

DRY WORK

Here is a breakdown of the Victorian Reined Cow Horse Association (VRCHA) Dry Work. "Dry Work" refers to the reining work portion of VRCHA competition — essentially the reining pattern (without cattle). This phase is often compared to a traditional reining pattern, but within VRCHA, it's judged with a cow horse-specific approach. Below are the key guidelines:

General Overview of VRCHA Dry Work (Reined Work) – Guide Only

Objective:

The Dry Work (Reined Work) portion evaluates the horse's ability to perform a series of precise maneuvers that demonstrate control, responsiveness, finesse, and overall willingness.

Required Maneuvers in Dry Work

Each pattern will include some or all of the following:

Maneuver	Description
Circles	Large fast circles and small slow circles in each direction. The horse must demonstrate clear speed differences.
Spins	360-degree spins, Spins should show cadence, correctness, and smoothness.
Stops	Sliding stops performed with correctness and power.
Rollbacks	A 180-degree turn immediately following a sliding stop, performed over the horse's hocks.
Lead Changes	Simple or flying lead changes performed between circles, as required by the pattern. Accuracy and smoothness are key.

Maneuver Description

Back Up A straight, controlled back up for a required distance.

Run Downs Horse must show run rate and responsiveness when running to a stop.

 **Judging Criteria**

Judges are evaluating:

- **Correctness of Maneuvers:** Proper execution of each element.
 - **Degree of Difficulty:** Horses that show more athleticism, speed control, and finesse may score higher.
 - **Control and Willingness:** A horse that stays willingly between the rider's hands and legs is favored.
 - **Smoothness and Transitions:** Abrupt or rough transitions are penalised.
 - **Position and Form:** Correct body position, especially during spins, stops, and lead changes.
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 **Scoring System**

- **Maneuver Scores:** Each maneuver is scored from -1.5 to +1.5, with 0 being average.
 - **Penalty Application:** Penalties are assessed for deviations from correct performance (see below).
 - **Overall Score:** Combined maneuver scores minus penalties give the final Dry Work score.
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Common Penalties

Penalty Description

-½ to -1½ Poorly executed maneuver

2 Points Break of gait, jogging more than 2 strides in a lope, failure to change leads where required

5 Points Spurring in front of cinch, blatant disobedience, horse dropping to knees

Zero Score Illegal equipment, failure to complete pattern, out of order maneuvers, willful abuse

Patterns

- Each class/division will specify which pattern to perform.
- Patterns include clear descriptions and diagrams.

Additional Guidelines

- Horses must work on a loose rein where appropriate, showing trust and relaxation.
- The rider should demonstrate minimal visible cues. Obvious over cueing (kicking, pulling, jerking) is penalised.
- Equipment must conform to VRCHA rules (legal bits, reins, etc.).
- Riders may be disqualified for abuse, excessive schooling, or unsafe behavior.

