



February 04, 2015

President's Message to All CTCPA Members

Re: 2015 Penning Season "Respect the Cows"

I was just reading the Jan/Feb issue of the Western Horse Review and noted a couple of articles dealing with the effect of the current shortage of cattle and the resulting rise in beef prices. What affect this will have on our sport of team penning remains to be seen as all equine sports compete with finding cattle for their shows. At our AGM held in November, we had representation from all 10 clubs and each and every one of them indicated that finding cattle for shows is becoming more difficult and expensive. I know this for a fact due to trying to find over 1,250 head (valued at approximately \$2.4 million dollars) for our National Finals show. While we were fortunate to have great cattle for our show, I can not help but reflect on some of the comments that I heard at pennings during the year, these cattle are too tough, they can't be fresh they must have been cut on, I like the cows to be all the same colour, I think heifers should be mandatory? etc. If people only knew that today we are lucky to have 4 legs and a tail to chase. At our AGM your representatives had to deal with a couple of proposed rule changes on the agenda that primarily dealt with treatment of cattle. I thought that I would share some of this with you.

1 Calling for Time

Change the rule for calling for time to dropping the flag once all 4 feet of all three cows enter the pen. This was proposed to eliminate some of the bumping and roughing of the cattle as they enter the pen, reduce the chance of the cows hitting the back of the pen as well as some of the excessive jerking on horses and the crashing into each other that often happens. Time could still be called on less than 3 head by entering the pen and raising your hand as we do today.

Canadian Team Cattle Penning Association
Site 8, Box 4, RR 1
Millarville, Alberta, Canada, T0L 1K0
Telephone: (403) 931-2795 Fax: (403) 931-2799
Email: office@canadianpenning.com



2 Implementing a No Trash Rule

You may be aware that our US counterpart the USTPA implemented a “no trash rule” in 2015. This was implemented for the following reasons:

- Safety - The majority of horse wrecks are when chasing trash.
- Aesthetics - To reduce the perception of others that there is much more skill in the sport than just a “bunch of yahoos” running cows up and down the walls.
- Cattle Suppliers - Some suppliers are reluctant to rent to penning as it is believed that we are too hard on the cattle.
- Cattle would stay fresh longer and the lower classes would have the opportunity to ride on better cattle. Cattle would be fresher if carried over to the next day (sorting or penning).

As I was aware that the “No Trash Rule” would be a very contentious issue I requested our Senior Judge Pete Fraser to gather some statistics in order to evaluate the impact of a rule change. Pete recorded data from 9 shows, 5 different sized arenas, for a total of 3,293 runs. The results may surprise you.

- Overall, teams had a clean run 53.9% of the time of which:
 - 44.8% of this total penned 3
 - 9.1% failed to pen 3 despite no trash
- Trash occurred on the remaining 46.1% of which:
 - 19.3% eventually trashed out
 - 16.9% did not trash out but failed to pen 3
 - 9.8% penned 3 on runs involving trash which was further broken down by:
 - Time under 40 seconds is 1.8%
 - Time between 40 and 49 seconds is 3.2%
 - Time 50 seconds plus is 4.8%



What the above tells us is that as a **Worst Case Scenario** a no trash rule would have affected penning 3 head on only 9.8% of the runs. If penners were riding under a no trash rule perhaps they would presumably be more cautious and have fewer incidents of trash. Other changes could also be made such as increasing the foul line to further reduce the incidences of trash. Pete also stated that trash occurs on 46% of the runs, which means that the equivalent of 5 times per herd a team is wearing out another team's cattle or training them errant behaviour. With our practice that herds be used no more than 5 times max, one or more in a set of 3 head may be aggressively chased 8 to 12 times or more throughout the day. The implementation of a "No Trash Rule" would significantly reduce this inequity and create a more level playing field.

I have attached Chart 1; Base Data; Key Findings prepared by Pete Fraser indicating the differences within each class the results of which may surprise you as the 7 class has the highest % of clean runs.

While the above certainly stimulated some lively debate no changes were approved. We will continue to monitor the impact this rule change has in the US.

Please be respectful of the cattle you chase, if the run is not going to work please consider tipping your hat.

I look forward to seeing you at the National Finals. We are fortunate again to have the Alberta Ford Dealers as the Show Sponsor with \$25,000.00 in added money.

Good luck penning and ride safe.

Sincerely,

Kent Hillard
CTCPA President

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