

Snohomish County 4-H Horse Program

Trail Horse Class in The Field

Rules

PURPOSE

To help 4-H members learn trail skills and gain confidence in their riding abilities and their mounts. Riders learn what obstacles they can handle and how to take care of themselves, other riders, and their mounts on the trail. Safety and trail courtesy are very important, and will be emphasized and judged on the trail and in the camp/trailer areas, before, during and after the ride. Safety will be emphasized rather than endurance.

OFFICIALS

- Trail Master, the lead rider that no one should pass.
- Drag Rider, the last rider "out" and no one should fall behind.
- Obstacle Judges.

EQUIPMENT

- Saddles and headstalls must be used. Type is optional but safety, control and proper fit are important. Protective leg wraps, bell boots, etc. are allowed. Shoes on all horses and ponies are recommended, because of terrain and footing. Hoof picks, grooming brushes, curry combs, rub rags or sponges may be used at any time.
- Any equipment that the rider starts with must be maintained by that rider during the course of the ride.
- All riders must wear appropriate riding boots.
- ASTM/SEI approved helmets are required for all mounted participants, regardless of age.
- Exhibitor numbers will be assigned. This number is to be worn at all times through to the final judging. Any rider who needs assistance should turn their number over, signaling to the Judges that they need help. Riders not wearing a number, or wearing a number that is not visible, cannot be scored.

RULES

- All youth riders must have a Parent sign a release/hold harmless agreement. There will be no smoking, liquor, drugs, firearms, or dogs on the trail. Violators will be asked to leave immediately, forfeiting all entry fees and prizes.
- All Juniors must be accompanied by a Parent, guardian, other adult, or experienced Intermediate or Senior member on the trail. Registration forms will be signed by the Parent and the Rider who has agreed to be responsible for, and accompany the Junior on the trail.
- No non-competing riders except for Officials.

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- The trail will be marked (how the trail will be marked will be explained at the orientation meeting). Riders should watch carefully for markers, and stay on the trail.
- Horses shall maintain a space of at least one horse length at a walk and increase the distance between horses as the pace increases. Riders will safely allow faster horses to pass when the trail allows.
- Riders will use the buddy system on the trail, never leaving an inexperienced rider or horse alone.
- Walk up hills, down hills, on hard surfaces, when vehicles are present, and where footing is uncertain (mud, rocks, roots, holes, etc.). When footing is soft and level a trot (jog) or slow canter (lope) is acceptable as long as the whole group is in agreement.
- The trail shall not exceed 10 miles in length.
- There shall be a minimum of eight obstacles on the trail, at least four of which shall be chosen from the list below. The same type of obstacle may not be judged more than twice: Logs; Steep Uphill; Creek Crossing; Shy Object; Steep Downhill; Bridge Crossing; Mud Crossing; Road Crossing; Underbrush.

BASIS FOR JUDGING

- Four divisions will be judged and placed.
 1. Junior (grades 3 through 5).
 2. Intermediate (grades 6 through 8).
 3. Senior (9th grade and above).
 4. Adults/Leaders.
- The Riders should demonstrate behavior that is appropriate and safe. The Riders should:
 - ◇ Be courteous on the trail and in camp.
 - ◇ Mount and dismount quietly.
 - ◇ Allow plenty of room for others in camp and on trail.
 - ◇ Allow faster riders to pass safely.
 - ◇ Keep to the right on roads and trail.
 - ◇ Provide adequate care for their horses.
 - ◇ Have their horse under control at all times.
 - ◇ Slowing to a walk or stop when a car or truck is passing.

SCORING

The maximum points possible for each obstacle is 10. The horse and rider shall be judged as a "team" when negotiating obstacles. The "team" will be observed and scored according to criteria such as refusing or skipping obstacle, riding off course, maintaining unsafe distance between horses, rushing through obstacle, traveling at unsafe speed, leading horse through an obstacle (such as over a bridge or logs) or taking feet out of stirrups or irons. Camp manners and attention to the well-being of horses will also be judged. Judging will start at the beginning of the orientation session and will be completed after final judging.