bosal and mecate [under bridle] may be led by the mecate.
 - 11.1.1.4 Horses wearing a Spanish hackamore with a fiador (Appendix E) are not required to use the leading hitch as shown in Appendix A.
 - 11.1.2 Reins should be secured to the horn of Western saddles, or knotted and/or appropriately secured, if no saddle horn is available.
 - 11.1.3 Stirrups without fenders on saddles such as English, Endurance, Australian, etc., shall be secured by running the stirrups up the leathers, or secured by crossing over the saddle
 - 11.1.4 A rider ground handling his horse through challenging terrain, over logs, through tight spaces shall secure a safe position prior to asking his horse to negotiate the obstacle.

11.1.5 Send is defined as: From a designated position, the horse moves as directed ahead of the rider without the rider moving position and with slack in the lead rope. Hand position should never be in front of the horse after the initial send.

11.2 Mounting: The rider must check cinch. The stirrup does not have to be laid over the saddle seat. Horse will stand quietly and not move off when mounted. Style of mounting is not considered, only a smooth mount that does not unbalance the horse. A rider must have the reins in hand while mounting.

11.3 Dismounting: Horse will stand quietly and not move off. Style of the dismount not considered, only a smooth dismount that does not unbalance the horse. A rider must have the reins in hand while dismounting.

11.4 Hoof check: Horse will stand quietly. The criterion for this obstacle is a safe leg pick up, not the method of cueing the horse to pick up the leg. If the rider is holding the horse rather than tying him, letting go of the lead rope will be penalized. At the riders discretion the horse may be secured by tucking a portion of the lead into the riders belt or pocket or over the riders shoulder, however points will be assessed if the horse moves off or dislodges a lead rope from the belt, pocket, or shoulder. Riders shall not be assessed points for the lead rope merely touching the ground unless there is an issue with safety. Hoof boots are not required to be removed to check hoof.

11.5 Water crossing: The horse should walk quietly through the water. It is at the rider's discretion if the horse will be allowed to drink or not to drink without being penalized. Horses will not be penalized for acknowledging the obstacle before entering it.

11.6 Uphill: Before beginning ascent check cinch and breast collar, if used. A rider is to be positioned appropriately, maintaining the center of balance. No penalty for holding the mane or neck to secure the forward position. Horse to negotiate a slope in a safe manner. At riders' discretion, horse may stop to blow, as needed. If the rider is asked to stop on an uphill and there is sufficient room, the rider shall rest their horse so that all four hooves are on ground that is as level as possible. The location of the stop shall be clearly marked and given in the directions for the uphill. At no time should a rider position his mount, haunches toward a drop off or significant downhill slope. For purposes of cinch check requirement, the Senior Judge determines an uphill obstacle. Ride management will use the word "uphill" in the directions each rider receives from the obstacle judge.

11.7 Downhill: Before beginning descent check cinch and crupper if used. The rider to be positioned appropriately maintaining the center of balance. Riders may use a hand on the saddle to support themselves, but must not do so in such a way as to unbalance the horse. Horse to negotiate the slope in a safe manner. At rider's discretion, horse may stop to blow, as needed. If the rider is asked to stop on a downhill and there is sufficient room, the rider shall rest their horse so that all four hooves are on ground that is as level as possible. The location of the stop shall be clearly marked and given in the directions for the downhill. At no time should a rider position the haunches of his mount toward a drop off or significant downhill slope. For purposes of cinch check requirement, the Senior Judge determines a downhill obstacle. Ride management will use the word "downhill" in the directions each rider receives from the obstacle judge.

11.8 Step over: This is a forward motion obstacle. Horse to look at an obstacle and proceed over carefully, avoiding striking the obstacle. Size of an animal relative to an obstacle to be considered. Small horses and ponies not to be penalized for hopping very tall step overs, if they otherwise negotiate the obstacle calmly and with deliberation. For consecutive, in stride step overs, ride management will endeavor to select obstacles that are no higher than approximately 12 inches. While negotiating step overs, the horse is to be balanced and pick up feet and avoid clipping and stumbling. A slight brush that does not imbalance the horse or move the obstacle is acceptable.

11.9 Bridge: The horse should walk across quietly. No penalty for acknowledging the obstacle before starting to cross. Horse should step on and off the bridge quietly.

11.10 Gate: Competitors may be required to negotiate a gate either mounted or dismounted. The horse and rider combination will move through the obstacle quietly, deliberately and under the rider's direction.

11.10.1 Direction of opening the gate will be given as follows:

11.10.1.1 Push - the riders initial direction will be to push the gate away from their horse. Horse to side pass through the gate to open the gate.

11.10.1.2 Pull - the riders initial direction will be to pull the gate towards their horse. Horse to side pass away from the gate to open the gate.

11.10.2 Solid Gate- A rider must keep their hand on the gate at all times. Moving or adjusting hand position on the gate while negotiating the gate is allowed.

11.10.3 Rope Gates - when going through a rope gate, the rope should not touch the ground. The rope shouldn't become tangled in the horse's legs nor should the horse hang their head over the rope gate.

11.11 Drag or Pull: Check cinch required before taking the rope or drag obstacle in hand. The rider may hold rope or dally. No tying hard and fast. The rider should demonstrate awareness by looking at both the drag obstacle and the direction they are going. The drag is a forward motion obstacle; the pull is a backward motion obstacle. The horse or rider should never become entangled in the rope. The horse is to stand quietly during preparation then pull or drag an obstacle quietly and in control. Wrapping the rope around the rider's working hand is to be severely penalized. Excess rope should be held in the rein hand, never in the working hand.

11.11.1 Novice riders shall only be required to either pull or drag within any one obstacle.

11.11.2 As stated in rule 4.1.1.1, Novice obstacle skills are elementary and performed on mostly undemanding terrain, in a calm environment. Dragging and pulling shall be performed in a straight line, on even footing, for short distances.

11.12 Standing tied: Some obstacles may require riders to tie their horse. Horses will be tied with the halter and lead rope or correctly configured halter-bridle, or other approved means, using a knot that is safe and appropriate for the situation and horse. (See **Appendix C & D for specified knots**) The knot must be secure and the horse must be tied in a location that is safe for the horse, the rider, and any bystanders, other tied horses and their handlers. Horses will stand quietly while tied.

11.12.1 Securing the horse: **Advanced only.** Some obstacles may require riders to secure their horse other than tying which may include ground tie or, hobbles. Rider will have the option of removing the saddle and/or bridle before performing this skill(s) and will be judged accordingly. Rider is responsible for providing their own hobbling equipment. Hobbling and ground tying **must** be performed in an area where the horse may demonstrate the skill, but not be in danger of escape (round pen, corral, arena, etc.)" **High lining may be performed by Intermediate and Advanced only.**

11.12.2 Ground tying refers to leaving a horse standing while the rider walks away. Horse should not walk away as rider leaves. Reins, get down rope, lead rope or neck rope may be used to ground tie. Riders with loop reins with snaps may unsnap one end of loop reins and use for ground tying. When using loop reins that don't snap, the lead rope must be dropped to the ground under the horse's chin and the reins must be secured to the saddle. Points may be given if horse steps away while being ground tied.

11.12.3 Some obstacles may require riders to hobble their horse. Obstacle judge will observe if the rider has hobbling equipment and the ability to put it on safely. The horse must stand quietly and accept the hobbles. The reins, mecate and lead rope must be secured and not dropped on the ground. The horse will not be penalized for minor movement while standing with hobbles.

11.13 Stationary Obstacles: These are such things as slickers, balloons, maps, trash, etc. A rider is to maintain control of the horse as he acknowledges the obstacles.

11.14 Moving Obstacles: These are such things as backpackers, bicycles, baby strollers, vehicles and carts. A rider is to maintain control of the horse as he acknowledges the obstacles. Safety of all parties, including those persons providing the obstacle, is the primary concern.

11.15 Jumping: Jumping on, into, off of, through, or over any obstacle, unless required to do so, is a major fault.

11.16 Whoa: At a walk, an animal should stop on command with little aid from the rider. Effort will increase slightly for the jog, and again for the lope. The horse should stand quietly after the stop.

11.17 Skills: The following abilities will help riders negotiate obstacles successfully. This list is meant only to provide a reference for riders. Riders and horses may be asked to perform the following skills in the negotiation of trail obstacles:

11.17.1 Whoa - responds to halt cues without argument.

- 11.17.2 Be able to ask horse to stand quietly.
- 11.17.3 Execute all gaits calmly and as directed. All gaits natural to a breed are acceptable.
- 11.17.4 Be able to move the horse laterally [side to side].
- 11.17.5 Make turns on the forehand and/or hindquarters.
- 11.17.6 Be able to back the horse in a straight line and/or around corners. When backing, the rider should demonstrate awareness by looking in the direction they are traveling. Riders should not be instructed to back either their horse's front or back feet over a raised object.
- 11.17.7 Emergency dismount shall not be used as an obstacle.

SEC. 12.0 Obstacle Judging – Score Sheet Standards

- 12.1 Cinch Check: Is a pass or fail of 0 or 2 points. Rider may test the cinch for excess slack by tugging on it. This may be done either from the ground or in the saddle. If done from the ground, rider will be judged on dismount and mount. Cinch checks are required before mounting, going up or down hills, or pulling and/or dragging which are all considered stresses on the saddle. Only one cinch check per obstacle shall be required.
- 12.2 **Awareness:** This is a very broad and important category.
 - 12.2.1 **Rider awareness:** Judging only begins once the words "you may proceed" or "you are now being judged" are read.
 - 12.2.2 The rider should evaluate the obstacle for potential cautions before proceeding, and during the obstacle. If the rider is asked to answer a question (i.e., where are we on this map?), perform a specific skill (i.e., tie a specific knot, using only specified knots found in the State Trail Trials Rulebook. Use only specified knots included in Appendix C & D.), or lead their horse, and the rider does not perform the skill correctly, the judge may use this category to assess points.
 - 12.2.3 **Horse awareness:** It is a fault if the horse is too aware by spooking, shying, or spinning or if the horse is unaware and is just "going through the motions". If a horse clips or stumbles because of lack of awareness, score here (see "Balance").
- 12.3 Horse's Response to Cues: When the rider applies aids or cues to the horse, the horse is to react appropriately. The rider should not have to resort to very strong aids to obtain a response from the horse, nor should cues create a reaction whereby the horse overreacts (i.e., side passing or backing too far). The horse should approach an

obstacle as cued (i.e., straight on, side pass) and not avoid direct approach. The horse should stand quietly while mounted (slight shifting of weight is okay). If the horse is tied, the horse should stand quietly and not pull back.

12.4 **Riders Control:** The rider must maintain control of the horse at all times. This will be maintained by having the rider control either with the reins, lead rope, ground tie, hobbles or high lining or other means as instructed. Rider's control of the horse is whether mounted or un-mounted. Rider should also control the horse by knowing HOW to ask their horse to execute the obstacle as well as keep the horse under control if the horse shys or spooks. If un-mounted, the rider is to lead as set forth in rule 12.1. The horse should be lead quietly either behind or slightly to the side of the rider. While leading the horse the rider should not let the horse crowd or lean on rider.

12.4.1 While keeping control of the horse, riders must also maintain control of items needed to complete the obstacle such as, but not limited to, ropes, buckets, flags, gates, etc.

12.5 **Balance:** This applies to both rider and horse. The rider should be well balanced in the saddle. For uphill, the rider should lean slightly forward with legs balanced under rider and not hitting horse's flanks, and deep in the saddle but not hitting the back of cantle. For downhill, the rider should lean slightly back. The rider is not to lean excessively forward, back or sideways. The horse is to be balanced while negotiating obstacles. For downhill obstacle hindquarters should be under the horse and the horse should not lean on forehand. While negotiating step overs, the horse is to be balanced and pick up feet and avoid clipping and stumbling. A slight brush that does not imbalance the horse or move the obstacle is acceptable.

12.6 **On Course:** The rider is to follow directions as given and stay on course. Excessive response, avoidance or rider's misunderstanding of the direction will be penalized. The participant must remain within the boundaries of the obstacle as marked. Avoiding or going outside marked boundaries constitutes being off course.

12.7 **Bypass or Disqualify:** It is the participant's responsibility to bypass any obstacle they deem as beyond their team's skill level. Safety and common sense should always be kept in the participant's mind. After the horse refuses three times the rider is disqualified for this obstacle and receives full penalty points except a cinch check.

12.8 **Coaching:** It is the participant's responsibility to negotiate the obstacle on their own so a true test of their skills can be assessed. Once a participant has presented himself or herself to the obstacle judge there shall be no further contact by another person.

12.8.1 Coaching is defined as any verbal, gesture or implied assistance to a rider on course and executing the obstacle.

12.8.2 Both the coach and rider being coached will be disqualified.

SEC. 13.0 Scoring

13.1 Participants will be scored on negotiating the obstacles by utilizing an official score card as provided by the State Trail Trials Committee. The individual areas of evaluation are outlined in Section 13.0 Obstacle Judging.

13.1.1 Obstacle assistants or helpers will not participate in the judging or scoring of the obstacles except when instructed to provide verification of an action/completion of the obstacle to the obstacle judge.

13.1.2 All obstacle scores are final but may be changed at the discretion of the Senior Judge. If a rider disagrees with a score, then they can follow the procedures outlined in Sec. 10.0 - Protests

13.2 Scoring values will be assessed per each section of judging per obstacle as follows:

- 0 = Perfect, no discernible mistakes
- 1 = Above average, very minor mistakes
- 2 = Adequate job, obvious mistakes
- 3 = Made effort, skills need development

13.2.1 The exception to this rule is “cinch check”:

- 0 = Rider checked cinch
- 2 = Rider did not check cinch

13.3 Bypass: Bypass points will be assessed a value of 24 to 26 points (depending on cinch check requirement for the obstacle). Riders shall retain cinch check credit.

13.4 Disqualify: Disqualification points will be assessed a value of 24 or 26 points (depending on cinch check requirement for the obstacle). Any obstacle judge may disqualify a participant from their obstacle for safety reasons. The obstacles must be executed as stated in the judge’s directions.

13.5 Refusal: Refusal points will be assessed a value of 24 to 26 points (depending on cinch check requirement for the obstacle). Riders shall retain cinch check credit.

13.5.1 If a horse refuses at an obstacle, the participant will be allowed a total of three attempts to complete. Each attempt the rider will acquire PENALTY POINTS. 1ST attempt 4 points, 2ND attempt 8 points, 3RD attempt 12 points. If the horse refuses a third time, the participant is dismissed from the obstacle. Total points shall not exceed more than 24/26 points.

13.5.2 The definition of a refusal is a horse that moves their feet away (any direction) from the obstacle. Looking and snorting are not considered refusals.

13.6 No Score: Should a rider miss an obstacle because of getting lost; injury to horse or rider, or quitting the trail trial, a score of NS will be entered in the obstacle score on the

Official Score Sheet and the total score for the rider shall indicate NS. Credit for the ride will not be given when the ride is not completed.

13.7 Upon posting of the score sheets, a ½ hour review period will be made available to competitors allowing for review of the score sheet (tally, penalty point review, noting judge's comments) and to speak to the Senior Judge for clarification regarding scoring and comments on particular obstacles, prior to scores being finalized and awards being presented.

APPENDIX A

HITCHING A HACKAMORE LEADING RIG

A Spanish hackamore offers its user the convenience of providing a leading rig. If the mecate (rope rein) is correctly hitched around the horse's neck to prevent the hanger from being pulled over the horse's ears when force is applied to the reins.

There are several different, safe methods of hitching up the reins to make the leading rig. They all have the following points in common:

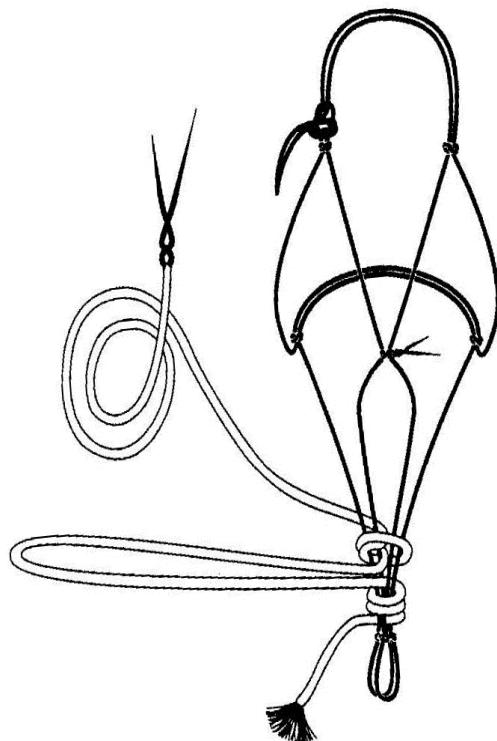
1. The reins are looped around the horse's neck to form a neck rope.
2. The reins are hitched over themselves to secure the neck rope in place.
3. The running end of the mecate lead rope is passed through a bite of the reins to secure the neck rope and take up any force if the horse pulls back while being led.



Example of correctly hitched mecate.

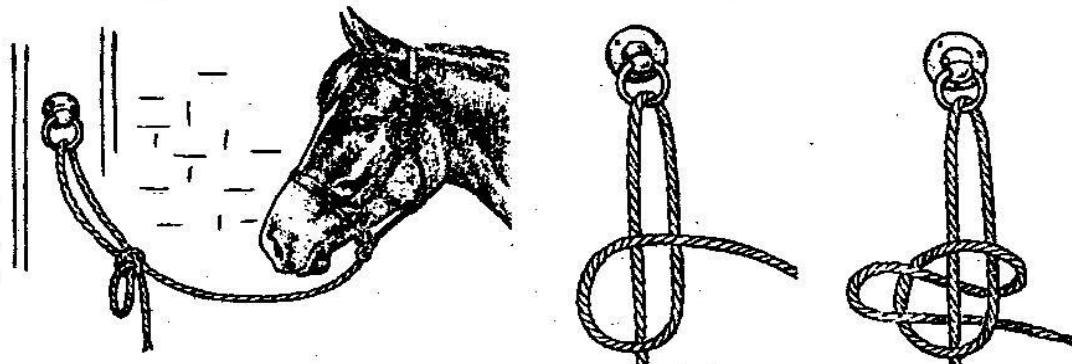
APPENDIX B

A natural hackamore with properly tied mecate.



APPENDIX C

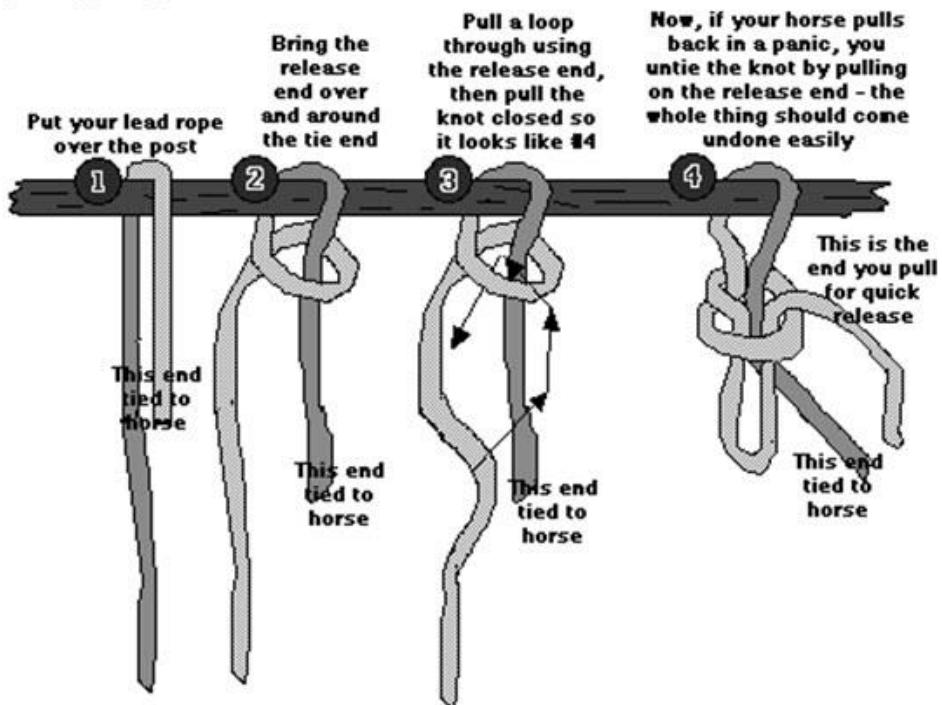
Quick Release Knot



A quick release knot.

Tying the Quick Release Knot

Practice tying this knot without your horse until you can do it correctly and release it just by pulling on the free end.



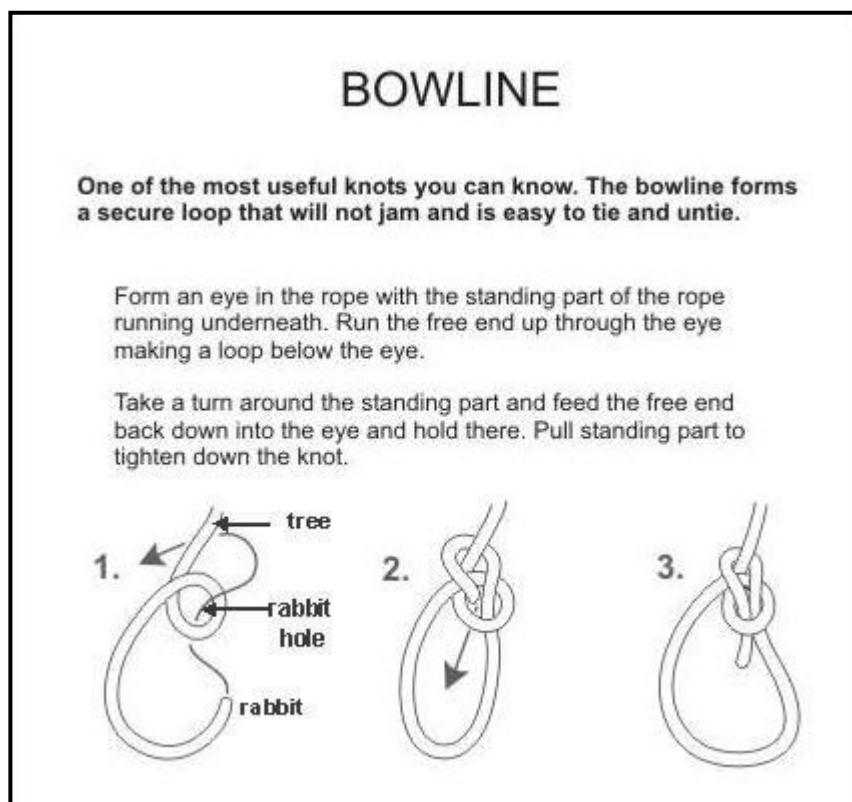
APPENDIX D

Bowline Knot

Imagine the working end of the rope as a rabbit, and the standing end of the rope as the tree.

First a loop is made near the end of the rope. This will be referred to as the rabbit's hole.

The "rabbit" comes up out of the hole, goes round behind the tree (right to the left), and then goes back down the hole.



APPENDIX E

Spanish hackamore with a fiador



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