

Campdrafting

Campdrafting is a sport unique to Australia, involving horses and cattle. The sport exemplifies the work which is carried out by stockmen and women on cattle properties in the bush, and to some extent is still carried out to this day. Friendly rivalry between stockmen, betting as to whose horse was the best, saw the conception of campdrafting, which has grown to be a recognised sport with its own set of rules.

Rules

A campdraft competitor starts by selecting a beast from about ten head in a cut-out yard, often called the "camp". He then proceeds to work the beast forward, proving that he can hold the beast clear of the mob, and calls to be let outside. The gatemmen then release him from the yard, and he begins the coursework in the open arena., which involves directing the beast around three pegs in a figure-of-eight pattern, and then between two pegs, often referred to as the "gate". For the work in the cut-out yard, the judge allocates a score out of a possible 26 points, depending on the pressure applied to the beast and the resultant turns which the horse must perform to block the beast.

Scoring

The outside horse work is scored out of a possible 70 points depending on the competitor's speed around the course, and the ability to control the beast and keep the beast on the most direct course. An additional two points are added when the first peg has been completed, one point on completion of the second peg, and a further point for achieving the "gate". Thus the judge allocates a score in three sections for a possible 100 points in total.

Status

Competitions are normally divided into three categories to represent the horses' ability and experience. Maiden Campdrafts are for those horses that have never won a campdraft, Novice for those that have won some lesser campdrafts, and Open Campdrafts are open to all horses. Junior Campdrafts for young riders are often held, as well as for Lady riders, and sometimes campdrafts are restricted to Stallions or local horses, etc. The average competition fields about 100 horses in each category.

Horse Type

Campdrafting requires a horse with cattle sense, athletic ability in the camp, and the ability to gallop fast, small circles on the course while remaining responsive to the rider's control. The Australian Stock Horse is the ideal mount, particularly when fitted with the Australian Stock Saddle and ordinary bridle with a plain snaffle bit.

Rider

A campdraft competitor requires an understanding of cattle, the ability to ride well, and a horse which is under control at all times. It is an advantage if the competitor can predict a beast's intentions and if the horse has been started on cattle work.

Schools

Campdrafting schools are conducted around Australia and are an ideal medium for people and their horses to learn the basic requirements to campdraft, as well as the finer points necessary for the more serious competitor. The Head Office of The Australian Stock Horse Society can place interested people in touch with approved campdraft instructors who can help beginners and improve the techniques of competing campdrafters.

A number of Campdrafting events hosted by Branches and Management Councils are regularly listed on the Society's events calendar. Contact your local Secretary to find out details of forthcoming campdrafting events, or check out the upcoming events section on this website.