

# HDTPA SORTING RULES & GUIDELINES

Rev 2/23/2025

Ranch Sorting, in its basic form, is successfully sorting/cutting cattle out in a specific order and moving them from one cattle pen into another, typically in teams of two, unless specified otherwise in class descriptions.

Keep in mind that one person on the team of two will guard the 'gate' to make sure that cows that have already been sorted don't cross back into the herd (where they really want to be with all their buddies), and one person proceeds to 'sort' a specific number cow out of the herd. And all in under 60, 75 or 90 seconds! Team members can alternate sorting or guarding the gate unless specified otherwise in the class descriptions.

## OFFICIAL RULES:

In the rules below, where there is shared responsibility for coming to a decision and there is not consensus – the President will be the tie-breaker. Where there is no shared responsibility, those decisions by the individual assigned to the role are final.

1. **DRESS CODE:** All contestants at a HDTPA sanctioned show must wear western attire: Collared western shirt (sleeveless and cap sleeve are acceptable) and boots. Western hat is optional. Western attire is optional for the timers and announcers and for themed events. Tank tops, tee shirts, polo shirts, and ball caps will not be allowed. A fine of \$10 will be levied by the judges at their discretion, against any contestant not in compliance. Fines must be paid before the contestant rides again. Helmets are acceptable.
2. **RULES OF CONDUCT:** No person shall harass, heckle, ridicule, or make offensive comments or gestures, or make any racial or sexist remarks against any participant or spectator. The Board of Directors will have the final decision.
  - a) The penalty for the first offense shall be a warning.
  - b) The penalty for the second offense shall be \$25.00 fine. This is per an event.
  - c) The penalty for the third offense will be loss of membership in the HDTPA, and banishment from all HDTPA sanctioned events for a period of up to one (1) year from the date of the infraction.

A minimum of three (3) Board of Directors will determine if an infraction has occurred.
3. **FOUL LANGUAGE:** Use of foul language while participating in a sorting event may be cause for ejection from the event without refund of entry fees.
  - a) 1st offense = warning
  - b) 2nd offense = \$10.00 fine.
  - c) 3<sup>rd</sup> offense = \$25.00 fine.

This is Per an event. Flagger/ decision.

4. **EXCESSIVE SCHOOLING/ABUSE:** There will be no abuse or excessive schooling of cattle or horses. Inside the competition arena - Flagger at their discretion can make a decision for abuse and/or roughing, and the contestant may be subject to disqualification. Outside the arena – Arena directors' discretion/decision.

## HDTPA SORTING RULES & GUIDELINES

5. All cattle will be bunched on the cattle side of the starting line within the designated area before the time begins. The flagger will raise the flag to signal when the arena is ready. The flag will drop, and time will start when the nose of the first horse crosses the start/foul line. The contestants will be given their cattle number when the team crosses the foul line.
6. There will be at least 10 cattle in the end of the arena marked with visible numbers, 0-9. No more than one (1) un-numbered cattle shall be used in any herd.
7. Cattle will be settled after each run, to the satisfaction of the flagger. The team that just finished, must allow the new team to enter the arena, prior to exiting.
8. You are to start with the starting number and continue in a numerical order. For example: Your number is 6. You must first sort 6, then 7, 8, 9, 0, etc.
9. Thirty (30) seconds after the previous team completes their run, the following team must be in the arena ready to ride. Any further delay will be judged a “no-time”, unless waived for good cause. Flaggers’ decision.
10. If any cattle, already sorted, cross back over the foul line, in whole or in part the team is disqualified/”no-time”. Flaggers’ decision.
11. If two or more cows cross the line together as long as the nose of the correct number or numbers cross the line first the cattle are considered to be in order regardless of whether they finish crossing in that order. A cow is considered sorted when the nose crosses the line. Also, if any part of a wrong numbered cow starts across the line it is a “no-time” or if any part of a correct numbered cow starts across the line and then backs out it is also considered a “no-time”/disqualified. Flaggers’ decision.
12. If any cattle cross the foul line out of sequence, the team is disqualified/”no-time”. Flaggers’ decision.
13. Teams are judged on their number of cattle sorted, and on the time it took to sort them.
  - a. It is permissive to stop sorting anytime to hold cattle already sorted until the clock runs out.
  - b. A lap timer will be used to determine “time” on less than ten (10) head sorted.
14. No hazing of cattle with hats, romels or ropes will be permitted. Slapping hand to leg or Rommel to leg is acceptable. Flaggers’ decision.
15. **SAFETY/FALLEN RIDER:** If a rider falls off their horse or is injured during a clean run, one of the riders must raise their hand to stop the clock for the safety of the rider. In a case where both riders are off their horse or injured simultaneously, the clock will automatically be stopped for the safety of the riders. When the rider(s) are ready, they will have the option to:
  - a. Call for time and end their run as is, or
  - b. Re-mount, go to the other side of the start line and continue their run from where the clock stopped when they fell or were injured.
16. **APPEALS:** Any appeal must be made by the contestant(s) before leaving the arena.
  - a. Two (2) Directors will be in charge at each sorting event. Appeals will be resolved by the two (2) directors in charge and the Flagger, if the appeal involves the Flagger’s decision.
  - b. Any member who refuses to abide by the final decision of an appeal and/or continues the dispute, may be disqualified from further participation at the

## HDTPA SORTING RULES & GUIDELINES

respective event. Any further suspension from future events would require a vote by the Board of Directors.

17. All sorting classes, (Except Juniors) will be two (2) man teams, unless class description designate differently.
18. After the end of each run, whether from disqualification or from successful time, riders should single file the remaining cattle into the next sorting pen in an orderly fashion.
19. A recommended pen size of 60 wide X 60 deep and to sort two directions. Any changes are to be made by the Board of Directors and at their discretion.
20. **TRASH CATTLE RULE**: The definition of trash cattle is any wrong numbered or blank cattle that starts across or crosses the start/foul line or that starts back across or crosses back across the start foul line, or any correctly sorted number that starts across the start/foul line and backs out before going all the way through is a “no-time”/disqualified. Flagger’s decision
21. **ROUGHING**: Roughing includes, but is not limited to, running over cattle with horses, stepping on cattle while in pursuit, running through the herd in such a manner that the cattle are knocked down, horses consistently biting the cattle, and entering the pen with such force on the cattle causing them to collide with the back pen panels A Flagger’s call for “roughing” will result in the team receiving a “no-time”/disqualified. Roughing calls are made in the Flagger’s sole discretion, and Roughing may be called by the Flagger whether or not the Flagger believed the action that resulted in the Roughing call was deliberate.
22. **WORKING CATTLE WHILE DISMOUNTED**: Any rider working cattle must be mounted on horseback. Working cattle on foot is reason for disqualification/ “no-time”. Flagger’s decision.
23. **NUMBER ALREADY CALLED**: If a duplicate number is called within the same set of cattle a re-ride will be given immediately upon point of discovery using the same set of cattle with any number that has not already been used. Those re-rides will begin at zero time and zero cows. Flagger
24. **OFFICIAL OR MECHANICAL ERRORS**: Re-rides may be given for official or mechanical errors. Examples: Clocks, timers, or buzzer errors. Panels, gates etc.
25. **DOWNED CATTLE**: Times may be stopped for downed cattle by any team member by raising their hand and stopping the clock. Downed or stuck cattle includes cattle that fall down, but not as a result of Roughing, and are down for 5 seconds (as determined in the flagger’s sole discretion) whether stuck in a panel or gate, or not standing. In these cases, contestants will be given the option to take their time on the number of cattle sorted when the run is stopped. When the rider(s) are ready, they will have the option to:
  - a. Go to the other side of the start line and continue their run from where the clock stopped.
26. **COW LEAVES THE ARENA**: If there is a malfunction of the Sorting pen, or a numbered cow jumps any fence and either leaves the arena, or ends up in the opposite pen, but did not pass through the gate (assuming either instance was not caused by roughing of the cattle), contestants will be given the option to take their time on the number of cattle sorted prior to the cow leaving the arena or re-ride **immediately** using the same herd (with the exception of replacing the jumping cow – at the flaggers’ discretion). In the instance of a re-ride, contestants will receive a full clock, but the contestant’s time cannot be improved. However, the number of cattle sorted during the allotted time can be improved. Example:

## HDTPA SORTING RULES & GUIDELINES

if a team has sorted 5 head in 55 seconds (with a 60 second clock) when the cow jumped the fence, they would get a re-ride with the full 60 second clock. In the re-ride, the same team sorted 10 head in 50 seconds, their official time would be 10 head in 55 seconds.

27. **INCORRECT NUMBER OF CATTLE, MIS-NUMBERED, UNNUMBERED, INJURED or UNFIT CATTLE:** Prior to a team crossing the start / foul line the contestant(s) must notify the flagger of any Incorrect number of cattle, UN-numbered, mis-numbered, injured, or unfit cattle. Once brought to the Flaggers' attention the Flagger (not the contestants) will determine whether to correct the problem or proceed forward. No re-rides will be given once a team has committed to the cattle by crossing the start / foul line, unless cattle become injured, unfit or UN-numbered during the run. "Committed to the cattle" means that the team has crossed the start/foul line, the flag has been dropped to start the time on that run, and their cattle number has been called. Then at the flaggers' discretion the flagger may stop the run and the contestants will have the choice to take their current cattle and time or a re-ride. The re-ride will occur **immediately** using the same numbered cattle once injured, or unnumbered cattle are replaced. Only the team that is in the arena at the time the problem is identified will receive a re-ride.

a. Possible reasons for a flagger to remove cattle:

- Lamé
- Sick
- Exhausted
- Blind
- Bleeding
- Safety

28. **BAD COW:** If there's a cow that has blown through the gate person 3 times consecutively and there has not yet been a time on the herd, then the Arena Directors or President will replace the bad cow. Caveat - If there has been a time on the herd and the number the team was given was the 'bad cow', that team will be given the option to keep their time or be given a re-ride option. For example: If team #1 draws cow #3 and gets a time and team #4, #5, & #6 gets disqualified because cow #3 blew through the gate; the arena directors or president will replace the #3 and offer Team #1 the option of a re-ride or they can keep their existing time. At the discretion of the directors/president – after the herd has been used, the cow can be replaced before using that herd again.
29. There will be **NO CONTESTANT PROTESTS** for 'BAD COW(S)'.  
30. There will be **NO** re-rides for inconsistent cattle.

**FLAGGERS', DIRECTORS, PRESIDENT** will strive to make the best call possible; wrong calls may sometimes fall in your favor and other times it may not. We realize this is true in all sports and we accept that risk.