

Competitor's Guide to Trail Trials

SAFETY FIRST!

Camaraderie, competition, fun, and obstacles of course!

This has been prepared to give you an idea of what to expect and to help answer any questions you may have. Even though we have attempted to define obstacles and expectations as best we can, judging is still somewhat subjective. It is important to remember that the people doing the judging are volunteers doing the best they can.

The trials consist of a trail ride, averaging about two hours with 10-12 obstacles that are natural or simulated to conditions found on the trail in different settings to test rider and equine friend's capabilities.

Good horsemanship, good sportsmanship, and a good time are the important goals.

REMEMBER: The judge has the right to ask you to pass on an obstacle if he or she feels you will be unsafe. You may school your horse/mule if there is no other riders waiting to compete. You will be disqualified for any alcohol or drug use before or during the competition. We also ask that you refrain from smoking on the trail.

GENERAL RULES

1. To compete, the horse/mule may be of any breed and over three years old. It is up to the rider to determine if the animal is capable of competing.
2. Consideration will be made for either a handicapped rider or mount.
3. Ownership of horse is not required.
4. All animals are subject to the State of California Department of Agriculture's drug testing and drug use laws. Information will be available at the registration table.
5. Each rider is responsible for his/her own safety and the safety of their mount. Points are secondary to safety.
6. Control of the mount must be maintained throughout the ride.
7. Riding double is not allowed.
8. Any type of cruelty to animals such as excessive use of spurs, crops, etc., will be penalized. You may be disqualified.
9. No pets are allowed on the trail.

COMPETITION REGISTRATION

At time of registration you will receive a packet with your name tag/number, rules, maps, score card, survey, and any other pertinent information.

COMPETITION DIVISIONS

There are two categories, Senior (18 + years) and Junior (17 years of age and younger).

EQUIPMENT AND ATTIRE

1. A saddle of any type and a bridle or hackamore. Equipment must be clean, in good condition, fitted and used properly. NO riding bareback, with or without a bareback pad.
2. A halter, lead rope, knife, hoof pick, and water bottle are mandatory. It is also suggested to carry a first aid kit for both rider and mount. A cell phone is a smart idea.
3. Any type of clothing that is appropriate for riding is acceptable. Long pants and shoes with heels are mandatory. Helmets are required for riders 17 and younger and suggested for all competitors.

POINT SYSTEM AND AWARDS

1. The total points for the competition is 200 points.
2. Riders with the most points in each of the two divisions will receive ribbons up to ten places. The top three will also receive prizes.

OBSTACLE GUIDELINES

(These are suggested obstacles, *not necessarily the ones we will use.*)

1. **Leading:** Mount to follow willingly, not lagging or crowding. Coiling the rope around the rider's hand will be penalized. Mount must be lead by a lead rope not the reins unless the reins are unclipped from the bit and re-clipped to the halter. Bosal or mecate may be tied into a leading hitch.
2. **Mounting:** Rider must check cinch before mounting; stirrup does not need to be laid over the saddle. Mount is to stand quiet and not move out when mounted. A smooth mount does not unbalance your mount. Reins should be in left hand and on neck while right hand grabs the horn or the pommel on the off-side.
3. **Dismounting:** Mount is to stand quietly and not move off. Style of dismount is not considered, only a smooth dismount that does not unbalance the mount. Reins should be in hand.
4. **Hoof Check:** Mount is to stand quietly. The criteria is a safe leg pick up, not cueing the mount to do so. There is a penalty if the rider lets go of the reins or lead rope unless the mount is tied.
5. **Water Crossing:** The mount should walk through the water quietly in a continued forward movement. Mount shall not be penalized for stopping to drink or checking out the water before crossing.
6. **Uphill:** Check cinch before ascending. Rider should be positioned appropriately to maintain the center of balance. Rider and mount are to negotiate slope in a safe manner. No penalty for holding on to the mane.
7. **Downhill:** Check cinch before descending. Rider should be positioned appropriately to maintain the center of balance. Rider and mount are to negotiate slope in a safe manner. Rider may use a hand to support themselves on the mane or saddle.
8. **Stepover:** Mount may check out obstacle, then proceed over without striking the obstacle. Smaller mounts are not penalized for hopping over very tall obstacles as long as the rest is done calmly. If a rider declares to the judge that it is safer for them to jump the obstacle, no penalty will be given. However, when choosing to jump, it needs to be done in a safe manner.

9. **Bridge:** The mount should step up, walk across, and step off quietly. No penalty for acknowledging the obstacle.

10. **Gate:** Depending upon type of gate, rider will decide whether gate should be worked mounted or dismounted. If rider dismounts, 2 points are deducted.

11. **Drag:** Check cinch before beginning. Rider may hold rope or dally once. No tying hard and fast. At no time should the rider or mount get tangled in the rope. Mount should stand quietly during preparation and then pull or drag in control.

12. **Stationary Obstacles:** There are such things as slickers, balloons, map, trash, etc. Mount may acknowledge obstacle and rider is to maintain control.

Refusals: If the mount refuses an obstacle three times, a zero score is given. There is a three-minute time limit for the rider and mount to complete the obstacle. Mounts led through obstacles will lose points.

IDEAS FOR OBSTACLES

1. Tack check and mount
2. Log pull
3. Water Crossing
4. Gate
5. Off-side mount or dismount
6. Hoof check
7. Balloons
8. Potty
9. Bridge
10. Uphill or downhill
11. Backing up
12. Rain slicker
13. Stepovers and cones
14. Trot in hand
15. Carrying an object
16. Campsite
17. Turn on fore hand or hindquarters
18. Mailbox
19. Side passing
20. Walk, trot, canter, stop
21. Dead or live animals
22. Wherever the committees' imaginations take them

This event is designed, organized, set up, and judged by volunteers, who are giving their time to create a fun and educational experience for the equestrian community. Please be kind to the volunteers, and remember to thank them.

Have a great time on the trail!