

## Table of Contents

- ... **Section 1** Horse Show Management Ground Rules
- ... **Section 2** Divisions of Competition
  - ... 2.1 General
  - ... 2.2 Special "Lead Line" Rules for Young and/or Handicapped Persons
- ... **Section 3** Entry Requirements
  - ... 3.1 Clothing and Tack
  - ... 3.2 Unsoundness or Injury
  - ... 3.3 Stallions
- ... **Section 4** General Procedures
  - ... 4.1 General
  - ... 4.2 Be Prepared to Run
  - ... 4.3 Enter the Arena and Begin the Course
  - ... 4.4 Falling Off Horse Prior to Beginning Course
  - ... 4.5 Run the Course
  - ... 4.6 Finish the Course
  - ... 4.7 Leave the Arena
  - ... 4.8 Event Chairperson's Decision
- ... **Section 5** Penalties
  - ... 5.1 General Conduct of Contestant...
  - ... 5.2 Proper Dress and Equipment...
  - ... 5.3 Cruel or Inhumane Treatment of Horses...
  - ... 5.4 Entering the Arena...
  - ... 5.5 Loss of Control...
  - ... 5.6 Loss of Forward Motion
  - ... 5.7 Knocking Down or Touching Obstacles

- ... 5.8 Failure to Complete a Course
- ... 5.9 Failure to Leave Arena When Notified
- ... 5.10 Use of Illegal Drugs or Alcoholic Beverages
- ... **Section 6** Awards and Points
- ... 6.1 Day Awards
- ... 6.2 Year End Awards
- ... **Section 7** Gymkhana Events Course Layouts and Patterns
- ... 7.1 General Information
- ... 7.2 Course Pattern Diagrams
- ... **Section 8** Protests

Section 1

**Horse Show Management Ground Rules**

All riders must be paid members of Merced Horsemen’s Association. With a signed release of liability. All dogs must be kept on a leash. Trash pickup at the end of the show is the responsibility of all club members. No alcoholic beverages are allowed on the Merced Horsemen’s Association grounds. Merced Horsemen’s Association expects all members to be responsible for the well being of their animals. This includes proper tying that insures safety for people and horses. To assure prompt starting time for each show please arrive on time for sign ups. To assure prompt ending time for each show please be at the gate when your name is announced and if you are called off course please exit the arena immediately. Stay off fences and gates. No children near the gate or in the alley during the show. Helmets are strongly recommended but not required. Cruelty to animals is NOT TOLERATED. Belligerent behavior is NOT TOLERATED.

Section 2

**Divisions of Competition**

**2.1 General**

All riders over 10 years of age will begin the new season in the open division. After a rider has 3 qualified times in each rating event they will be placed into a timed division. If a rider who has an unruly animal issue in one of their qualifying rides, but their timed division is very obvious by their other two rides then Merced Horsemen's Association has the right to still place them in the appropriate division. The division will be determined by using the CGA Division Rating

**California Gymkhana Association  
Divisional Rating Matrix**

	Division 1	Division 2	Division 3	Division 4	Division 5	Division 6
<b>Barrels</b>	18.199	<<18.709	18.710- 20.539	20.540- 22.849	22.850- 28.390	28.310>>
<b>Bi-Rangle</b>	13.499	<<14.009	14.010- 15.539	15.540- 17.369	17.370- 21.669	21.700>>
<b>Poles I</b>	10.029	<<10.989	10.990- 13.289	13.290- 15.589	15.590- 19.759	19.760>>
<b>Poles II</b>	21.019	<<22.259	22.260- 25.559	25.560- 29.359	29.360- 36.809	36.810>>
<b>Speed Ball</b>	7.109	<<7.359	7.360-8.519	8.520- 10.969	10.970- 16.109	16.110>>
<b>Speed Barrels</b>	9.589	<<9.879	9.880- 10.979	10.980- 12.319	12.320- 15.709	15.710>>
<b>Single Stake</b>	9.189	<<9.469	9.470- 10.219	10.220- 11.099	11.100- 13.529	13.530>>
<b>Big “T”</b>	14.309	<<15.160	15.161- 17.274	17.275- 19.770	19.771- 25.029	25.030>>

Chart. Any rider can bump up to a higher division during the year if they exceed the fastest time in their existing division. This can even happen mid show. No rider shall move downward in divisions. 10 and under's will bump up to higher divisions if their times exceed the fastest time on the 10 and under rating chart (REGARDLESS OF AGE).

Divisions are: Lead Line, Open, 10 and Under, #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, and #6. (Division #1 being the fastest)

## **2.2 Special "Lead Line" Rules for Young and/or Handicapped Persons**

The MHA is interested in providing an opportunity for young and/or handicapped persons to participate in MHA Shows. For this reason, the following special rules shall be applied

at MHA Shows that allow participation of these riders: a. A rider may be led through the course by a parent or responsible party provided the rider is not able to complete

the course without adult assistance. Such assistance is allowed to ensure the safety of the rider but does not extend to the assistant touching the poles, flags or other obstacles. The assistant must conform to the same dress code defined for competitors. b. Hard hats are mandatory for all Lead Line riders. The animal being led shall be in normal tack with the addition of a halter and lead rope. b. Lead Line riders may proceed no faster than a trot or they will be disqualified. c. When leading the animal across the timing line, the assistant must be at or behind the shoulder of the animal to prevent any timer malfunctions.

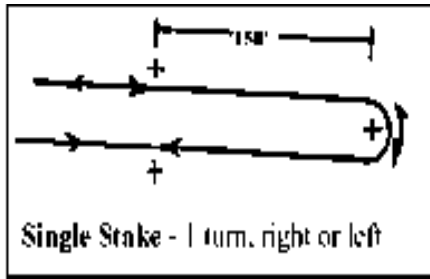
## **Section 8**

### **Protests**

- a. Written protests, accompanied with a fee of \$25.00 cash must be submitted to the event chairperson within 30 minutes after completion of the protested event.
- b. Approved protests will result in a refund of the \$25.00 fee. Fees from unapproved protests will be directed to the MHA general fund.
- c. A copy of the written protest shall be forwarded to the MHA Board of Directors. All protests will be reviewed by the Board of Directors with the intention of eliminating ambiguities that might exist in the rule book.
- d. MHA will not change a ruling or decision mid show but will meet to discuss the issue. Any official changes will be announced at the following show.

## Single Stake

Go through timing line to pole, turn pole in either direction, return across timing line.



## Section 3

### Entry Requirements

#### 3.1 Clothing and Tack

The high standards of Gymkhana will be reflected by the rider's full and proper dress as follows: a. CLOTHING: A Safety Helmet (hard hat) is not required but strongly recommended when riding any MHA event. The helmet must be correctly worn at all times while mounted on the show grounds. Failure to do so may result in disqualification. If a helmet comes off while an rider is on course, a 1 second penalty will be assessed. Clothing shall be neat and clean, either Western or English riding attire, but not mixed, except where required for safety (i.e. hard hat). All contestants shall be fully attired in a shirt with long or short sleeves (female contestants may wear sleeveless shirts), long pants and boots. A boot is defined as either a traditional Western, traditional English, or roper style boot that laces up that is minimum of 1 1/2" above the ankle. All other boots must be approved by the MHA Event Chairperson. All boots must have at least a 1/2" heel and a smooth sole. Patterned soles are permitted if the pattern is 1/8" or less deep. "Waffle" soles are specifically prohibited. All articles of clothing shall be properly worn, however buckles may be worn at the side or back for safety reasons. A hat may also be worn but a means must be devised to keep it on while running the course. If the hat hits the ground while the rider is on course, it will result in a one (1) second penalty. b. TACK: Any appropriate, neat and humane Western and/or English equipment may be used. Riders are permitted to use whips, crops, quirts and spurs if used sparingly, so long as these aids do not result in abuse of the horse. A rider may use any part of the horse or saddle to maintain

balance. Use of a tie down is permitted.

### 3.2 Unsoundness or Injury

Management shall not allow any horse to participate when unsoundness or injury is sufficient to be considered an act of cruelty. The existence of a Veterinarian's note does not automatically grant an exemption. The final decision belongs to MHA, and the Event Chairperson may decide that using the animal would be an act of cruelty. Any ambiguous situations should be referred to MHA Board of Directors.

### 3.3 Stallions

No one under 18 years of age will be permitted to ride a stallion at a MHA show.

## Section 4

### General Procedures

#### 4.1 General

Much can be done by riders and horse show management to make a show run more smoothly and help Gymkhana contestants improve their horsemanship practices. The following procedures are set forth to acquaint horse show management and new riders with the normal progression of a well run show. Some of these procedures are only suggestions. Others incur penalties as set forth in the penalty section of this book.

a. **Position of poles and obstacles:** After measuring each course, place a spot of lime under each pole or obstacle so that it may be put back in the same position in the event it is

knocked down. Each obstacle shall be centered over the spot of lime. In the event the lime spot is obliterated, the course shall be re-measured.

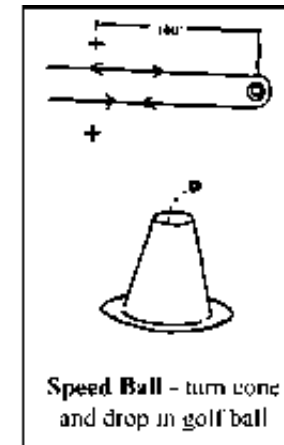
All measurements must be made with the tape laying flat on the ground.

illegal course, and the rider shall be given a re-ride.

The rider may make a left or right turn around the cone.

Right turn around end barrel

Left turn around end barrel

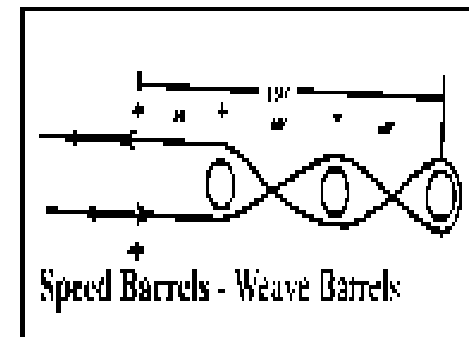


#### Speed Barrels

Go through timing line, pass first barrel on either side, pass the succeeding barrels on alternate sides, turn around last barrel, pass remaining barrels on alternate sides, go through timing line.

Right turn around pole

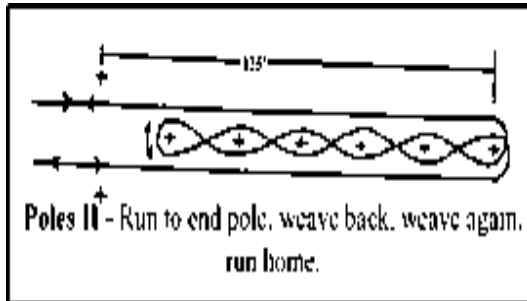
Left turn around pole



## Pole Bending II

Go through starting line, go along either side of the poles to the last pole, turn around last pole, pass successive poles on alternate sides, turn around first pole, continue to pass successive poles on alternate sides, turn around last pole and go along the side of the poles to the timing line.

Right turns first Left turns first



## Speed Ball

Go through timing line to cone. Turn the cone in either direction, dropping the golf ball in the cone. Go back through timing line.

**Special penalty:** A rider will be disqualified if the golf ball does not go inside the cone or if the cone is knocked over. Any action by the horse or rider that causes the ball to be outside of the cone at the end of the ride shall be a "No Time" ride. The cone shall be set on flat ground with no openings underneath the edges of the cone. If the ball rolls out from under the cone because of uneven ground, this shall be considered an

b. **Announcers:** Time should be allowed for each rider to warm up their horse. This can be accomplished by giving a warning prior to the start of an event and by reading the names of the next three contestants. The announcer should not interfere with a rider's ride by talking when the rider is in the arena or announce a good ride or disqualification without a signal from the flagger.

c. **Resetting of course and raking:** As needed, course obstacles should be reset to their original position so that the course will be as identical as possible for each contestant. The course should be raked around each obstacle if required for the safety of the contestants. A contestant has the right to request resetting and/or raking of the course.

d. **Gates to the arena:** All gates to the arena should be closed during the running of every event; no gate(s) should be opened until the rider has completed the course, the horse has been brought under control, and the judge has signaled the rider to leave the arena.

e. **Condition of the arena:** The arena should be properly prepared for Gymkhana competition. It should be disked, rocks removed, leveled and watered as required for the safety of the horse and rider.

## 4.2 Be Prepared to Run

All riders should be fully prepared to run when called, be in proper dress, have equipment in good shape and horses warmed up ready to compete.

## 4.3 Enter the Arena and Begin the Course

The rider will be notified when the course is ready and must enter the arena within one minute after such notification. A rider who remains mounted may be assisted through the gate. After entering the arena, the rider must show control of the horse before the flagger will signal

approval for the run. The signal should be prompt and loud enough for the rider to hear. This will enable the rider to give undivided attention to the horse while setting it up to run. The course must be started within one minute after notification by the flagger.

#### 4.4 Falling Off Horse Prior to Beginning Course

If a rider falls off their horse prior to running an event, the flagger must excuse the contestant and place him at the end of the division or class to complete the event.

#### 4.5 Run the Course

The course must be run in accordance with the prescribed pattern (See Section 8). A horse is on course when any part of the horse crosses the start/finish line. It remains on course as long as it is run in accordance with the prescribed pattern for the event being run until every part of the horse crosses the start/finish line. If a rider goes off course, but corrects the course, and completes the prescribed pattern, there will be no disqualification or penalty.

#### 4.6 Finish the Course

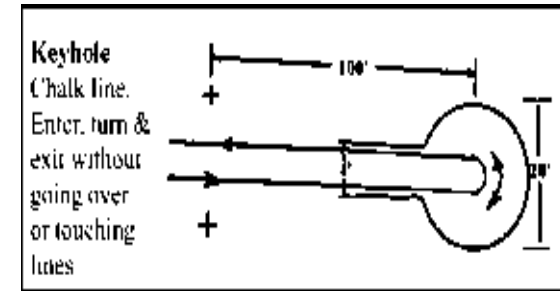
After the course is completed, the horse must be brought under control before leaving the arena. The rider may circle to bring the horse under control.

#### 4.7 Leave the Arena

The rider is requested to acknowledge the flagger after bringing his/her horse under control. The rider should watch for the flagger's signal to leave the arena before walking the horse from the arena. The rider should not dismount at any time while in the arena. The above noted procedures are normally considered a matter of courtesy towards MHA, and normally there are no penalties associated with them. They

Left turn at last pole

Right turn at last pole

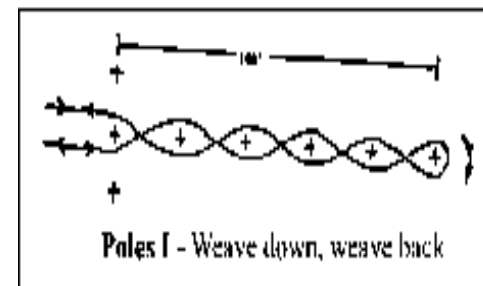


#### Pole Bending I

Go through the timing line, pass the first pole on either side, pass the successive poles on alternate sides, turn the last pole and return, passing each pole on alternate sides.

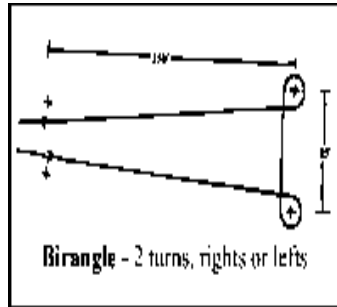
Left turn at last pole

Right turn at last pole



## Birangle

Go through the timing line and run to the inside of either pole. Turn the pole and run to the second pole, turning in the same direction as the first pole. Return to timing line. Right turn around last barrel. Left turn around last barrel.



## Keyhole

Go through the timing line, run into the circle of the keyhole, turn in either direction, and return through the timing line. All four of the horse's feet must enter the circle.

**Special penalty:** The rider will be disqualified if the horse's hoof touches the ground on or outside of any portion of the Keyhole (circle or wings).

**Note:** A penalty judge shall be stationed near the Keyhole and shall determine (by viewing hoof prints) the qualification of the ride. Such decision is final. One or more assistants shall be stationed near the Keyhole with rakes and will rake the disturbed area near the Keyhole as needed.

may, however, be indicative of unsportsmanlike conduct or a safety issue as referred to in the penalty section, and as such could incur penalties as set forth in that section (Sec. 5).

## 4.8 Event Chairperson's Decision

All decisions of the event chairperson in the arena are final. (See Section 9)

Section 5

## Penalties

### 5.1 General Conduct of Contestant

- a. The use of offensive language, or any other conduct considered by the event chairperson to be detrimental to Gymkhana, will not be allowed in the arena. A contestant not adhering to the first warning will be disqualified from an event on the next occurrence. Conduct which jeopardizes the safety of the contestant shall result in disqualification from the horse show. All contestants must display good sportsmanship at all times.
- b. Unsportsmanlike conduct by contestants, parents or relatives of the contestant, inside or outside of the arena, may result in disqualification of the contestant and possible dismissal from the show grounds. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:
  - (1) Willfully causing trouble by constant complaining, aggravating MHA members, event coordinators, or other personnel.
  - (2) Accusing or making derogatory statements relative to the performance of MHA members, event coordinators, or other personnel.

### 5.2 Proper Dress and Equipment

- a. A one-second penalty will be added to the time of any rider who enters the arena with attire and/or equipment in violation of the rules

(refer to Section 3.1). An exception may be given to new riders attending their first show providing prior approval has been obtained from the event chairperson. In addition, a rider may be given an exemption for medical reasons providing safety is not compromised. The existence of a Doctor's note does not automatically grant an exemption. The final decision belongs to MHA event chairperson may decide that the situation would be unsafe. Any ambiguous situations should be referred to MHA Board of Directors.

b. The dress code is in effect and must be adhered to during the running of any MHA events, whether those events are regular events, setups or schooling rides. A rider's obvious disregard for this dress code will preclude that rider's participation in the event.

### 5.3 Cruel or Inhumane Treatment of Horses

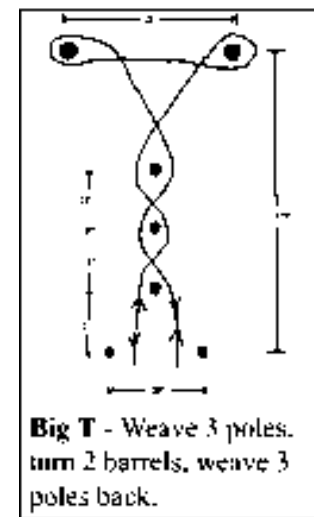
Spurring, striking or beating in any manner whatsoever forward of the cinch after entering the arena will result in immediate disqualification of the contestant. The contestant will likewise be disqualified if there is any indication of cruelty such as welts, cuts, bleeding or marks on the animal. Any subsequent violation may result in disqualification of the contestant from the show. Contestants shall be warned for the following:

- a. Excessive spurring or jerking of the reins.
- b. Unusual construction or arrangement of equipment considered by the event chairperson to be inhumane or unsafe.
- c. Excessive use of bats or whips.
- d. Cruelty of any kind to the horse while on the show grounds whether or not specifically mentioned.

Any subsequent violation may result in disqualification of the

### Big T

Go through the timing line, pass the first pole on either the left or the right, pass the next two poles on alternate sides. If the 3rd pole is passed on the right side, proceed to the barrel on your left, making a left turn and then a left turn around the other barrel. The weave back through the three poles on opposite sides to pass through the timing line. **Note:** If the first pole is passed on the right side, the two barrels will both be left turns. If the first pole is passed on the left side, the two barrels will both be right turns. Two Left Turns Two Right Turns



obstacle to be turned and the fence or rail. All measurements shall be made from the center position of the obstacle except for the Keyhole race which is 25 feet from the center.

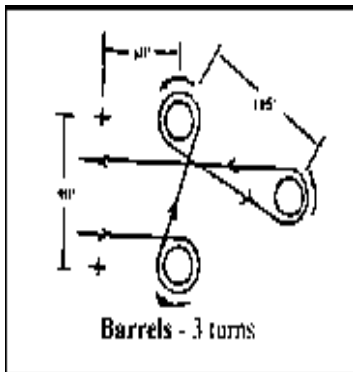
d. The distance for running starts shall be exactly 80' from the timing line. Unless the fence is used as the 80' foul line, that line must be marked with either a non-caustic type of lime or flour. This distance can vary and notification shall be given to the riders if that occurs.

e. The starting gate shall be 30' in width for all events unless otherwise specified in the event diagrams.

## 7.2 Course Pattern Diagrams

### Barrels

Go through the timing line, go to either barrel # 1 first, making a right turn and then to barrels #2 and #3, making left turns; or to barrel #2 first, making a left turn and then to barrels #1 and #3, making right turns; then return through the timing line. Left turn around each of the two barrels. Right turn around each of the two barrels.



contestant from the show.

### 5.4 Entering the Arena

a. A rider may be assisted through the gate. However, the rider must ride their horse into the arena.

b. A rider may not school his/her horse prior to running the course. Schooling is defined as going around an obstacle more than once in a close, tight turn. Such action will result in disqualification.

### 5.5 Loss of Control

Any one of the following will be considered loss of control and will result in disqualification:

a. **Failure to Show Control of Horse:** The horse must be brought under control before beginning the course to show that the rider has complete control. The flagger will signal approval for the run only if the rider shows control of the horse. The rider must wait for the flagger's approval prior to beginning the run.

b. **Failure to Begin Course:** After entering the arena, the rider must begin the course within one minute after the flagger gives the ready signal.

c. **Unruly Horse:** The horse must not be unruly such that, in the opinion of the flagger, the safety of the rider might be in jeopardy.

d. **Falling Off Horse While On Course**

e. **Failure to Enter Arena:** The horse and rider must enter the arena within one minute after being so notified by the flagger.

f. **Beginning the Run From Outside the arena.**

### 5.6 Loss of Forward Motion

The only penalty associated with the loss of forward motion will be the

increased time covering the Gymkhana course. Contestants will not be penalized for loss of forward motion.

### 5.7 Knocking Down or Touching Obstacles

Knocking down or dislodging any obstacle, including timing poles, shall result in a two second penalty for each obstacle (pole, barrel, etc.) knocked down or dislodged. However, touching an obstacle with the intent of keeping it from going down shall not result in a penalty. An obstacle that has been knocked to the ground and bounces back to an upright position will be considered a downed obstacle.

### 5.8 Failure to Leave Arena When Notified

Deliberate failure of a contestant to leave the arena immediately upon notification by the flagger shall bar the contestant from further participation in the show.

### 5.9 Use of Illegal Drugs or Alcoholic Beverages

No persons are allowed to bring onto the grounds of any MHA function or use or have in their possession any illegal drugs. No persons are allowed to consume or be under the influence of any alcoholic beverages while they are participating in an event.

## Section 6

### Awards and Points

#### 6.1 Day Awards

Ribbons will be awarded to competitors placing 1st through 10th place in each event and division. Points will be awarded 1st through 10th place. Trophies will be given to 1st and 2nd place average winners in each division.

1st	10 points
2nd	9 points
3rd	8 points
4th	7 points
5th	6 points
6th	5 points
7th	4 points
8th	3 points
9th	2 points
10th	1 points

### 6.2 Year End Awards

Riders must attend 5 out of 7 shows on the same horse to qualify for the year end buckle. Accumulated points in the riders highest 5 shows will count towards the year end buckle.

When bumping up, riders take their accumulated points with them.

## Section 7

### Gymkhana Events Course

#### Layouts and Patterns

##### 7.1 General Information

This section provides information on the course layout, course pattern, and penalties associated with specific events. General information applicable to these events is given in other sections of this rule book. In particular refer to Section 4 for general procedure and Section 5 for penalties.

- a. The course diagrams that follow are intended to depict the proper turning direction around obstacles. The straight-line method of proceeding from one obstacle to another, however, is not mandatory. A rider may be considered on course so long as he/she remains within the confines of the arena and negotiates all obstacles in the correct direction without re-crossing the timing line until the course is completed.
- b. **Rider's time:** Time shall start when any part of the horse crosses the starting line and shall end when any part of the horse crosses the finish line.
- c. In all Gymkhana events there must be at least 15' between any