

COMPETITIVE TRAIL RIDING

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

The aim of Competitive Trail Riding (CTR) is for horse and rider to traverse a course within a specified period of time and to score points for the purposes of competition. The rides are judged events. They are not races as there is a minimum as well as a maximum allotted time. Although the pace allows for viewing the scenery, it is faster than a 'pleasure ride' in order to provide a test.

Upon arrival at the ride base, each rider nominates with the ride secretary, competition numbers are awarded (these ID numbers must be worn by the rider until the completion of the competition) as well as ride departure times. Riders then present their horses to the Horse Health official for a preliminary veterinary check.

All riders then attend the ride briefing when details of trail and expected riding time are discussed.

Riders are required to present their horses saddled and ready ride 15 minutes prior to their scheduled starting time to the first judge point – the 'Grooming, Tack and In-hand Presentation'. The second judge point is the 'Mount' (a mounting block is provided) and riders are then timed out (usually 3 minutes apart) and the ride has begun.

On the trail, there will be a variety of challenges. Horses are judged out of 25 points on their manners and ability while riders are judged out of 25 points on all phases of technical riding skill and the care and handling of their horses. It's a REAL experience but it is not a life and death situation e.g. Your horse may refuse to do a particular judge point and score poorly but your riding ability may score high points.

From the scorecards and the experience of competing, riders learn equitation and pacing techniques as well as methods of care and training which help their horses perform well. A by-product of CTRs includes nutrition, care and selection of tack and horse handling techniques.

Competitive Trail Riding has four divisions – Open, Novice, Junior (10-16 yrs) and Teams. An adult will automatically enter the Novice Division and graduate to Open after accumulating 60 riding points. These riding points are accumulated by a performance formula. Junior riders also graduate to Novice based on the same formula. From the time you nominate you are responsible for the care of your horse e.g. no one else can carry water for your horse, feed it or prepare your horse.

CTR's are designed to compete individually however you have the opportunity to nominate for the CTR TEAM RIDE which allows you to ride with another rider. Competitors from any division can ride in a Team Ride.

Here are some basic rules of Competitive Trail Riding:

1. Once your horse is nominated:

- a) Present your horse to the vetting area where a TPR will check and record your horse's temperature, respiration and heart rate.
- b) The Horse Health Judge will then check your horse for any problems such as dehydration, loose shoes, sore back or injuries which will exclude it from competing. If your horse passes all these checks you will then be required to trot out your horse (on a loose lead) so it can be checked for lameness.

2. Attend the Ride Briefing at the specified time where you will receive:

- a) a map of the designated trail
- b) a safety talk on how to correctly follow the marked trail.

3. At the start of the ride:

Present your horse saddled and ready to leave for **in hand presentation i.e. unmounted** (be in the area ready (15 minutes before your starting time).

4. Riders leave at three-minute intervals:

Wait for instruction from the Secretary's Van that it is time for you to leave.

5. While on track observe the following:

- a) Follow arrows and ribbons – don't go past any blockers
- b) Don't follow closely to the rider in front e.g. like on a trail ride. Maintain a good distance apart while moving along as the objective is for you and your horse to complete the course without the assistance of other riders.
- c) Ask permission from a rider in front before passing and pass at a **walk or trot only** (DON'T CANTER OR GALLOP PAST).
- d) Give any horse sufficient space when passing ALL HORSES POTENTIALLY WILL KICK OUT AT A STRANGE HORSE, THEREFORE RESPECT THE SPACE OF ALL HORSES.
- e) At Judge sections wait for the Judge to call you up. You and your horse are both marked out of 25 points each (i.e. total of 50 points) at each section. Do not follow another rider through a judge section. Wait until you are asked to proceed by the Judge. If you follow another rider through you and your horse will not score any points as the Judges can only judge one at a time.
- f) If you encounter a hold up at a Judge Section wait your turn and proceed in the order that you arrive at the Section. **DO NOT WAIT FOR ANOTHER COMPETITOR AFTER COMPLETING A JUDGE SECTION – RIDE ON** otherwise the judge will penalize you.

6. While on track observe the following:

- a) Look for Markers at 2km, 4km, 6km, 8km & 16km these will help you to estimate if you are travelling at the correct speed as advised at the briefing - usually 8km per hour. **There are penalties for travelling too fast or too slow.**
- b) When you come to the **3km to Home marker you must proceed in a forward motion** ... no stopping, weaving or turning.
- c) **AT ALL TIMES** you are to remain mounted ... therefore no getting off and walking in a forward motion **UNLESS** instructed at a judged section. If you feel you or your horse need a rest you may dismount but **must not walk forward along the trail** ... it is okay to walk back along where you have come from e.g. to the shade of a tree if you feel that it is necessary.
- d) If you come upon a rider who is trying to get their horse to have a drink ask if they would like you to wait ...DON'T JUST PASS THROUGH as it may disturb the other horse.

7. When you arrive back at the Ride Base:

- a) Stop at the Secretary's Van to receive a time slip which will tell you what time you should present your horse to the Horse Health Steward (this will be exactly ½ hour from your arrival time).
- b) Strap your horse i.e. cool him/her down. Experienced riders are only too willing to give advice if you need it but make it known at the ride briefing if you need any advice.
- c) Present your horse at the vetting area at your designated time. Arrive just a little bit before and avoid rushing.
- d) Final presentation to the Horse Health Steward will include checking your horse's heart rate, dehydration and overall condition and will require you to again trot your horse out so it can be observed for lameness.
- e) The Horse Health Steward will tell you if your horse has then completed the ride.

8. Presentation:

- a) Place getters are announced and receive their awards.
- b) All riders who complete the ride (*therefore the horse has passed the final health check*) will receive their completion awards and Judge's Score Card.
- c) Any rider not completing the ride (*therefore horse vetted out or withdrawn from ride*) can then collect their Judge's Score Card.

Ride Officials are always available to help you