

Merced Horsemen's Association  
499 W. Nevada St.  
Merced, California

# Gymkhana Rule Book

2016

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## **Section 1: Horse Show Management Ground Rules**

All riders must be paid members of MHA with a signed release of liability or non-members who signed the non-member release of liability. Dogs are prohibited from the grounds during a Gymkhana show. Trash pickup at the end of the show is the responsibility of all member/non-member participants. No alcoholic beverages are allowed on MHA grounds. MHA expects all members to be responsible for the wellbeing of their animals. This includes proper tying that ensures safety for people and horses. To ensure prompt starting time for each show, please arrive on time for sign-ups. To ensure prompt ending time for each show please be at the gate when your name is announced; if you are called off course, please exit the arena immediately. There is no climbing on fences or gates. Children are not permitted near the gates or 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

Rider/horse combinations that competed in MHA Gymkhana the year prior to the current season may start the current season in their previous year-end division. All riders over the age of 10, who are new to MHA Gymkhana or have not competed in MHA Gymkhana in over one year, will begin the new season in the open division (as well as previous competitors riding a new horse). They will subsequently be placed in the appropriate division based on their times in the rider's first show. The divisions will be determined using an adaptation of the California Gymkhana Association Divisional Rating Matrix. Any rider will advance to a higher division during the year if they consistently exceed the fastest time in their existing division. This includes rider in the 10 and under division regardless of age. No rider shall move downward in divisions.

***With the exception of Lead Line riders and the Hurry Scurry event, all events are open to all riders who wish to participate.***

MHA Division Rating Matrix					
Event	AAA+	AAA	AA	A	Future Champions (FC)
<b>Barrels</b>	<18.709	18.710-20.539	20.540-22.849	22.850-28.309	28.310>
<b>BiRange</b>	<14.009	14.010-15.539	15.540-17.369	17.370-21.699	21.700>
<b>Hurry Scurry</b>	<9.799	9.800-11.429	11.430-14.489	14.490-26.709	26.710>
<b>KeyHole</b>	<7.509	7.510-8.969	8.970-11.459	11.460-16.109	16.110>
<b>Poles 1</b>	<10.989	10.990-13.289	13.290-15.589	15.590-19.759	19.760>
<b>Poles 2</b>	<22.259	22.260-25.559	25.560-29.359	29.360-36.809	36.810>
<b>Speed Ball</b>	<7.359	7.360-8.519	8.520-10.969	10.970-16.109	16.110>
<b>Speed Barrels</b>	<9.879	9.880-10.979	10.980-12.319	12.320-15.709	15.710>
<b>Single Stake</b>	<9.469	9.470-10.219	10.220-11.099	11.100-13.529	13.530>
<b>Big T</b>	<15.160	15.161-17.274	17.275-19.770	19.771-25.029	25.030>

\*MHA is using an alternate Quadrangle pattern, not used by the CGA, therefore division times for this event are not available.

### 2.2 Two or More Classes in the Same Event

Two or more classes in the same event may be combined if there are an insufficient number of entries in either class. If classes are combined, any rider affected may withdraw their entry and is entitled to a full refund of entry fee for the class from which the horse is withdrawn.

### **2.3 Special “Lead Line” Rules for Riders Who Need Assistance**

MHA is interested in providing an opportunity for riders who need assistance to participate in Gymkhana shows. For this reason, the following special rules shall be applied at Gymkhana 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 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.
- c. Lead line riders may NOT participate in the Hurry Scurry event for safety reasons.
- d. Lead line riders may proceed no faster than a trot or they will be disqualified.
- e. 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 3: Entry Requirements

### 3.1 Head Gear, Clothing and Tack

The standards of MHA Gymkhana will be reflected by the rider's proper dress as follows:

- a. Head Gear: A safety helmet is required for all riders under the age of 18. Use of a helmet for riders over the age of 18 is not required but is strongly recommended by MHA. If a rider over the age of 18 elects to wear a helmet, the helmet must be worn in all events for that day. The helmet must be correctly worn at all times while mounted on the show grounds. Nothing that effects proper fit may be worn under the helmet. If a helmet comes off while on course, a 1 second penalty will be assessed. If a rider under the age of 18 enters the arena without a helmet correctly worn, they will be disqualified from the event. If a rider over the age of 18, who elected to wear a helmet, enters the arena without a helmet correctly worn, they will be disqualified from the event. If a rider (who is either required or elected to wear a helmet) has more than one helmet violation on the same day, they will be disqualified from the show. If a non-safety piece of head gear is worn (e.g. western hat, baseball cap), means must be devised to keep it on while running the course. If alternative headgear is worn and comes off while on course, a 1 second penalty will be assessed.
- b. Clothing: Clothing shall be neat and clean. All contestants shall be attired in a shirt with long or short sleeves (female riders 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 and is a minimum of 1 ½ inches above the ankle. All boots must be approved by the MHA event chairperson. All boots must have at least a ½ inch heel and a smooth sole. Patterned soles are permitted if the pattern is 1/8 inch or less deep. "Waffle" soles are specifically prohibited.
- c. Tack: Any appropriate, heat, 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 the 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 now 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 shall be referred to the MHA Board of Directors.

### **3.3 Stallions**

No one under the age of 18 will be permitted to ride a stallion at an MHA Gymkhana 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 by the penalty section of this book.

- a. **Position of poles and obstacles:** After measuring each course, place a marker 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 marker. All measurements must be made with the tape lying flat on the ground.
- 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:** Course obstacles reset to their original position, as needed, 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 contestant. A contestant has the right to request a 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 should be opened until the rider has completed the course, the horse has been brought under control, and the rider has been signaled 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.
- f. **Re-rides:** The only time a rider will be required to re-run an event is if the timer's malfunction or a course is improperly set.

## **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 and 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 judge 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 5 and 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 aforementioned procedures are normally considered a matter of courtesy toward show management and normally there are no penalties associated with them. They 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 (Section 5).

#### **4.8 Event Chairperson's Decision**

All decisions of the head judge in the arena are final. (See Section 8 regarding protests).

## **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 contestants, inside or outside of the arena, may result in disqualification of the contestant and possible dismissal from show grounds. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:
  - i. Willfully causing trouble by constant complaining, aggravating MHA members, event coordinators, or other personnel.
  - ii. Accusing or making derogatory statements relative to the performance of event management or other contestants.
- c. Contestants engaging in unsafe conduct inside or outside the arena that may put themselves, other contestants, spectators, or other personnel at jeopardy of harm may be subject to disqualification from the show.

### **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, the 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 the exemption. The final decision belongs to the MHA event chairperson, whom may decide the situation would be unsafe. Any ambiguous situations should be referred to the MHA Board of Directors.
- b. The dress code is in effect and must be adhered to during the running of any MHA Gymkhana event, whether those events are regular events, setups or schooling rides. A rider's obvious disregard for the 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 of the following:

- a. Excessive spurring or jerking of the reins.
- b. Unusual construction or arrangement of equipment considered by the judge 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 contestant from the show.

### 5.4 Entering the Arena

- a. A rider may be assisted through the gate and up to the timing line. The assistant cannot pass the timing line inside or outside of the timing poles. Such action will result in disqualification.
- b. A rider must ride their horse into the arena.
- c. 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 judge gives the ready signal.
- c. **Falling off horse while on course.**
- d. **Failure to enter the arena:** The horse and rider must enter the arena within one minute after being so notified by the flagger.
- e. **Beginning the run from outside the arena.**

### **5.6 Loss of Forward Motion**

The only penalty associated with loss of forward motion will be 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 on 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: Gymkhana Events Course Layouts and Patterns

### 6.1 General Information

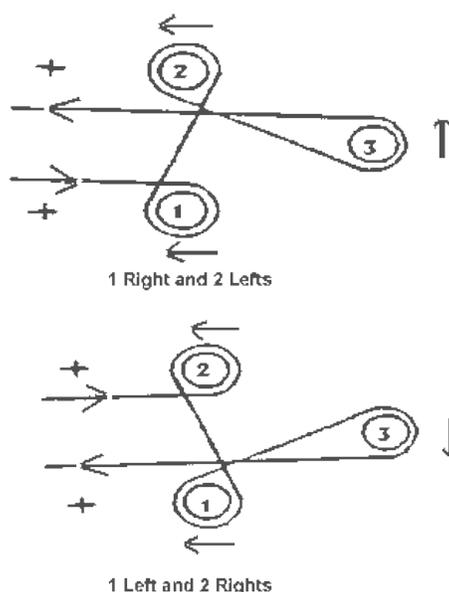
This section provides information on the course layout, course pattern, and penalties associated with specific events. General information applicable to these events is given in other sections of this rule book. Refer to Section 4 for general procedures and Section 5 for penalties.

- 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.
- In all Gymkhana events there must be at least 15' between any 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.
- The timing poles shall be 30' in width for all events unless otherwise specified in the event diagrams.

### 6.2 Course Pattern Diagrams

#### Barrels

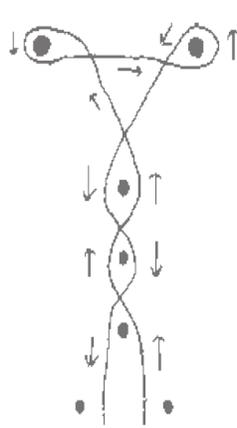
Go through the timing line, go to either barrel #1 first, making a right turn and then to barrels #2 and #3, making left turns; or go to barrel #2 first, making a left turn, and then to barrels #1 and #3, making right turns; then return through the timing line.



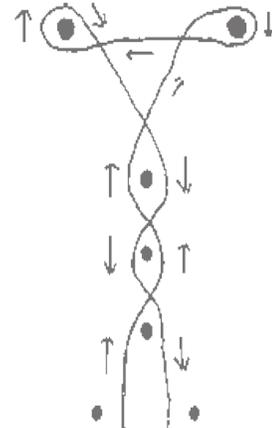
## Big T

Go through the timing line, pass the first pole on either the left or the right and pass the next two poles on alternate sides. If the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.



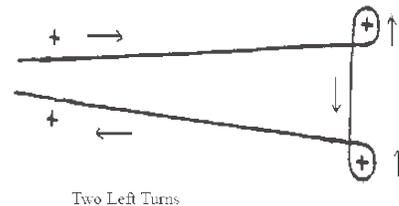
Left turn around each of the two barrels.



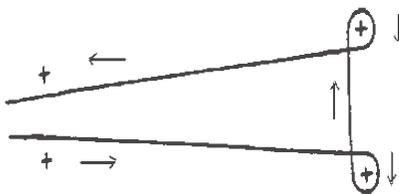
Right turn around each of the two barrels.

## 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 the timing line.



Two Left Turns

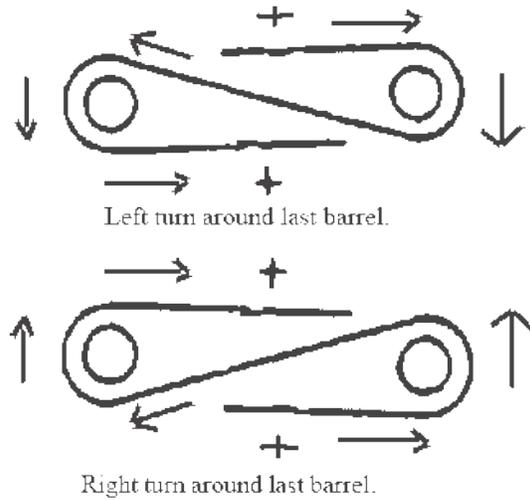


Two Right Turns

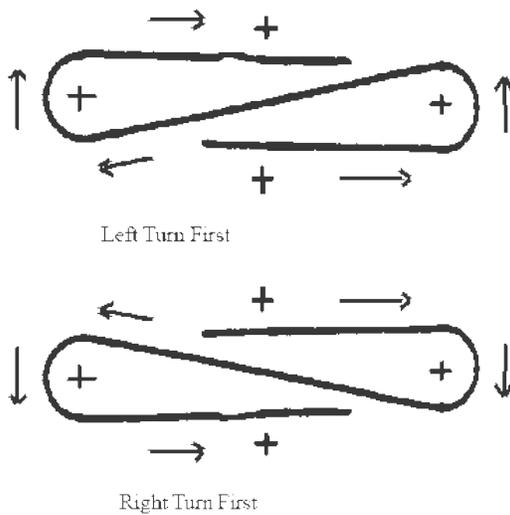
### Figure 8 Flag

Start from either end of the course carrying a flag. Go through timing line and go around first barrel in either direction, exchange flags, then go around the second barrel, turning it in the opposite direction. Exchange flags and return to the timing line. The dowel portion of the flag must be in the pail and touching the sand. If the flag has fallen (laid over pail or barrel), but not touched the ground, the rider may recover it and place it in the pail. If the flag touches the ground, the rider is disqualified.

**Special penalty:** The rider will be disqualified for knocking over a pail, or for using the flag as a club or bat.



### Figure 8 Stake

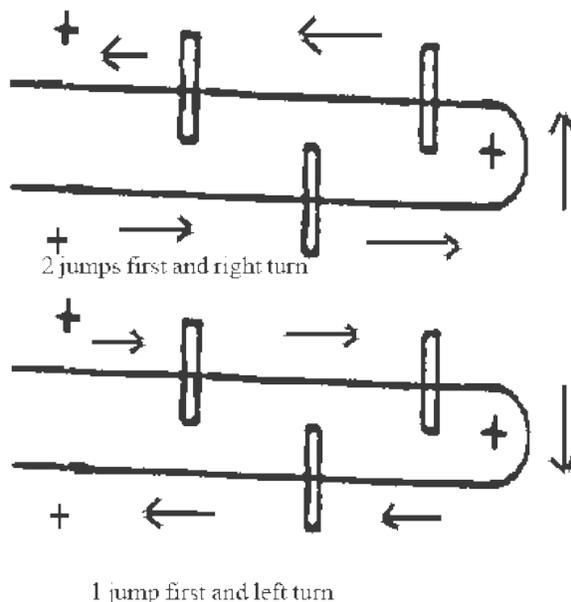


Start from either end of the course. Go through the timing line to the first pole, go around it in either direction. Go across the timing line to the next pole and go around it in the opposite direction, then return across the timing line.

## Hurry Scurry

Go through the timing line and either, go down left side making two jumps, a right turn around the pole, and one jump or go down right side making 1 jump, a left turn around the pole and two jumps, then go back across the timing line.

**Special penalty:** The rider will be disqualified if all four feet of the horse do not go over each jump and the course is not corrected.

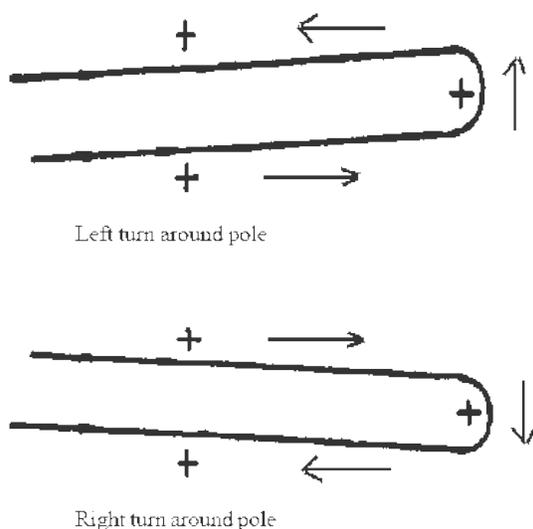


## Keyhole

Go through the timing line, run into the circle of the key-hole, 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 any portion of the keyhole (circle or wings).

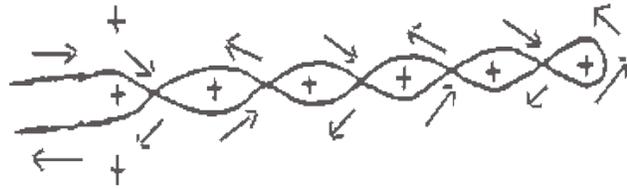
**Note:** A penalty flagger shall be stationed near the keyhole and shall determine (by viewing hoof prints) the qualification of the ride. Such decision is final. One or more assistants shall be stationed near the keyhole with rakes and will rake the disturbed area near keyhole as needed.



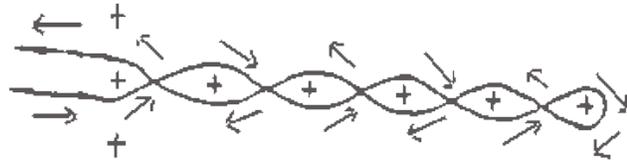
## Pole Bending I

### AKA California Poles

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.



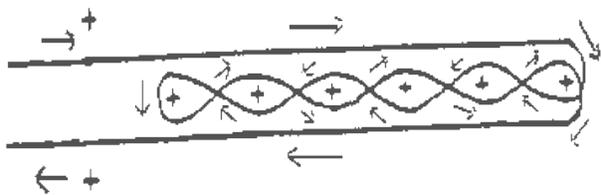
Left turn at last pole



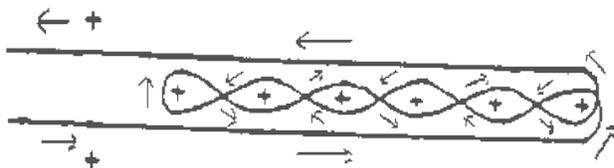
Right turn at last pole

## Pole Bending II

### AKA Washington Poles



Right turn at last pole

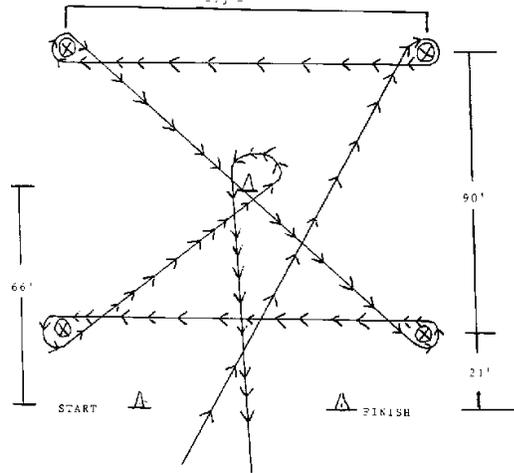


Left turn at last pole

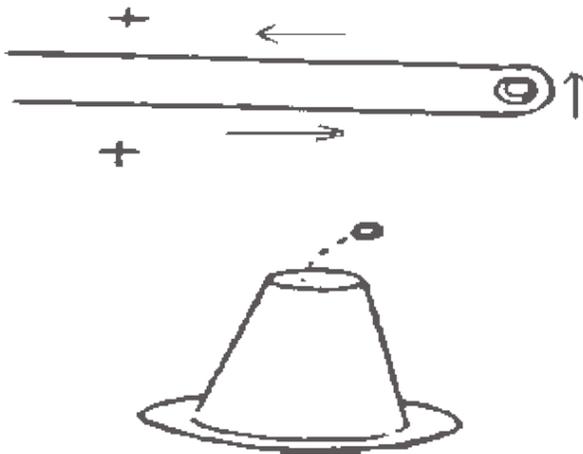
Go through starting line, go along side either side of the poles to the last pole, turn around the last pole, pass successive poles on alternate sides, turn around first pole, continue to pass successive poles on alternate sides, turn around last pole and go along the side of the poles to the timing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

## Quadrangle Stake

The rider may start with either two left turns followed by two right turns or two right turns followed by two left turns, starting with the two barrels furthest from the start/finish line. Then the rider must proceed around the cone, in either direction before crossing the finish line.



## Speed Ball



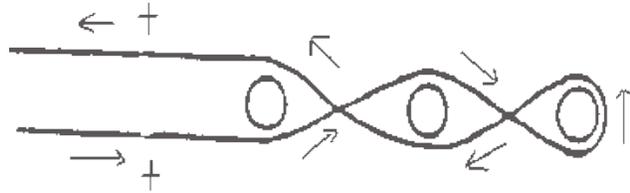
The rider may make a left or right turn around the cone.

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

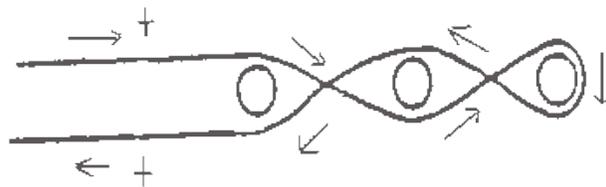
**Special penalty:** A rider will be disqualified if the golf ball does not go inside the cone or if the cone is knocked over. Any action by the horse or rider that causes the ball to be outside of the cone at the end of the ride shall be a "No time" ride. The cone shall be set on flat ground with no 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 illegal course, and the rider shall be given a re-ride.

### Speed Barrels

Go through the 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.



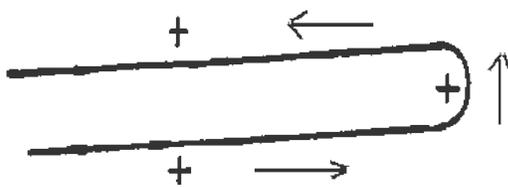
Left turn around end barrel



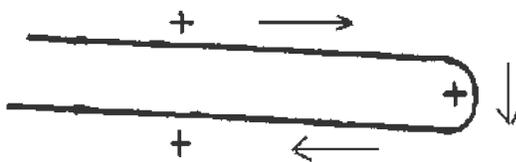
Right turn around end barrel

### Single Stake

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



Left turn around pole



Right turn around pole

### 6.3 Course Layout Diagrams

See the Course Layout Diagrams Document located on the MHA website.

## Section 7: Awards and Points

### 7.1 Day Awards

Ribbons will be awarded to all competitors in the 10 and Under and Lead Line divisions. For all other divisions, ribbons will be awarded to competitors placing 1<sup>st</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup>. Points will be awarded 1<sup>st</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> place in all divisions.

1 <sup>st</sup>	10 points
2 <sup>nd</sup>	9 points
3 <sup>rd</sup>	8 points
4 <sup>th</sup>	7 points
5 <sup>th</sup>	6 points
6 <sup>th</sup>	5 points
7 <sup>th</sup>	4 points
8 <sup>th</sup>	3 points
9 <sup>th</sup>	2 points
10 <sup>th</sup>	1 points

### 7.2 Year End Awards

Riders may compete in the buckle series by paying a one-time \$25.00 series fee. (Lead Line division will compete for an alternate prize and are not required to pay the series fee). The series fee must be paid by the third show of the season to be eligible for year-end awards. Riders must attend at least 5 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 awards. There must be at least three riders in a division to be eligible for a buckle award (divisions may be combined if there are an insufficient number or riders in a given class).

Note: When advancing divisions, riders take their accumulated points with them.

### 7.3 Multiple Horse Competition

Riders may compete on more than one horse in an event or show; an entry fee is due for each horse/rider combination. If a rider wishes to compete for year-end awards on multiple horses, one series fee is due for each horse/rider combination.

