



# **POLISH COWBOY RACE**

## **THE RULEBOOK**

### **Introduction**

Polish Cowboy Race is a set of western riding competitions that aims to show riders' dexterity and horses' skills used in all possible movements of the western riding style. During the shows, elements such as calf roping, pole bending, barrel racing, reining, western horsemanship, trail and many more can be observed.

There may also be obstacles and tasks not related to the western riding technique, therefore versatile horses that are fast, precise and ridden by skillful and confident riders have a chance to show off. In Polish Cowboy Race competitions time is one of the components of the final score, which makes the shows a lot more dynamic.

PCR competitions are looked after by Polish Cowboy Race Commission that is a part of PLWiR Association.

These rules were developed in order to provide the riders with equal and fair competing conditions. In case of any doubts concerning these rules they should be interpreted in a way that ensures equal chances for every participant, concordantly to fair-play rules.

### **I. Competitions**

1. Cowboy Race (Youth, Amateur, Open)
2. Team Cowboy Race (Amateur + Open)
3. Cowboy Parallel Race (Amateur + Open)
4. Cowboy Trail (Youth, Amateur)

## **II. Classes**

1. Youth – a class for riders aged from 11 to 15. Riders must have their birthday before the start of the season (applies to 11 year olds). Riders having their birthday during the season can take part in Youth classes. Riders having it before the season starts need to switch to a higher class (applies to 15 year olds).
2. Amateur – a class for riders that are 15 years old and older and are not professionally working with horses or financially benefiting from riding. Riders that took first, second or third place three or more times in competitions in years 2017 and 2018 or riders that have won the Rider of the Year in Amateur class in the previous year cannot be assigned to this class.
3. Open – minimum age of a rider competing in this class is 15 years old. Riders that work professionally with horses and draw financial benefits from that work and riders that have taken first, second or third place three or more times in the competition in the previous 2 years in Amateur class or riders that have won the Rider of the Year in Amateur class the previous year are assigned to this class. In this class horses must be older than 4 years old.
4. Riders that have been qualified to Open class in the previous years cannot start in the Amateur class.
5. Important! At the beginning of the season, riders that have been qualified to the Amateur class have to decide in which class they want to participate. If they choose Amateur, they can take part in CRA, CTA, TCR and CPR, if they choose open, then CRO, TCR and CPR.

## **III. Competitors' outfit**

1. It is mandatory to have a typically western riding outfit, meaning: jeans, a long sleeve shirt with a collar, a western hat and cowboy boots.
2. Riders under the age of 18 (in Youth and Open classes) are obligated to use certified protective vests and helmets.
3. Riders over the age of 18 are recommended to use protective gear.
4. The competitors' outfit shall be be clean, neat and aesthetic.

5. Judges can agree to certain adjustments made to the riders outfit in order to adapt to the current weather conditions.
6. Riders are obligated to be dressed in accordance with these rules at all times when in the arena (also during the warm up, decoration and walking through the pattern).
7. Grooms or other persons (other than the riders) riding the horses that are taking part in the competition have to be dressed in a full western riding outfit.
8. All of the persons walking through the pattern with the riders (before the competition) have to be dressed in a full western riding outfit.
9. Chaps are allowed but not mandatory.
10. Missing a correct competition number which is supposed to be visibly displayed on the riders outfit, results in a disqualification (or in some cases agreed upon fine).

#### **IV. Riding gear**

1. The rules regarding the riding gear from PLWiR Association Rulebook are in effect during the competition.
2. The riders are obligated to use a riding gear (a bridle, a bit, a saddle, reins) that is safe and humane for the horses.
3. Removing certain or all elements of the riding gear may be demanded by the judges if deemed threatening to the safety of the horse or if there is a sign of inhumane treatment.
4. The judge has the right to demand the removal or alteration of all or any part of the riding gear if he thinks it poses a threat to the rider's safety by the fact that the gear is not effective enough in leading the horse.
5. The judge has the right to make a decision about excluding any of the gear being used (not allowing the rider to participate in the competition) if the judge thinks that the gear poses a threat to the safety of the horse.
6. In the case of discovering any gear malfunction, repeating the run is not allowed.
7. Leg boots and/or bandages on all of the horses legs are mandatory.
8. In Cowboy Race, Team Cowboy Race and Cowboy Parallel Race the use of the following gear is permitted:

- a. a Tie Down (standing martingale) attached to the nose band – allowed, if there are no jumping obstacles in the pattern.
  - b. a running martingale attached to the reins.
9. It is forbidden to use a whip, a lasso, a crop or any other item to make the horse go faster.
  10. Spurs are not required.
  11. Connected and disconnected reins are both allowed.
  12. It is not allowed to use Romal style reins.

## **V. Pattern rules**

1. The Polish Cowboy Race competitions are held in arenas. The arena has to be fenced in a way that prevents the horses from going outside.
2. The number of obstacles in a pattern must be consistent with the rules of the competition. The pattern should be adjusted to the level of difficulty of the competition.
3. The walk of the horse can be specified in the pattern. If the walk is specified, the horse has to move in this walk during the run.
4. The pattern has to be approved by the judges and the organizer/person responsible for the pattern. If any of the obstacles is considered dangerous, then it has to be removed or replaced with a safe one (even if it happens just before the competition starts).
5. The organizer is obligated to provide the competitors with the scheme at least 14 days before the competition.
6. Before the start of the competition, riders must be given an opportunity to walk on the track where the scheme is arranged (when walking through the track, they may ask questions about the scheme to the judges and the person/ persons responsible for the scheme).
7. Before the start of the competition, competitors may have the opportunity to familiarize the horse with the scheme at the time set by the organizer. The mandatory gait is the walk.
8. A pattern can be built with natural obstacles or realistically looking artificial ones.
9. The maximum height of a jumping obstacle is 0,5m and its width is 0,6m.

10. The maximum depth of a ditch for jumping is 0,15m and its width is 1,2m.
11. There may be other elements on the arena that are not obstacles to overcome (e.g. flags, balloons, banners). Event staff may also be present.

## **VI. General rules**

1. In the PCR competitions the classification is determined by the number of correctly passed obstacles and the time of the run and also by the points for obstacles in the Cowboy Trail competition.
2. The organizer of the competition must take care of the safety of competitors, third parties (spectators, organizers, judges, etc.) and horses.
3. Competitors are obligated to care for the safety of third parties (spectators, organizers, judges, etc.), other competitors and horses.
4. All of the riders entering the competition must agree to accept the rules, the competition's policy and other documents regulating sport rivalry in the PLWiR Association and agree to follow the judges and the organizers' instructions.
5. During one day of the competition, the maximum number of starts for a horse is five (the participation in the competition under one rider is treated as a start). In the case of combined competitions, the number of allowed starts per day can change.
6. The horse can take part in Cowboy Race Youth/Amateur and Cowboy Trail Youth/Amateur two times, but only under a different rider.
7. During the competition, the horse can be led with one or both hands, no matter what bit is being used. During the run, the hand holding the reins can be switched.
8. The competition run begins the moment the rider enters the arena.
9. The rider must start the run only after the judge or the speaker makes sure that the rider is ready - voice confirmation, the word READY.

10. The starting signal is given by the judge or by the speaker (whistle sound or the word „start”).
11. The time is measured from the moment the rider crosses the starting line, until the crossing of the finish line, as described in the pattern.
12. If the conditions are safe, the judges may allow a running start. In this situation the measuring of the time starts when the horse’s nose crosses the starting line and ends when the horse’s nose crosses the finish line.
13. If during passing through the starting line (after the signal to start is given) or the finish line designated by markers or other elements, at least one of them is knocked over, the competitor receives 10 penalty seconds added to the final time.
14. In Polish Cowboy Race competition, the time is measured by the judges simultaneously using two stopwatches. If the first, considered official, does not work, the official time is the one measured using the second stopwatch. In the situation when both stopwatches do not work, the competitor has the right to repeat the run.
15. The rider must go through the path according to the designated scheme, keeping the order of obstacles.
16. The competitor who did not pass an obstacle may not be classified higher than a competitor who did not make such mistakes during the ride.
17. Obstacle is not considered passed if:
  - a. a rider passes through it differently than it is described in the pattern (applies to horses gait, how and what direction the obstacle is passed, way of passing it, order of passing the obstacles).
  - b. an obstacle is only passed partially (e.g. going through 3 of 5 poles).
  - c. a rider does not finish passing it (e.g. a horse runs away from the obstacle).
  - d. a rider passing the obstacle changes its state significantly (e.g. when a barrel/marker is flipped over, when during carrying a bucket with water, the water spills etc.). It’s not an error when a horse or a rider touches an element of the obstacle and it returns to its previous place by itself.
  - e. a rider misses a target (e.g. throwing a horseshoe into a bucket).

- f. there is the fourth break of gait, which is described in the scheme
  - g. there is a break of gait, which is described in the scheme (all competition besides Cowboy Trail).
  - h. a rider drops the carried item (e.g. bucket, coat, umbrella).
  - i. a pole, during loping through it, is between the two front or two back legs of the horse.
  - j. a horse steps off with all 4 legs outside of an obstacle (only in Cowboy Trail).
  - k. a horse steps off with 1 leg outside of an obstacle (in every competition beside Cowboy Trail).
  - l. a horse refuses to overcome the obstacle three times (on the judge's signal the competitor is obliged to go to the next obstacle), When in a walk or a jog both legs front or back are put in a space designated only for one leg.
  - m. jumping over or not putting a leg in a required space.
  - n. flipping over a marker or other things that are limiting the runs track (if is not an obstacle element, then the previous obstacle is considered not passed).
18. During the run it is forbidden to get off the horse, unless it is an element of the run.
19. After the third disobedience of the horse on an obstacle, the judges signal the rider with a whistle to move to next obstacle.
20. If the run is disturbed in some way, the judge has the right to decide to repeat it.
21. If during the passing of an obstacle the rider or the horse alters its state, it can not be corrected until the rider has overcome the entire obstacle. If the same obstacle is supposed to be passed again during the same run, then after the rider finishes passing it, the run is stopped until the moment the obstacle is fixed. Then the run continues.
22. If the rider during a run notices that the track was not fixed after the previous rider then he/she can stop the run and inform the judges about it. If the complaint was justified, then the rider can repeat the run.

23. If the rider during a run notices that the track wasn't properly fixed after the previous rider but doesn't stop the run then there are no grounds to repeat the run or file a complaint.
24. In the case of a tie (the same run times) in all competitions beside Cowboy Trail a runoff decides about the win. How the runoff is supposed to look (choosing the obstacles and the path) is the judges decision. If a winner cannot be selected after the runoff then the judges resort to a coin toss.
25. No-time score happens when:
- a. A rider mistakes the run route as it is described in the scheme.
  - b. A rider does not finish the run (riders' resignation).
  - c. A rider does not follow the proper order of passing the obstacles.
  - d. A rider is not trying to pass an obstacle (3 attempts are required).
  - e. If during a run the rider notices that the track was not fixed after the previous rider, then he/she can stop the run and inform the judges about it. If the complaint was not justified, then the rider is given a no-time score (look pt. VI/22).
  - f. The rider falls off the horse or the horse falls down.
  - g. Reins are used in breach of the rules or the competitions policy (e.g. using reins as a whip).
  - h. There is a riding gear malfunction that prevents the rider from continuing the run.
  - i. The rider is not complying with the rules regarding the gear (e.g. no boots on horses' legs, using a martingale that is not allowed).
  - j. The horse is displaying clear signs of disobedience (kicking, rearing, bucking, bronking etc.), threatening the safety of the rider, the horse or third parties.
  - k. The horse or the rider crosses the middle line that separates the two tracks with any part of their bodies (only in a Cowboy Parallel Race). When both riders make this mistake, no one passes to the next round).
  - l. The second rider starts the run before the previous one has finished (in a Team Cowboy Race).



26. In the case when a situation from the article VI/25, g to k occurs, the judges stop the run by signaling it with a whistle.
27. The judges committee has an obligation to disqualify any rider even for the duration of the whole competition (during the training or the official run) for:
- a. Displaying any inappropriate or aggressive behaviors towards the horse.
  - b. Exceptionally unsportsmanlike conduct towards other riders, judges, organizers or the audience (e.g. rude gestures, swearing toward others, negating judges' decisions, when a rider is suspected to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs).
  - c. Any other action blatantly ignoring the standard rules of conduct towards other people and horses.
28. The judges committee has a right to disqualify any rider even for the duration of the whole competition (during the training or the official run) for:
- a. Any behavior towards the horse that can be considered inappropriate.
  - b. Any behavior towards the horse judged as too aggressive (e.g. spurs or reins used in abusive way).
  - c. Any unsportsmanlike behavior towards other riders, judges, organizers or the spectators (e.g. unjustified delaying the start of a run).
  - d. The absence during the decoration ceremony or the official competition opening (if participation is obligatory).
  - e. The absence of a valid competition number, visibly displayed on the riders attire (showpad, riders back).
  - f. Clothing not consistent with the rules.
  - g. Not respecting the rules written in this rulebook or other rules and policies of PLWiR association.
29. The judges committee has a right and in some cases an obligation to seek help from other post holders present at the event e.g. a veterinarian in order to reach a decision about a disqualification

30. If a horse gets injured during the competition, then the rider is obligated to stop the run and withdraw from the whole competition. If a rider does not notice the injury, then the judge will stop the run with a whistle.
31. A rider has the right to file a complaint in accordance to the PLWiR Association rules.

## **VII. The rules of Polish Cowboy Race Competitions**

### **1. Cowboy Race**

1. Classes: Youth, Amateur and Open.
2. Classes Youth and Amateur can be done as class in class competition (by the same pattern).
3. The classification is individual.
4. The main goal is to do the run in the most precise manner (number of obstacles passed correctly) and as quickly as possible, through 8-12 obstacles.
5. There is an option to make the pattern so that the riders have to follow the correct order of the obstacles, accordingly to the numbers on them, but without a specified route between them.
6. There is an option to make the pattern so that the riders can pass the obstacles in any order. The track between them is not specified. Obstacles have to be marked on their right side with red markers. The obstacles have to be numbered. This version can be used in Jackpot competitions.

### **2. Team Cowboy Race**

1. Riders from Amateur and Open classes are allowed to take part.
2. Team classification is in effect.
3. The teams consist of two horse-rider pairs (it can consist of three pairs – this decision is made by the event organizer and has to be included in the competitions rules). In Polish Championships 2019 there can only be two pair teams.
4. A single horse-rider pair can only be a part of one team (besides exceptions from pt. VII/2/5 and VII/2/6).
5. In the case of 2-4 teams participating in TCR, the organizer may allow the rider to be assigned to two separate teams. That means the riders can start

- twice in one competition (every start counts towards the whole number of starts for the horse on this day). Only one starting fee has to be paid.
6. In the case of an uneven number of riders, a draw can be performed to assign a rider to a team. Only riders who agree to the draw are partaking (every start in TCR is still counted to the whole number of starts throughout one day). Only one starting fee has to be paid.
  7. The main goal is to do the run in the most precise manner (number of obstacles passed correctly) and as quickly as possible, through 6-8 obstacles.
  8. The second rider of a team can start the run, when the first one has finished his/her part (horse and rider had crossed the finish line).
  9. There is an option to make the pattern so that the rider has to follow the correct order of the obstacles, accordingly to the numbers on them, but the track between them is not specified.

### **3. Cowboy Parallel Race**

1. Riders from Amateur and Open classes can take part in the competition.
2. Two riders are taking part in this competition at the same time.
3. The classification is individual.
4. The main goal is to do the run in the most precise manner (number of obstacles passed correctly) and as quickly as possible, through 4-6 obstacles.
5. The pattern must be built in such a way that the paths do not cross
6. The winner is selected using single-elimination competition (the winner goes to the next round, loser drops out).
7. In the 2019 competition, the horse-rider pairs are seeded based on the places taken in Polish Championships Cowboy Parallel Race in 2018 ( the results of the competition are posted on [www.plwir.pl](http://www.plwir.pl) or can be sent to the organizers from the PLWiR office on request). If the rider is competing on a different horse than the previous year, then he/she is counted as a new pair and last year results do not apply. This set out does not apply in the Polish Championships in 2019.
8. Riders are drawn immediately before the CPR competition.
9. Tracks are drawn immediately before the CPR competition.

10. The duration of every run is measured by the judges. Recorded time can be used in the classification process e.g. in anyone to anyone classification.
11. The organizer can decide to make a consolation tournament using single-elimination (for riders that have dropped out in the first round.)
12. If the number of riders competing is small, then the organizer, in consultation with the jury of the competition, may decide to apply the anyone to anyone system.
13. In the case of a small number of participants in the CPR Polish Championships, the organizer is obligated to apply the anyone to anyone system.

#### **4. Cowboy Trail**

1. Classes: Youth, Amateur.
2. Competition in classes Youth and Amateur should be done as class in class competition (by the same pattern).
3. The classification is individual.
4. The main goal is to do the run consistently with the pattern and as precisely as possible through 6-8 obstacles.
5. Judges are rating both the horse and the rider and their cooperation during the passing of an obstacle.
6. For passing an obstacle the judges give marks/scores:
  - a. Excellent– 5 pts
  - b. Good – 4 pts
  - c. Average – 3 pts
  - d. Poor – 1 pt
  - e. Obstacle not passed – 0 pts (see section VI, point 15).
7. Three fastest riders are also granted points:
  - a. Best time – 10% of maximum overall score for obstacles in the particular pattern
  - b. Second time – 10% minus 1 pt.
  - c. Third time – 10% minus 2 pts

- d. Example: The pattern consists of 8 obstacles.  $8 \text{ obstacles} \times 5 \text{ pts} = 40 \text{ pts}$   
 $10\% \times 40 \text{ pts} = 4 \text{ pts}$ . The rider with the best time is given 4 pts, second best time 3 pts, third best time 2 pts.
8. The winner is the pair that obtains the highest cumulative score for passing the pattern.
9. In the case of two pairs having the same score, the winner is the pair with the shorter time.
10. During the rating process the judges pay attention to:
  - a. The ability to correctly pass an obstacle, confidence and pace of passing it, attitude and posture of the horse (judges have in mind that every breed has its unique characteristics in movement and body build)
  - b. The horse, no matter what breed, should be confident, brave, vigorous and should present a good response to the riders signals.
  - c. The obstacles should be passed in a technically sound and safe way, thereby giving a chance to show off to all rounded horses that are fast, but also precise and are ridden by skillful and confident riders.
  - d. The rider and the horse should give an impression of harmony.

In consequence, the following elements are important:

- a. The attitude of the horse when approaching an obstacle, the way the horse passes it and moves away, the quality of the gait and the level of the horses concentration on the performed task
- b. The correct and prepared way the horse approaches an obstacle - straight ahead, to the middle, with no short-cuts.
- c. The way the horse passes the obstacle - the technique, the confidence, the speed of passing it.
- d. A natural posture and a correct engagement of the horse in all gaits.
- e. Whether, after passing an obstacle, the horse will follow the track (if it is determined) and, in the case of a lope, if it is on the right leg.
- f. Horses that pass an obstacle with a better technique, with more confidence and with willingness to correctly respond to the riders signals, will be rated higher.
- g. Points granted for passing an obstacle will be higher if the obstacle is passed in a higher gait (if the gait is not defined in the pattern), e.g. a

rider carrying a flag from place to place loping, will be rated higher than the one that is walking.

- h. Points granted for passing an obstacle will be lowered if the horse clearly shows a lack of technique, unwillingness to approach or pass an obstacle, or if the horse is not responding to the riders signals. Points will also be lowered for speeding up or slowing down unnecessarily during the passing of an obstacle or when the horse approaches an obstacle not in a straight line, tries to go to the side of an obstacle or when it walks off the obstacle.
  - i. First approach to the obstacle can be rated up to 5 points. Second approach (after first disobedience) up to 4 points. Third approach (after second disobedience) up to 3 points. Fourth approach (after third disobedience) – 0 points, rider has to move on to the next obstacle (look pt. VII/4/6).
11. Minus 1 point from the score:
- a. Every additional lap around an obstacle (e.g. if a rider has to get off the horse and the horse has to do a lap around the rider).
  - b. If the flag is carried horizontally or with the material part directed down (flag has to be held by the shaft vertically, material up).
  - c. For every touch or a bump made by the horse to the obstacle (unless it is required).
  - d. When a horse steps off with 1 leg outside the designated area (the poles surrounding the obstacle are not a part of the obstacle and standing on them is an error).
  - e. When the backing up command that is supposed to be performed in a straight line, is not (e.g. zigzagged).
  - f. If a side-pass is not done perpendicularly to the direction of the movement.
  - g. Wrong leg lope (if in the pattern it is not determined on which leg the horse is supposed to be loping, then the rule is that the horse should be loping on its front, inside leg), when the rider notices it and immediately after starting a lope changes it to the correct leg.
  - h. First gait break.

- i. Every time a rider lets go of an obstacle (e.g. gait) during passing it, unless it is determined otherwise in the scheme.
12. Minus 2 points from the score:
  - a. If a horse steps off the obstacle with 2 legs outside the designated area.
  - b. Second gait break.
13. Minus 4 points from the score:
  - a. If a horse steps off the obstacle with 3 legs outside designated area.
  - b. Third gait break.

## **VIII. Types of Cowboy Parallel Race tournament systems**

### **1. Single-elimination competition**

1. Two horse-rider pairs are competing at the same time, in the next rounds only winners are competing, losers are dropping out.
2. Pairs should be seeded according to the results of the Polish Championships in 2018, that way the best pairs are not competing against each other in the first round. This rule does not apply to the 2019 Polish Championships. The rest of the pairs are selected by a drawing to already seeded pairs.
3. If the number of horse-rider pairs is different than 4, 8, 16, 32 some pairs can be granted a wildcard and go directly to the second round. It is also possible to do a preliminary round.

### **2. Single-elimination competition with consolation prize**

1. Riders do not end competing after losing in the first round. Another competition takes place for the first round losers, based on the same rules as the main event.
2. This option gives the riders that lost in the first round an opportunity to compete more than once.

### **3. Round-robin system**

1. This system is designed to determine a winner from a small group of competitors.

2. In Cowboy Parrarel Race this system is used in the case of 3 or 4 horse-rider pairs.
3. The essence of this system is that a single horse-rider pair is competing with all the other competitors
4. A pair gets one point for winning
5. After finishing all of the runs, the classification is determined by a score ranking system – higher scores indicating better performance.
6. If any of the competitors have the same score, then the times of the best runs decide about the ranking.

**Berger's Table – order of runs for 3 pairs (every pairs starts 2 times, overall there are 3 runs)**

Round	I	II	III
Order of runs	1-2	2-3	3-1

**Point Table for 3 pairs**

	Pair 1	Pair 2	Pair 3	Score	Place
Pair 1					
Pair 2					
Pair 3					



**Berger's Table – the order of the runs for 4 pairs (every pair starts 3 times; overall there are 6 runs)**

Round	I	II	III
Order of runs	1-4	4-3	2-4
	2-3	1-2	3-1

**Point Table for 4 pairs**

	Pair 1	Pair 2	Pair 3	Pair 4	Score	Place
Pair 1						
Pair 2						
Pair 3						
Pair 4						

**Examples of pattern elements:**

- a. Going around the barrel
- b. Slalom between markers (or different elements e.g. barrels)
- c. Riding without stirrups
- d. Bareback riding
- e. Jumping through obstacles
- f. Spins
- g. Trail bridge
- h. Trunks
- i. Gate
- j. Roping
- k. Pulling a trunk/branch/pole/beam on a rope
- l. Mailbox
- m. Putting on/taking off a coat or different element of clothing
- n. Side-pass (over an obstacle or not)
- o. Backing up (between obstacles or not)
- p. Getting off the horse and walking away
- q. Lifting horse's legs

- r. Taking off the saddle
- s. Moving things from one place to another