

WELCOME

TO THE

NORTH AMERICAN TRAIL RIDE CONFERENCE

(N.A.T.R.C.)

REGION 1

CLINIC HANDBOOK



February 2008

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INTRODUCTION TO COMPETITIVE TRAIL RIDING

(Reprinted with permission from "NATRC Competitive Trail Riding, A Basic Guide")

The aim of competitive trail riding is for horse and rider to traverse a cross country course within a specified period of time and to score high for purposes of the competition. The rides are judged events. They are not races since there is a minimum as well as a maximum allotted time. Although the pace allows time for viewing the scenery, it is faster than a "pleasure ride" in order to provide a test.

NATRC rides take place on park and/or private land. Competitors haul their horses to the ride's headquarters where they set up camp. The camp might be in a grove of giant oaks or in a meadow where non-riding family members can either relax or perhaps assist management personnel while riders are competing.

After checking in with the ride secretary, the riders present their horses at a preliminary veterinary inspection. Later in the evening a meeting is called to brief the riders on the trails, and the next morning they are timed out from a starting line. With the aid of a map, they follow the marked course. How far they travel and for how long depends on the particular event and in which division the rider is competing.

The riders are judged by a team of at least two judges, a veterinarian and a qualified horseman/woman, the former being primarily responsible for judging the horses and the latter chiefly for horsemanship. Separate scorecards are kept for both categories, and after an awards ceremony competitors receive a copy of their cards. There are no secrets here; everything in the judging is spelled out.

The animals (horses, ponies, and mules) are judged mostly on condition and soundness but also on their manners and way of going, while the riders are judged on all phases of technical riding skill and on the care and handling of their horses.

Individual rides are all local events with an NATRC Sanction given using NATRC rules and approved judges; therefore, each ride is unique yet follows the same basic structure.

Although competitors do not have to be members, membership results in a number of benefits such as reduced ride fees, receipt of *Hoof Print*, NATRC's bi-monthly publication, eligibility to vote and participate in the management of NATRC, opportunity to become a ride Rules Interpreter, or train to become a recognized judge, and to accumulate points and mileage toward regional and national awards. Here, too, is the opportunity to support a strong national organization interested in the promotion of trails.

From the scorecards and from the experience of competing, riders learn equitation and pacing techniques and methods of care that help their horses perform well. A by-product of competitive trail riding includes learning such things as proper nutrition, emergency medical care, etc. Most importantly, riders become familiar with how the animal's body functions and how it handles the stresses that lead to improved health and outlook.

NATRC competitors share the challenges of terrain and weather conditions, of timing, and being judged, and sometimes the treasure hunt quality of staying on course, making for a spirit of friendliness special to NATRC. In a sense that, too, is one of the learning experiences of the sport.

So it is then that trail riders compete year after year, not just for the competition but for the friendships, old and new, the ongoing education, and the enjoyment of the partnership that develops between horse and rider.

Most rides offer Open, Novice and Competitive Pleasure (CP) Divisions. Mileage in the Open Division is 25-35 miles for a "B" (1-day) ride, 50-60 miles for an "A" (2-day) ride, and 80-90 miles for an "AA" (3-day) ride. The pace ranges from 4-6 miles per hour with the time and distance depending on the terrain. Novice and CP riders travel a less difficult, shortened course not exceeding 24 miles per day and traveling at a slower pace.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Cheri Jeffcoat, President of NATRC 2003-2005, reflected on what NATRC means to her and many others
(Reprinted in part from *Hoof Print*, official publication of the North American Trail Ride Conference, (January/February 2003, with permission)

N is for Nurture. Our NATRC culture is to encourage and assist our fellow riders. Our help may be in the form of yelling to a rider that they are off trail or encouraging a first time competitor to finish even though they are exhausted and their horse is being a "ditz". It may be cheering on a fellow competitor as they complete a difficult obstacle. It is caring for our fellow riders.

A is for Aspiring to Excellence. All of us pursue the perfect ride. Does it come easily? No. We strive to raise the bar on what our horses and we can accomplish. How many of us started a horse that could not back or side-pass? I was so bad that I had to learn how to teach my horse to do all those things that often frustrate us. We aim higher and higher; we attempt complex and challenging tasks; we feel a sense of accomplishment when we finally get Excellent + + on our score cards.

T is for Trail. What is a trail? It is not just a route that we ride. A trail is a pathway that leads to excellence, to educating ourselves and caring for and training our horses. Our trail leads us to endeavor to master all the aspects of competitive trail riding. Our trail is long and winding. But fun, challenging and gratifying.

R is for Respect. The Golden Rule says treat others as you would wish to be treated. By setting a high standard of good sportsmanship, by competing with honor and integrity, we are all raised to a level of being respected and being respectful of our fellow competitors.

C is for Courage. My favorite saying is, "Courage is not the absence of fear. Courage is the overcoming of fear." Courage may be just coming to your first competitive trail ride. Courage may be the first time you haul your horse more than an hour. Courage is the heart and bravery of participating; of trying a difficult obstacle; of acknowledging that we have more to learn and practice. Courage is the plain old guts to ride through a driving rain, to persist regardless of a Heat Index of 125 degrees, of making what feels like a giant leap from Novice to Open. Courage is in all of us.

Perhaps these thoughts are simplistic, but they are heartfelt. My very best friends from coast to coast come from the ranks of NATRC. The future of NATRC is in all of our hands. Aspiring to excellence is what makes us different, unique, and definitely a great group to join.

R1 RIDE SCHEDULE 2008

May 3	Mt. Diablo Ellen Pofcher Sec: Martha Flannery	Clayton, CA (925) 672-3733 (925) 673-9858	"B" O/N/CP
May 24 -25	Gilroy Hot Springs Jim Jeffers Sec: Judy Etheridge	Gilroy, CA (408) 779-4722 (415) 948-8823	"A" O/CP; "B" N harleyguy@garlic.com misxfire@yahoo.com
June 14	Mt. Quarry Vickie Myers Sec: Marilyn Hunter	Auburn, CA (530) 823-1202 (530) 885-4819	"B" O/N/CP mhunter@onemain.com
June 21	Georgetown NATRC Helen Steenman Sec: Zina Vitcov	Georgetown, CA (530) 333-4364 (530) 888-0768	"B" O/N/CP hsteenman@yahoo.com zvitecov@sbcglobal.net
August 9	NATRC Clinic Kay Lieberknecht	Ukiah, CA (707) 621-3662	Bring Your Horse
Aug 16-17	Bald Mountain Butt Busters Diane Sullivan Sec: Katie Carney	Wasilla, AK (907) 688-2250 (907) 373-7919	"A" O/CP; "B" N stable@mtaonline.net kcarney@mtaonline.net
August 23	Jackson Forest Steve Meroshnekoff Sec: Maria Pilgrim	Ft. Bragg (707) 743-9973 (707) 795-8163	"A" O/CP; "B" N iambrewing@aol.com wolves1961@sbcglobal.net
September 20-21	Bort Meadows R1 Benefit Ride Michelle Pimentel Sec: Sue Flagg	Oakland Hills, CA (209) 537-9355 (925) 890-2144	"A" O/N/CP; "B" N LIMIT 85 stablemucker2003@aol.com janismom@aircloud.net
October 4-5	Almaden Valley R1 Benefit Ride Phil Young Sec: Ellen Carter	Calero County Park San Jose, CA (530) 283-3221 (408) 353-2974	"A" O/CP; "B" N pbyoung@sunset.net ellen.carter@hp.com

NATRC MEMBERSHIP FORM
YOU CAN ALSO RENEW, JOIN OR PURCHASE ITEMS ONLINE! www.natrc.org

Memberships run from January 1-December 31. NATRC offers six membership plans (check plan desired):

NATRC announces new member benefits through Association Resource Group-ARG.

Platinum members receive personal excess liability coverage with a \$1,000,000 policy limit. Coverage is for claims brought against members of NATRC (Platinum) arising from the use and /or ownership of a horse and for horse-related accidents involving third party bodily injury or property damage. Coverage will apply when engaged in any horse related activity, and coverage is in excess of any existing valid and collectible insurance. There is no deductible. Professional Liability is not included, and business exposures are excluded. Other Benefits include:

Hertz Car Rental: Reference # CDP # 1747926

Accuconference Conference Calling: Customer Service 1.800.989.9239

Wicked Smart Apparel: Email Dave at Sales@wickedsmartapparel.com

Hotels.com: Visit our website www.associationresource.net then follow the Hotels.com link seen on the member benefits page.

IMS Printing & Signs: Email JJ at jjheim@imscolorado.com

CURRENT SINGLE ADULT OR FAMILY MEMBERSHIPS CAN BE UPGRADED TO INCLUDE PLATINUM BENEFITS. SEE UPGRADE OPTION BELOW.

- FAMILY MEMBERSHIP..... \$60.00 per year Household of 1 or 2 adults and children under the age of 18 as of Jan 1 (2 votes)
- PLATINUM FAMILY MEMBERSHIP.....\$100.00 per year Household of 1 or 2 adults and children under the age of 18 as of Jan 1 (2 votes)
- PLATINUM UPGRADE TO CURRENT FAMILY MEMBERSHIP \$40
- SINGLE ADULT MEMBERSHIP.....\$50.00 per year Single adult member (one vote)
- PLATINUM SINGLE ADULT MEMBERSHIP..... \$70.00 per year Single adult member (one vote)
- PLATINUM UPGRADE TO CURRENT SINGLE ADULT MEMBERSHIP\$20
- UPGRADE FROM CURRENT REGULAR SINGLE ADULT MEMBERSHIP TO PLATINUM FAMILY MEMBERSHIP..\$50 (\$10 for change to Family + \$40 for Platinum Family Upgrade)
- JUNIOR MEMBERSHIP..... \$35.00 per year Single Junior member under age 18 (no vote)
- ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP..... \$50.00 per year Equine-related groups or businesses only (no vote)
- SINGLE LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP....\$600.00 Any person of any age (one vote)
- PLATINUM ANNUAL UPGRADE TO SINGLE LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP....\$20.00annual fee
- FAMILY LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP...\$800.00 Husband and/or wife at the time membership is obtained and children under the age of 18 as of Jan.1 (two votes)
- PLATINUM ANNUAL UPGRADE TO FAMILY LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP...\$40.00 annual fee
- HOOF PRINT subscription only.....\$15.00 per year US and \$20 foreign

All NATRC memberships include: Rule Book (**upon request**), newsletter, eligibility to compete for NATRC annual high score awards and championships, rider and horse mileage awards, and reduced ride entry fees. New members also get a club patch. **Rulebook can be downloaded at www.natrc.org**

NOTE: All membership fees include both national and regional dues - when you join NATRC you are automatically a member of your respective region.

Please list first & last names of all competing family members, we especially need to know if members of the family have different last names:

Name(s) _____

Street _____ City, State, Zip _____

Phone (____) _____ Email: _____ Birthdates of Junior(s) _____

How did you find out about us? _____ \$ enclosed _____

Mail to: NATRC, P.O. Box 224, Sedalia, CO 80135

NATRC RIDER'S MANUAL

\$15 + \$3 SHIPPING/HANDLING EACH

_____ COPIES OF RIDER'S MANUAL _____ AMOUNT ENCLOSED

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Make checks payable and send request to: **NATRC, PO Box 224, Sedalia, CO 80135**

HORSEMANSHIP CARD

PRESENTATION/ TROT OUT

During the course of the competition, the judges will be observing and evaluating many things about you and your horse. If you want to place well, you need to pay attention to many little things. Veterinary judges monitor the horses to see what the effects of the ride are on the horse. Notes are made on the horse before the ride, during the ride, and after the ride. Doing a good job of presenting the horse to the veterinary judge is very important for a good evaluation.

When you present your horse to the judges, it is your opportunity to show your horse at his very best. Make a good first impression. The horse should be well-groomed; clean, clear ears and nostrils, no lingering sweat marks, no bot eggs or ticks. The hooves should be cleaned out and the shoes secure and in good condition. The halter should fit well, and all the ends should be tucked away.

As you approach the judge, for safety, make sure both hands are on the lead rope. It should be folded in a figure-eight (not a loop) in one hand. The other hand should be grasping the lead rope 6-10 inches below the halter. If you hold the halter for extra control, be careful not to accidentally slip a finger through the ring. Stand beside your horse and pay attention to the veterinary judge. Unless instructed otherwise, you should be on the same side of the animal as the veterinary judge to maintain control and to be able to turn the horse's hind legs away from the judge. It's risky to stand directly in front of the horse except to momentarily allow access to the mouth to check the mucous membranes capillary refill.

Follow the directions you are given to trot out. Usually you will be asked to trot away from the judges, circle the horse in each direction, and then trot straight back to the judge. Practice this at home with some variations. Judges have been known to ask for something different. Some riders prefer to longe the horse in a circle for the judge, while others prefer to lead the horse in-hand. Most judges allow either, but it is very difficult for most riders to keep up with the trotting horse. It is usually better to lead the horse from the right side (inside) to trot a circle in-hand going clockwise. For safety, keep both hands on the lead or longe line. Make large, smooth, round circles to show the horse to his best advantage. Practice at home until you are proficient. The ride is NOT the place to teach your horse to trot.

Be careful to not let the lead rope drag the ground or get tangled around your feet. If you look back at your horse while you are trotting beside it, it will probably take that as a cue to slow down. Try to not block the judge's view by getting between the horse and the judge. Letting the horse crowd into your space at any time, including the trot-out, is hazardous and usually reflects problems with respect in other areas as well. In the case of gaited horses, keep the horse in a lively, constant gait through the trotting presentation.

The in-hand presentation is one of the most important parts of the ride. Practicing your presentation at home until you and your horse are relaxed and confident will pay off handsomely on your scorecards later. As one horsemanship judge said, "It's not practice that makes perfect, it's PERFECT practice that makes perfect."

HORSEMANSHIP CARD

EQUITATION

(Reprinted from Hoof Print, Official Publication of the North American Trail Ride Conference, May/June 2003, with permission). By Priscilla Lindsey

Priscilla Lindsey is an NATRC Horsemanship Judge and a Centered Riding Instructor. She has been a competitive distance rider for 24 years and is a horse breeder and trainer.

Happy is the horse that carries a well-balanced rider with a secure seat and soft hands. The goal of every rider should be to ride this way all the time, whether riding for one hour or for eight hours or more.

Riding in harmony with the horse's movement is achieved by riding in balance all the time. When the rider is not in balance, excessive muscle tension (grip) is used. This results in rider fatigue and consequently pounding the horse's back and bumping his mouth. Riding in balance requires only good muscle tone (rather than tension) to keep the rider **light** in the saddle.

Riding in balance begins with the alignment of the rider's ear, shoulder, hip and heel in a vertical line when the horse is standing, walking, jogging or cantering. Also, this vertical line balances the riders of horses with lateral and four-beat gaits such as running walk and foxtrot. The faster trot, gallop and up hills requires a change so it is the rider's center of gravity over the heel, with shoulder ahead of the vertical line and hip behind, counterbalancing each other. The amount ahead and behind the line depends on the speed of the horse or the steepness of the hill.

The first step in achieving this ideal alignment is to have the pelvis in true vertical position, neither tipped forward (rider with hollow back) nor tipped backward (rider with rounded back). You might need visual feedback from a friend or a riding instructor to help determine if you are sitting hollow-backed or rounded. If you can easily feel your seat bones (the bony knobs that you sit on when sitting properly), rock back and forth on them until it feels like they are pointing straight down at the ground beneath your horse's belly. Also, when the pelvis is in the true vertical position, you will feel the least amount of muscle tension (abdominal or lower back muscles) holding it there. If you can't feel your seat bones in the saddle, try practicing on a flat, hard chair.

If you don't have someone to visually assess your position, try this: pull your knees up over the pommel of the saddle until your thigh is parallel to the ground. Feel how you are sitting on your seat bones. Then lower your legs without changing the position of your pelvis.

When your pelvis is correctly aligned, the next step is to position the legs and feet to provide a solid foundation. Your feet need to be directly under your hips to provide this support. Otherwise, you will have to use a lot more grip, rather than balance, with your hands and legs to overcome the effects of gravity and the motion of the horse.

Do this exercise to understand what I mean: sit in a chair with a flat seat and no arms. Sit all the way back in the chair with your feet flat on the floor out in front of you. Now try to stand up on your feet. You will have to throw your upper body forward before you can do it. Sit back down and notice how heavily you land in the chair. Now sit toward the front of the chair and place your feet flat underneath your hips. Notice how easily you can go up and down and how lightly you can land in the chair. Try this same exercise in the saddle to see if you have been riding with your feet too far forward. (Be careful not to land heavily on your horses back!)

When you ride in correct balance, relaxed and easy, yet with energy and good muscle tone, you will notice your horse starting to move out more freely. He will willingly give you his back if he is not worried about your slamming down on his back or being thrown off balance with every stride.

HORSEMANSHIP CARD

EQUITATION: GOING UP AND DOWN HILLS

You will probably be judged going up and down hills. Regardless of whether it is a mountain or a creek bank, the judges will be looking for the same things. The horse should proceed with calm deliberation at a consistent pace, carefully placing his feet and going straight up or down the trail when asked. The horse might lose points for “crabbing” sideways going up or down, rushing, crowding another rider, being excessively nervous, or tossing his head.

For the rider, the ascents and descents present a multitude of ways to excel. Whether you are going up, down, or on the flat, leg position is of paramount importance. Ideally this position is one that if the horse were to suddenly evaporate from under you, you would land upright, on your feet.

Going up hills, there is a “window” of good upper body position. If you lean too far back or are too far forward over the neck, you will make the horse’s job more difficult. If you are too far out of the saddle, you sacrifice stability and safety. You should fold slightly forward from the hips in an amount appropriate for the slope of the hill and the speed of the horse. Support yourself by rolling up onto your inner thighs so you can have your seat lightly off the saddle to make it easier for the horse to get his rear legs under it for upward push. It is permissible to take a handful of mane to steady yourself as long as it doesn’t interfere with the rein control. The reins should be short enough to guide your horse easily, but long enough that he can get his head down for balance on the climb. Maintain your form and control to the top of the hill. It takes muscles and coordination that come only with practice. The judge will interpret how well you’re moving with your horse.

Maintain your balance going down hills. Don’t lean back; this makes it harder for the horse to use his hindquarters to “brake” himself. Don’t grab the back of the saddle to stabilize yourself. Doing so puts you off balance and twists you in the saddle. One of the most common faults is “body sway” which is the rolling of your upper body from side to side as the horse descends. This not only makes it very difficult for the horse to stay in balance, it can cause saddle rubs.

In doing a down and up such as in a gully, or an up and down such as over a hump, maintain the appropriate body, leg position and control throughout. If you are balanced and moving as one with your horse, you should not get thrown off-balance or put behind the action of the horse as he makes the transition.

HORSEMANSHIP CARD

JUDGED MOUNT

Rarely a ride goes by where you aren't asked to demonstrate your abilities (or lack of) doing a mount in front of the judges. Being able to mount safely is important; horseback riding always involves first getting on the horse. The perfect mount consists of a horse that is standing still and listening to his rider and a rider who mounts quickly and smoothly and lands lightly. As with other challenges the judges present to you, this one has lots of opportunities for you to do your best.

Before you present your horse for the judged mount, be ready by making sure the girth is snug, the breast collar is attached, the stirrups are down, saddle packs are snugged down, and the reins are attached to the bit. Proceed to the mounting place when it is your turn. It would be inconsiderate to the judge and the other riders to fiddle with your equipment and do last minute tack adjustments when you should be doing the mount.

Make sure the reins are even and have just a bit of slack in them. Grasp them and some mane in your left hand about two-thirds of the way down your horse's neck. With your right hand steadying the stirrup, put your left foot in place. Take your right hand and place it over the saddle on the pommel of the opposite side. If you grab the saddle on the pommel, you are much less likely to pull the saddle over while you mount. Instead you are pressing it against the horse's withers where it is much less apt to shift.

If you stick your foot in the stirrup, gather up the reins, jerk the horse and grumble "whoa," then proceed to bounce 7 – 10 times on one foot before heaving yourself up in to the saddle, you will lose points for safety and control. You need to settle your horse before committing your foot to the stirrup. It would also be unsafe to stand too long, one foot in the stirrup, on the side of the horse.

Once you are in position and in control, bounce once or twice and lift yourself up, swinging the right leg cleanly over the horse's butt. Kicking the horse in the flanks or dragging your leg over his rump will cost you points in horsemanship even if your horse doesn't move. Settle lightly in the saddle, lowering yourself down instead of just dropping. The horse must not walk off and 'leave' without the rider.

It is better for the horse to use the terrain to mount as it helps you land more squarely into the saddle. Use a rock, log, or stump whenever you can. If you have any questions, simply ask the judge, "May I use that rock/log/stump to mount?" You might be asked to position your horse next to something to do the mount.

If you are asked to do an offside mount, do the same as described above, but as a mirror image.

The key is practice, practice, practice. Your horse will never learn to stand still for the mount unless you insist that he stands for every single mount. Bev Tibbitts, one of our early and best horsemanship judges, always seemed to have the perfect mount. She would practice by mounting and dismounting six times each time she got on her horse. She mounted on the near side, dismounted on the off-side, then mounted from the off-side and dismounted on the near side. The horse soon learned that it wasn't going anywhere for awhile.

You can also practice backing up after a mount, turning left or right, anything but going straight ahead. Don't let your horse anticipate which way it's going to go.

HORSEMANSHIP CARD

TRAILER CHECK

Safe camping with your horse is an important part of an NATRC ride. How you will secure your horse and care for his needs should be thought of before you ever leave home. Rings, bucket brackets and other modifications may be needed to make the trailer your horse's "home away from home" safe.

At most NATRC rides, your horse will be tied to the trailer while not being ridden or walked. He should have water available to him at all times. It is a good idea to mount the buckets up over the wheels or at chest level on the trailer side to prevent a horse from pawing and accidentally catching his foot in the bucket. A hay bag should be hung within your horse's reach. Make sure it is tied up high and in such a way that it will not droop too low when it gets empty and entangle your horse if he were to paw at it. Most horses will stand quietly tied to the trailer if they have a constant supply of hay and ample water.

Next, check for any protrusions, hooks or latches where the horse could catch or cut himself. The most common one is the back door latch on most 2-horse bumper pulls trailers. Unless your horse is tied at midpoint on those trailers, he can usually stretch around and get his halter caught under the door latch while scratching his face. You can wedge a tennis ball over the latch and secure it with some duct tape for the duration of the ride. You will also need to fill up the V-shaped well where the fenders curve down to meet the frame (by the taillights). This notch makes it possible for a horse to snag a hoof in it. Protruding license plates are another common problem. If they can not be relocated permanently, they could be wrapped with a towel and secured with duct tape for the duration of the ride.

If you have unhitched your trailer for the weekend while you are competing, be sure the wheels are chocked so your horse can not move it if he were to pull back. A panicked horse can drag a trailer a lot farther than you would think if it is unhitched. Make sure the blocks are back under the tires and don't stick out where the horse will be standing.

The horse should be tied with a panic snap or with a quick-release knot. The tail of the knot is pulled back thru the loop to "lock it down" in case the horse grabs it with his teeth and pulls. If a panic snap is used, the quick release end should be hooked to the trailer rather than to the horse as it can be very difficult to get close to a thrashing horse that needs to be released in a hurry. It is a good investment to get a nylon adjustable cross-tie and keep it in your trailer specifically for your trailer tie. Clip it to the ring where you intend to tie your horse and adjust it so the clip dangles 3-4 inches from the ground. If you tie with an extra lead rope, check the length during the weekend as they will tend to stretch and get too long. The horse should just be able to reach the ground. If you bring more than one horse, make sure they are not tied too close together. Ideally they should be on opposite sides of the trailer, but some people carry portable panels to separate two horses that must be tied on the same side of the trailer.

Stallions must be double tied at all times and tied to two different places. Please read the NATRC Rule Book for details if you plan to bring a stallion.

As with stabling situation, keeping the area cleaned and picked up is important. Do not leave brushes, rakes or tack lying within your horse's reach. Follow the ride manager's orders on manure and hay disposal. Some rides may allow you to scatter manure neatly away from the horses, and others demand you bag it for hauling out.

Make sure your rider number is taped to the trailer over where your horse is tied and that your horse has his halter tag number securely fastened. The halter should fit fairly snug and should not be loose enough that the horse can peel it off over his head in a panic. If he is blanketed, check to make sure the leg straps are adjusted correctly. The belly band should be snug enough that the horse won't get a foot caught when he lies down.

Once you are at a ride, take a break and walk about. Inspect other people's rigs and ask questions. Most NATRC people will be happy to share their knowledge and give you ideas for improving your set up. You will find that you become a lot more confident and safety conscious while camping with your horse.

HORSEMANSHIP CARD

TRAIL SAFETY AND COURTESY

Use your common sense when it comes to trail safety and courtesy. When approaching a water stop, don't crowd in, wait your turn unless the other rider(s) say it's okay. Some horses will stop drinking if crowded by a strange horse. On the other hand, if you're the one watering your horse, don't prolong your time and crowd others out. If you want your horse to drink more, move away and come back in a few minutes. A horse might also not drink if a horse ahead leaves. At any trail "obstacle," judged or not, wait for the horse behind you to complete it before you move off down the trail. Otherwise the second horse might get in a hurry to "catch up with the herd."

Don't dip your sponge directly in a water trough. No horse wants salty water full of horse hair. Carry a collapsible bucket or a zip lock bag to fill with water then move your horse away from the trough sponge.

One of the most common errors of new riders is to ride in a bunch or right behind the horse in front of them. Remember to keep a safe distance between horses.

Always let the person you're passing know that you're coming and on which side you will pass. Do not do an extended trot or canter past a horse that is walking or you might over excite it. Wait until you're well past to pick up your pace again. Always check to be sure the horse you passed is not throwing a fit because you're leaving. Finally, if you need to pass another horse because your horse is faster paced, do not just pass by one horse length. Pass the horse and rider and get going down the trail. Riders will appreciate it if you get out of sight after you pass.

If your horse is particularly slow, find a place to pull off the trail and let others by. Sometimes this may take awhile, but let people behind you know that you'll pull over as soon as you can.

When going through a gate, the first rider usually opens it and holds it for the others. After they have all passed through, they should wait until the gate is closed and the rider who opened the gate resumes his place in front. Occasionally, one rider will open the gate and ask the last rider in the group to close it. This is fine as long as you know the message was heard and the gate will be closed.

While you're being judged on your manners on the trail, your horse will also be judged on his manners. You, as the rider, will be responsible for his behavior and need to be alert to any situations that could cause a problem.

If your horse has been known to kick at other horses, put a red ribbon in his tail to warn other riders. Try to keep that horse from being crowded by other horses by pulling over if being followed too closely or moving the horse away when others get too close.

CHOOSING TACK FOR THE TRAIL

Whatever discipline you ride, the tack must fit your horse properly, be safe, humane and in good repair. NATRC requires that a saddle be used; type is a personal choice. Other equipment, as described in the current NATRC Rulebook, must be in the “bounds of good horsemanship.”

Besides a saddle, other tack may include, but not be limited to, a breast collar and crupper for holding the saddle in place in steep terrain; a pommel bag and/or canteen bag for carrying miscellaneous emergency supplies and water bottles; and a lead rope for tying your horse at the lunch stop. Unless hay is provided for all the horses at the lunch stop, any non-grazing food desired must be carried with you. Type of bridle is a matter of personal preference. Using a halter as the only headgear can be a good training tool in the round pen or arena, but halters often do not offer effective control in a competitive situation. While trotting the horse in-hand for the veterinary judge during the ride, a halter/bridle combination or some type of halter under the bridle works well. It is usually considered better to lead with a rope attached to the halter rather than by the reins attached to the bit. The horse will not only move more freely, but you will not be bumping the horse’s mouth with the bit.

Protective devices on the horse’s legs are not allowed. The leg is defined as any part of the leg above and including the coronet band. Distances and speeds in NATRC rides aren’t considered great enough that protective leg devices are needed. Also, protective leg devices themselves can cause problems if improperly applied, if dirt gets in between them and the horse’s leg, etc.

Any equipment you use should fit comfortably on your horse; should not bind, rub, or encumber movement. Any new equipment, saddle, pads, etc., should be tried out during training rides well before you consider using it in competition.

Many different styles and types of equipment are used. Often, you will obtain ideas how you can best modify your present tack to be the most effective for you on the trail. You don’t need to worry about everything matching and being color coordinated, but you do need to be sure your tack is functional and safe. The saddle pad should be clean and free of any object that might rub. Extra equipment should be securely attached to the saddle so it does not flop or dangle, causing irritation or rubbing, while you are riding.

Many riders become creative with the items they carry on the trail. A homemade scoop made from one-half of a Clorox (or the like) plastic container or a collapsible vinyl or canvas bucket can be used to obtain water from sources your horse may not be able to get to safely. They may also be used to offer water at P&R or lunch stops. Some riders use various types of see-through containers to hold their trail maps. A few may use a GPS or some type of horse “pedometer.” Others use heart monitors to readily assess their horse’s pulse rate from the saddle. Training to use these items must be done before you use them in competition.

Learning from others is just another example of what competing in NATRC can do for you and your equine partner. If it works for others, it may work for you. Experienced competitors and the judges can often help you solve your challenges more quickly than trying to figure it all out on your own. Horse people love to share their knowledge. NATRC riders are no exception!

YOU AND YOUR SADDLE

Another thing you must consider is the design of your saddle, because it is going to affect where you *can* put your feet. The point where the stirrup leather attaches to the saddle determines where the stirrup will hang. If the leathers are hung too far forward on the tree, as is typical with many western, Aussie, and forward-seat jumping saddles, it will be difficult for you to keep your feet in the correct position. No matter how hard you try to pull your leg back, the leather is going to keep pulling it forward as it seeks to hang vertically. This is an important thing to check when shopping for a saddle. Ideally, the stirrup will hang from just forward of the center of the saddle tree (or center of seat) so that when your foot is in the stirrup your heel will be directly below your hip joint.

This problem can also be caused by a saddle that does not fit level on the horse and is sloping down from front to back. This can be corrected by using a wedge pad that lifts the back of the saddle, providing the tree is not so narrow it pinches the horse's withers. The opposite problem is caused by a saddle that is too wide for the horse's withers and sits too low in front. This will cause your lower leg to swing too far back. Your upper body will feel like it is being pitched forward, causing you to grip with your knees. A wither pad that raises the front of the saddle can help, providing it does not interfere with the saddle fitting the horse properly.

Bracing hard against the stirrups or pushing your heel down too far (yes, you can have your heels *too far* down!) will send your leg out in front of you and cause you to sit back against the cantle, out of balance and behind the motion of the horse.

The next consideration is stirrup length. There should be enough bend in all the joints, hip, knee and ankle, to allow the legs to work as shock absorbers. A general rule-of-thumb is for the thigh to be placed at a 45 degree angle between level ground and true vertical, although many riders prefer a slightly longer stirrup length. Actually, it is smart to change the stirrup length during a long ride. Use an inch or two shorter for fast pacing and lots of hill work; then lengthen an inch or two for slow, level going. This allows different muscle groups to work and the others to rest.

Too long a stirrup length can cause many problems. A long, straight leg results in locked joints, thus no shock absorbing action. Also, having to stand on tip-toe and grip the stirrups with the toes during fast pacing results in considerable muscle fatigue, as well as putting you in precarious balance.

The placement of the feet in the stirrups can also hinder or help with fatigue. We are often told to "ride on the ball of the foot", but that is not quite correct. Your foot has a reflex point - just behind the ball and in line with the space between your big and second toes - that is the natural balance point of your foot. If the stirrup crosses this point, you'll be able to relax your heel down rather than forcing it down, and the circulation will remain better in your foot for those long hours in the saddle.

Perhaps you have also been told to ride with your foot parallel to your horse's side. This is not correct, as it stiffens your ankles and puts strain on your knees. Think about the way your knee joint works; it only bends one way, back and forth, not sideways. Keeping your foot and ankle joint in line with your thigh and knee is the most comfortable position. If a judge says, "Toes too far out," you probably also have your knees turned out. If your stirrups are the right length so you have bend in your knees, your knees are resting softly against the saddle and your feet are flat on the stirrup, then your toes should be in the correct position.

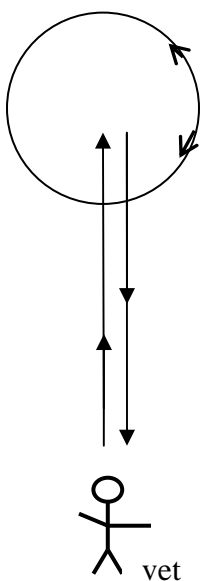
UNDERSTANDING YOUR HORSE CARD

By Suzanne Zane, DVM, with thanks to Robert Young, DVM.

There are 3 components to the veterinary (horse judging) score card: 1) Condition (40% of the horse's total score); 2) Soundness (45%); and 3) Trail ability and manners (15%).

Your horse will be evaluated by the veterinary judge at many points during a competitive trail ride. What we are looking for is an objective way to measure overall physical fitness of the horse for this kind of long ride, and see how he holds up as an athlete over the course of the weekend. The key to being able to sort out how the horses compare to one another is to judge every single one on the same things, the same way, using the same system of scoring. This is what we do on the score cards.

Each competitor has a “**check-in**” by the veterinary judge which is used to see what the horse's baseline is—that is, what is his physical condition *before* he starts the ride. That way we know if he has any fill in the legs from being trailered, recent tack rubs, interference marks, signs of lameness or soreness, what his normal activity level is at the trot out, etc. We mark everything down so that later on we can compare any changes that occur during the ride to what we saw before the ride. Most of the things we find on the horse at check-in do not count against the horse. However, if the vet sees a problem that may hurt the horse or become worse during the ride, such as a lameness, the horse will actually lose points at the first check-in or even not be allowed to compete. We try to discuss these kinds of findings with the rider when we see them because all of us are trying to look out for the best interests of the horse. The rider will be asked to bring the horse to the veterinary judge with only a halter and lead rope. You are welcome to use a longe line instead of a lead rope, and you may carry a whip for longing. The veterinary judge will examine your horse hands-on, and the secretary will record all the baseline information on your horse.



When asked, you will trot out your horse: straight line away from the vet, make nice, even circles (1-2) in each direction, then trot back to the vet. Think of it as a lollipop shape.

After your horse circles in each direction, head straight back to the vet. The vet wants to look at your horse directly from the front as you trot back to him/her. Try to stop a few feet from the vet – don't worry – they *will* get out of your way if you get too close. But do control your horse, and be able to stop him if necessary.

Every horse also has a veterinary “**check-out**” at the end of the ride, which will be similar to the check-in. It is a good idea to use the same routine at check-out as you did at check-in; i.e. if you used a longe line at check-in, use a longe line again, not just a lead rope. Note: If you want to use a longe whip at check-out, you had to have used it at check-in, too. Remember, the judge is using the trot-out to determine how the horse moves after the ride, and compare it to what they saw in the beginning, so you want everything you do to best show off your horse the same way you did at check-in.

It is to your advantage to teach your horse to longe. Besides being an excellent training and conditioning aid at home, a horse that longes well for the veterinary judge at a NATRC ride makes a much better impression in terms of movement than a horse that can only trot circles on a lead rope with the owner jogging next to them, interfering with their free motion. Also, a horse that is not making smooth circles or moving freely may look choppy or slightly “off” to the vet, when in reality the problem is just that he can't get his balance due to a short lead rope, etc. Note: although I will repeatedly use the word “trot” here, please know that for gaited horses, we really mean “your horse's gait that is the same relative speed as the trot”. So don't worry that you have to make your horse actually trot if he is gaited. However, if your gaited horse continually switches between similar-speed gaits when “trotting” out, it can be tougher for the vet to be sure that they are sound. If your horse is one of these gait-switchers, work at home on trotting out and longing while keeping one consistent gait.

At other times and places during the ride, you will meet the veterinary judge out along the trail. Don't worry when you see them—the judge is just trying to evaluate how your horse is doing as many times as possible during the ride in order to get an accurate picture of how fit the horse is for the competition. Just relax, follow any instructions they or their helpers give to you, and do ask questions if you aren't sure what you are supposed to be doing with the horse during a vet check.

CONDITION (40%)

MM (mucous membranes): Abnormal colors (bluish, bright red, brownish, or whitish) of the mucous membranes are signs of metabolic problems. We check the horse's gums, although we can also look at the inside of the eyelids or the vulva on a mare. Normal “mm's” should be a lovely pink color. If a horse's “mm's” are pink, I will write on the score card either “pink” or “1”, which stands for normal baseline.

CRT (capillary refill time): This refers to the amount of time it takes for the gums to get their color back after the blood is blanched out by pressing with your finger. It is a sign, among other things, of the overall hydration status of the horse. Normal CRT is 0.5 to 2 seconds, and I will write a “1” on the horse's card to indicate it is normal.

Hy (hydration): We check hydration by pulling up a pinch of skin over the point of the shoulder and seeing how fast it sinks back into place. Older horses are normally a little slower on the skin test than young horses because their skin is not as elastic. Again, this is a reason for checking a baseline, so that we can see what is normal for a particular horse before the competition starts. 0-1 seconds is normal (a “1” on the scorecard).

GS (gut sounds): Gut sounds are an indication of gut motility and related fatigue. A horse's intestines should normally be making nice, gurgly contractions every couple of seconds which you can hear with a stethoscope. I mark a “1” on the card if I can hear strong gut sounds every 4 or fewer seconds.

MT (muscle tone): Muscle tone is a measure of condition, electrolyte balance, and fatigue. I am looking for well-defined, relaxed muscle groups and also normal firm tone of the anal sphincter. These rate a “1”.

MAW (movement, attitude, and willingness): This is just what it says: the horse's look of animation, activity level of his movement, and attitude. This is scored as a “5” for a very active, hyper-alert, animated, eager horse; a “4” for an attentive, good mover who is relaxed, coordinated, and picks up his feet; a “3” for a slow mover who is still willing and paying attention, maybe shuffles a little bit; a “2” for a horse who is showing a lot of fatigue, not very willing to trot out, and disinterested; and a “1” for a horse who refuses to trot out on his own, is sour and depressed, hanging his head and ears. The numbers themselves are not a point score: a horse with a 3, 4, or 5 on check-in are all considered normal. It is the *difference* in that same horse's MAW between check-in and check-out that matters in terms of scoring. I have also checked in perfectly fit, rested horses that I have called a “3-minus”—just those very mellow, slow trail horses. That's not a problem either—it's normal for them, and if that same horse checks out as a 3-minus, they do not lose any points.

P&R (pulse and respiration): This is explained in a separate section of this Handbook.

SOUNDNESS (45%)

Gait (Way of going): We use this area to mark comments about soundness overall. We may also make comments such as “stumbles a lot” or “forging” or “nice, athletic mover.”

WBL: Withers, back, and loins. This is where we note muscle soreness or pain in these areas or tack rubs/tack sores of the withers or back.

Legs: (LF=left front, RR=right rear, etc.). Any swelling or fill, painful or hot areas, stiffness, fresh interference marks during the ride, etc., of a particular limb is marked here. I will generally mark an “ok” on the card for each normal leg.

Write-in areas under soundness are used to record other findings, such as tack rubs on the girth, mouth, chin or crupper area that occur during the ride.

TRAIL ABILITY & MANNERS (15%)

The vet judge uses this area to note any problems or to write in positive comments for especially well-mannered equine partners. The degree of scoring depends on how bad a problem is. For instance, if your horse is a bit antsy and won't stand still for the vet at check-in, I will make a note of it, and it might cost the horse 1 point. But if the horse tries to kick me in the head, I will have to mark off a lot more! Remember, what I am looking for here is the *horse's* trail ability and manners, not the rider's (the horsemanship judge scores the riders). If, for instance, we are doing a judged off-side mount on the trail, and the horse just walks off while the rider is trying to mount, that is scored against the horse. However, if the rider, in getting aboard, throws the horse off balance and the horse takes a couple of steps so that it doesn't fall over, the horse did his job properly.

Some additional things: Each vet judge uses slightly different systems to note things that are normal. For instance, I use a “pink” for normal “mm's” and a “1” for all the other condition parameters on the card. Another vet judge might use “OK” or “normal” or “0” for these instead. As long as the judge is doing things the same way through each card and for each horse, the actual way they mark something as being normal doesn't matter.

At the ride briefings after dinner each night, your judges will give information, tips, or feedback to the riders on any portions of the ride that were done that day and on what is coming up the next day. Listen and learn, and don't be afraid to ask questions!!

All the people putting on the ride- the ride managers, P&R crews, trail master, safety (drag) riders, radio/communications people, ride secretaries, and usually the people making the yummy food-are **volunteers**, and are working like crazy to make sure you have a good ride and that the competition is fair. Remember to take the time to thank them for all their hard work!

WHAT IS A P&R?

NATRC competitions involve traveling many miles on your equine partner. To make sure the animals are not over stressed, several P&R (pulse and respiration) stops will be encountered over the course of a competition. At these stops, your horse's pulse and respiration will be taken over a 15 second interval and recorded.

At the ride briefing the night before the ride, the trail master will usually tell you where the P&R stops will be. The veterinary judge will announce the P&R "Go/Hold" criteria. Criteria vary from ride to ride based on terrain and weather conditions expected the following day. Usually it will be said something like, "16 Go, 17 Hold." This means that after 10 minutes of standing quietly, if the count is 16 or below, you will be allowed to continue. If the count is 17 or more heartbeats and/or breaths in a 15 second count, you will be held an additional 10 minutes to allow the horse to recover. This time will be **added** to your minimum and maximum time allowed.

Most P&R stops are held out on the trail. When you know you're getting reasonably close to a P&R stop, stop for water if it's available. Let your horse drink his fill, and sponge his body if the weather is hot. Fill any horse water bottles you're carrying if you plan to use them at the stop. As you enter the P&R stop, you will be handed a time card and shown where to "park" your horse. The time on your card will be marked for your check which will be ten minutes from the time you arrived.

You should dismount and quietly lead your horse next to the last horse in line, facing the same direction as everyone else. Leave enough room for the P&R crews to get around between the horses safely. If the next horse in line has yellow ribbons in his forelock and tail (denoting a stallion) or red ribbons (potential kicker), give some extra space. After you have dismounted, you may tend to your horse in almost any fashion as long as it does not disrupt the horses on either side of you. It's a good idea to loosen your cinch just enough to give the horse a little more breathing room. It's also a good idea to run the stirrup up or throw it over the saddle so the P&R team doesn't have to fool with it later. Everyone has their own routine to calm their horse down, and you'll have to work out what is best for your horse. Some riders stroke their horse's face and ears using T –Touch, while some feed electrolyte cookies or sing to their horses. Some people like to pull the saddle if it is a hot day. Others carry lots of water and keep their horse sponged off. Some carry fans and create a little breeze of their own. Some horses don't like being messed with and will simply drop their heads, relax and go to sleep.

If you want to feed your horse a treat, remember that it can be very upsetting to the horse next to you who isn't getting one. It's usually better to wait until those around you have been checked. If your horse begins to act up, disturbing those around you, the P&R chairman might request that you move your horse away from the others. It usually takes a new horse 5-6 rides before he understands and gets used to the routine, so be patient. The more relaxed you are around your horse, generally the calmer he will be.

Ten minutes after your arrival, at the time written on your card, the P&R volunteers will come to check and record your horse's pulse and respiration. The pulse is given first, followed by the respiration for a 15 second count. The rules allow your horse a maximum of 12/9 for a P&R count without penalties. That means if your horse's heart beats 12 or fewer times, and he takes 9 or fewer breaths during the 15 second count, there will be no points deducted from his condition score. One point will be lost for every pulse count above 12 and for every 4 respiration counts above 9. For example, if the P&R volunteer records a 14/7, your horse will lose 2 points. If you feel that your count was incorrect for some reason, you may ask for a recheck which will be done by the team captain. You must accept the second count, even if it is a higher number.

When your count is done, if you have removed your saddle, get tacked up quietly, and check with the horse behind you to make sure it's okay for you to leave. If they are in the midst of getting checked or only have a few minutes left, please wait. Some horses get very excited when they think they're being left behind. You are given 15 minutes total time at each P&R stop to allow for this and other "necessities". It is permissible for a volunteer to hold your horse if you need to go to the bathroom, get a drink of water from the trucks, or fix your tack.

You might be instructed to carry your card to the veterinary judge. Other times the team will keep the card. Remember that the P&R crews are volunteers and are donating their time and energy. Be polite and courteous and remember to thank them for being there. If they weren't there, we wouldn't be either.

TRAIL SKILLS

A TRAINING LIST

Being able to do trail skills is part of what makes a good trail horse. We only do what we've practiced, and because we are judged on trail skills, we practice them. Skills asked for in a NATRC ride are based on practical situations. Judges will evaluate your horse's ability and responsiveness as well as your cues, control and balance. Ride them as you have practiced. Don't do a "monkey see, monkey do" and just copy the horse and rider ahead of you. Their technique might not work the best for you.

Following are some things you and your horse might be asked to do: (from a list composed by James McDonald, a NATRC Region 4 competitor).

From the Ground:

- Trot in hand
- Longe in hand
- Reverse direction of longe
- Mount with the horse standing still
- Dismount with the horse standing still
- Offside mount with the horse standing still
- Back between two objects
- Back uphill
- Back around something
- Side pass
- Allow strangers to pick up horse's feet, etc.
- Stand calm for 10 minutes.
- Hug the judges!

While Mounted:

- Back between two objects
- Back uphill
- Back around an object
- Side pass
- Step over a large log, stop, stand
- Side pass along a log
- Open and close a gate
- Walk over a bridge
- Turn on the forehand
- Turn on the hindquarters
- Walk up a hill (no rushing)
- Walk down a hill (no rushing)
- Stop on an incline and tie a ribbon to a limb
- Trot a figure eight
- Trot, stop when told
- Trot over a log without breaking stride
- Canter, knowing the lead
- Cross water
- Go down the side of a deep ravine
- Go up the side of a steep ravine
- Put on and take off a raincoat
- Condition your horse to maintain a pulse
Below 52 bpm after a 10-minute rest

PRACTICAL TRAIL SKILLS

A good trail horse is much more than one who will go forward down the trail. In order to deal with the unknowns of the trail, a good trail horse should be able to do certain trail skills. These types of skills highlight your horse's trust in you and your ability to guide him using your seat, legs, and hands. In the interest of safety, judges will often simulate a natural trail condition to ask you to perform a trail skill.

Back up: Since backing does not require any special props, such as logs or water, the judges may ask for this anywhere. The judge might stop you on the trail and ask for such things as to back your horse 5 steps, back between two trees, back between two logs on the ground, back up a slight incline, or even back in an L-shaped pattern. Collect your horse, glance back to make sure the space is clear, take a deep breath, and ask your horse to back. If backing a certain number of steps, back **ONLY** the number of steps requested. It helps to count the steps out loud so both you and the judge are in sync. Being able to control single steps of your horse is a wonderful tool for maneuvers on the trail or anywhere. Regardless of what you are asked to back through or over, the judges will be looking for a horse that backs straight, smoothly, and willingly.

Side pass: Being able to side pass can make a difference in safety on the trail as well as on your scorecards. This skill is useful in opening/closing a gate from the back of your horse, tying a ribbon, or picking up something lying over a fence.

Water and log crossings: Under most circumstances, the techniques used to cross water or logs are pretty much the same. The horse should cross obediently, without hesitation, paying attention to the rider's aids and where it puts his feet. Follow any instructions carefully. Don't be afraid to ask questions. It is usually permissible to let your horse stop and drink when crossing water, but you should not hold up other riders. Be considerate. If you think your horse needs to drink, move off to the side after the judge has evaluated you so as to let the next rider past.

Most veterinary judges like to see a horse cross logs without touching them. This shows that the horse is focused, aware of his surroundings, and not clumsy. The horsemanship judges are looking for riders to be balanced in the saddle and guiding the horse over the safest route. To stay balanced, do not look down as you cross. This moves your weight over the side and interferes with your horse's balance. Size up the situation **BEFORE** you begin, then keep your eyes focused ahead as you proceed through/over.

Unless you are given specific instructions to jump something, it is usually safer not to jump. You would be faulted if you ask your horse **NOT** to jump and he does anyway. If you choose to jump, maintain your balance and stay with the action of the horse so you don't get whiplash. Sometimes a rider will be asked to "Trot to point A" or "Trot until you are given other instructions." Somewhere along the way is a small log to jump where the judges are watching. Maintain the gait as instructed.

Fortunately, Mother Nature has given us lots of material to use to practice these skills at home. Instead of looking at the winter's downed trees and branches on the trail as a nuisance, consider them as an opportunity to practice your trail skills. For times when you can't get out on the trail, use logs or small jumps set up in a pasture or arena to practice on. Be creative...the judges certainly are!

Tip: When you practice these skills at home, be sure to do them from the ground as well. Not only can this help the horse understand the maneuver, sometimes the judges will ask you to perform these skills in-hand. Fortunately these skills require no special equipment and can be easily practiced anywhere, even in an arena. Once your horse backs up and side passes willingly for you, you will find more and more occasions to use these new abilities. Saddle up and ride!

Be safe: Above all, be safe. If you are asked to do something that you don't think you or your horse are ready for, just tell the judge that you'll pass on that observation. Yes, you will lose points, but just one more point than the horse/rider that did it the worst. It's better to be safe than getting you or your horse hurt.

NATRC — HORSE SCORE CARD

Top 2 Copies to NATRC Office

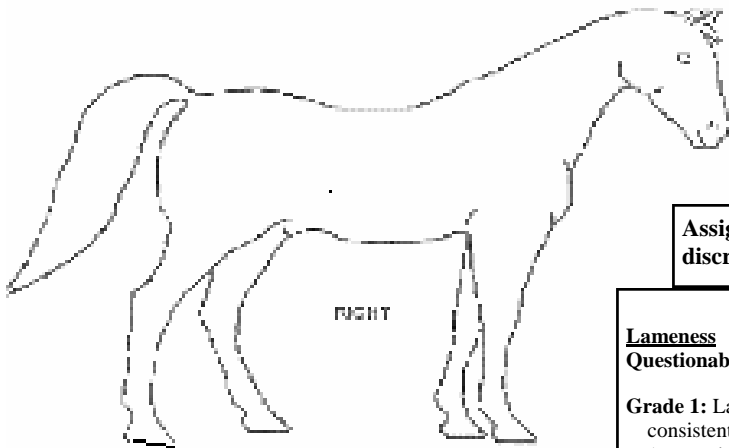
Hard Copy to Competitor

P & R's	Preliminary																			P&R Scores										
		In	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out	Day 1										
PULSE																				Day 2										
RESPIRATION																				Day 3										
P & R Scores																				Subtotal P&R										
CONDITION (40%)		<u>Check In</u>												<u>Check Out</u>				Condition Incl. P&R (40%)												
Mucous Membrane (MM)		MM				MM				MM				MM																
Capillary Refill (CRT)		CRT				CRT				CRT				CRT																
Jugular Fill (JF)		JF				JF				JF				JF																
Hydration (HY)		HY				HY				HY				HY																
Gut Sounds (GS)		GS				GS				GS				GS																
Muscle Tone (MT)		MT				MT				MT				MT																
Movement, Attitude & Willingness (MAW)		MAW				MAW				MAW				MAW																
SOUNDNESS (45%)		<u>Check In</u>												<u>Check Out</u>				Soundness (45%)												
LAMENESS (L)		L				L				L				L																
Way of Going (WOG)		WOG				WOG				WOG				WOG																
Withers, Back, Loins (WBL)		WBL				WBL				WBL				WBL																
Sores, Plaques, Rubs Interference (SPRI)		SPRI				SPRI				SPRI				SPRI																
LEGS Left Front=LF		LF				LF				LF				LF																
Left Rear=LR		LR				LR				LR				LR																
Right Front=RF		RF				RF				RF				RF																
Right Rear=RR		RR				RR				RR				RR				Trail A&M (15%)												
TRAIL ABILITY & MANNERS (15%)		<u>Check In</u>												<u>Check Out</u>																
Rider #	Horse Name					Breed					Age					Vet Judge(s)					Explain Penalty Points (if any)									
	Reg. #					Sex					Color															Height				
	Ride Name/Date															HSP Judge(s)														
																Rider														
																				Division/Class					PLACE					

Labels: 1 x 2 5/8ths or larger —Judges may initial names on labels.

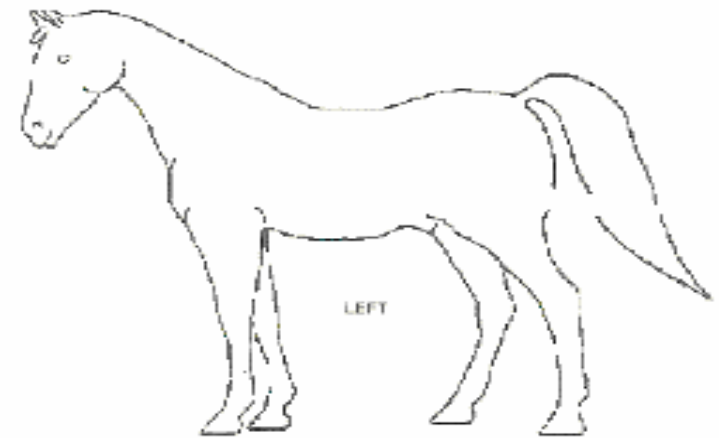
Attn. COMPETITORS: REVIEW ADDITION AND REPORT ERRORS TO MANAGEMENT

SWEEPSTAKES



SUGGESTED SCORING

Assignment of points is at the professional discretion of the veterinary judge.



Number In Class: _____
(to be filled in by rider)

TRAIL ABILITY / MANNERS 15%

Obvious kick at Judge, Rider or Handler -5 to -10
Obvious bite at Judge, Rider or Handler -5 to -10
Fractious, Unruly, Dangerous (Bites, Kicks
Non-responsive, Threatens those who come
near) **DISMISS**

Stands quietly for exam, mount 0
Moves 1 to 2 steps or turns -1
Walks off -2

Maneuvers obstacle with adequate to excellent skill 0
Maneuvers obstacle with difficulty and/or slight resistance -1
Refuses obstacle or unable to maneuver within a
reasonable time frame. -3

Misses obstacle: **Deduct one more point than the poorest performing horse is deducted.**

Downhill, uphill, creek/log crossings
Attentive to trail and rider 0
Mild disobedience -1
Moderate disobedience -2
Out of control or refuses -3

Breaking Ties: Refer to current Judge's Manual

SOUNDNESS 45%

Lameness

Questionable Soundness: -1 to -2

Grade 1: Lameness is difficult to observe and is not consistently apparent regardless of circumstance (e.g. under saddle, circling., inclines, hard surfaces, etc.) -3 to -5

Grade 2: Lameness is difficult to observe at a walk or when trotting in a straight line, but consistently apparent under certain circumstances (e.g. weight carrying, circling, inclines, hard surfaces, etc.) -6 to -10

Grade 3: Lameness is consistently observable at a trot under all circumstances. Do not allow to start a day! A horse observed during ride should be pulled. If observed final check-out, Completion Only may be granted at the discretion of the judge with card scored. **Pull OR Completion Only: Score -11 to -15**

Grade 4: Lameness is obvious at a walk. **Pull**

Grade 5: Lameness produces minimal weight-bearing in motion and/or at rest, or a complete inability to move. **Pull**

For grade 3, 4 or 5 See Judging Manual for Pull criteria

Legs: Heat on each leg Pain on each leg
Slight -1 -2
Moderate -2 -3
Severe -4 or pull -5 or pull

Windpuffs, windgalls (synovial swelling of joints or tendon sheaths that result from trauma but do not cause heat, pain, or lameness) are not penalized.

Fill Slight -0 to -1
(edema- Moderate -1 to -2
type filling) Severe -2 to -3

WBL (Withers, Back, Loins)

Discomfort/pain which is obvious with palpation
Slight -2
Moderate -4
Severe -6 or pull

(Score each side of horse separately)
(i.e. r loin, l loin, r back, l back etc.)

SPRI (Sores, Plaques, Rubs at girth, cinch, mouth, etc; Interference marks)

Slight -1
Moderate -3
Severe -6

Condition 40%

MM (Mucous Membranes)

Color: Normal 0
I: Injected -2
C: Cyanotic (Blue) -4 or Pull
M: Muddy Pull

MT (Muscle Tone)

Normal 0
Cool/Clammy -2
Cold/Trembling -4
Rigid/Spastic **During ride—Pull**
End of Ride -5

GS (Gut Sounds)

Slight to strong Normal
Prolonged -1 to -2
Silence -4 or Pull (if other factors corroborate)

MAW (Movement, Attitude, Willingness)

5 Bold, animated, attentive
4 Attentive, good mover, no animation
3 Slow mover, but willing & attentive
2 Showing a great deal of fatigue, not very willing to trot out
1 Refuses to trot out on own

HY (Hydration)

(To be taken over shoulder)

0 to 1 sec Normal
2 to 3 sec Mild
4 to 6 sec Severe
7 and up Pull

MAW: -1 per degree the horse deteriorates

JR (Jug Refill)

(Seconds)
0 to 1 Normal
2 to 3 Mild
4 to 6 Severe
7 and up Pull

CRT (Cap Refill)

(Seconds)
0 to 2 Normal
3 Mild
4 Severe
5 and up Pull

For Hydration, Jugular Fill, CRT

SI Change (0 to 1 degree) 0 to -1
Mod Change (2 degrees) -1 to -2
Severe Change (3 degrees) -2 to -3

Pulse: Base = 12 (48 bpm)

Points deducted -1 per each beat over base

Respiration: Base = 9 (36 rpm)

Points deducted

Always score the first recovery P&R

1 to 9 0

According to the pulse rate table.

10, 11, 12,13 -1

For each 10 minute hold score a total of

14, 15, 16, 17 -2

-5 points, **IN ADDITION** to the first recovery

18, 19, 20, 21 -3

P&R score. **Hold criteria is at the discretion**

22, 23, 24, 25 -4

of the Veterinary Judge

25+ -5

Thumps, Colic, Tie Up: Pull (Recommend Medical Attention Immediately)

Chronic Stumbling -2

Temperature may be taken by veterinarian only as a further judging criteria.

BASICS OF CONDITIONING

What is Conditioning?

Conditioning is a step-by-step process. It is not something that can be rushed or accomplished overnight.

What is the Goal of a Conditioning Program?

It is to safely help your horse achieve his highest athletic potential. The goal is to increase the efficiency of the heart and lungs, to help your horse build strength and endurance, and to help your horse build bone density, tendon, ligament and muscle strength. It is the intelligent application of stress to help your horse build a body that operates efficiently under distance conditions.

Where Do I Start if I Want to Prepare for Novice Rides?

The key words are *Long Slow Distance Training*. It is imperative that you build a sound foundation for your horse's distance career. LSD training is to improve your horse's *aerobic* metabolic capacity. Aerobic capacity means that your horse's heart works at a rate of 120 to 150 beats per minute (bpm).

To start, you should spend several weeks at a walk. A horse usually walks from 3 to 5mph. You should walk out briskly. Begin your program with an hour's walk or between 4 and 6 miles per day every other day or even 2-3 days a week. Get in what you can –twice a week is better than nothing.

Progress to walking & trotting. You may walk a mile, then trot a 1/2 mile. Build the foundation slowly and with care. Remember your goal is to safely build the stamina and endurance of your horse. **DO NOT INCREASE SPEED AND DISTANCE AT THE SAME TIME.**

Later in the season, increase either the speed or the duration (miles). Go from 5 miles to 8, then 10 or 12 miles twice a week. Include a longer ride every two weeks. Do not increase your speed at the same time. After you have reached a specific goal in miles, then slowly increase your speed.

How many miles and how fast should I be conditioning for a Novice Ride?

The first year, your goal should be to do about 30 miles per week. Once your horse is accustomed to the distance, you can increase the intensity by asking for more trotting time or adding a slow canter. It is very important to not over condition the horse. The reason for taking days off is to allow the horse's body to rest and repair itself from the mild stresses of the beginning conditioning program.

The average speed for a Novice ride is 4 mph. The rides will have a variety of terrain. Some may include a long up hill which will slow you down and other terrain to allow for faster travel. So, if you are conditioning at a speed of 4 to 6 mph, you should be able to handle a Novice ride easily.

Remember, the key is Long Slow Distance. During your first year your goal is to build the foundation for the future athletic career of your horse. Walk, walk, walk. Then, walk, trot, walk, trot.

After the basics, what do I do?

After your first year of competition, you will have a better understanding of the conditioning needs of your horse. You will have experienced a variety of terrain and weather conditions for the area you ride in. It will be easier and simpler to plan your future conditioning.

Conditioning is a study in itself. There are many good books available to learn about aerobic, anaerobic, interval training, strength training, energy demands (muscle types, lactic acid. etc.) One of the best is Go the Distance by Nancy Loving, DVM.

READING YOUR TRAIL MAP

Tools that will be helpful

Highlighter pens (various colors)

Pen or pencil

Flashlight

Clipboard

Map holder for saddle

You may look at the map and think it looks hopelessly complicated! It isn't once you understand the information on it. You will hear maps called "a bunch of intestines," "Chinese take out menu" and the like. Study the map before the rider briefing. To get your bearings, look where base camp and the trail start are located on the map. Make notes on things you don't understand. Each map will be a little different. At some rides, such as the Hayfork Ride in Region One, the point timings are necessary but the trail map will rarely be used. It's more like a scavenger hunt and one of the most fun rides we have. (You notice I didn't say easiest!).

The first thing to do is make sure you have the right map for your division (Novice, CP or Open). They may be different. Then, *LISTEN AND PAY ATTENTION AT THE RIDE BRIEFING!* Save the chatting for later. Determine what color ribbons or "pie plate" markers you will be following for the day. Often the markings will change after lunch.

Don't be afraid to ask questions at the ride briefings. If you are a first time rider, say so, and many will be glad to help you. Find out what the pulse and respiration criteria are for the ride. Usually it is "16 go and 17 hold" (count for 15 seconds). Make a note of criteria on your map somewhere.

Look for water stops (for your horse) shown on the map. If they are not shown, ask where they are. It is helpful to highlight these with a blue "dot." Look for obvious landmarks on the map or ones that might be mentioned in the rider briefing. It will help you keep your bearings when on the trail. There is nothing more comforting than saying to yourself (or out loud), "That's the tower they mentioned. I am on the right trail!"

Review the timing and points designated for the trail. The points are shown on the map and correlate with the time you are expected to be there. This is usually expressed in ride time. Most rides use a start time of 12:00. That means, no matter what "real" time is, when you cross the start line, your "ride" time is 12:00. It is helpful to set your watch to 12:00 and push the stem in when you cross the line. Some riders wear two watches; one with real time, one with ride time.

If the map is a topographic map, you might want to look to see where the hills are to help pace yourself along the trail. The "squiggly" lines on the map will be closer together. You can be sure there will be a hill prior to a P&R stop. Mark your P&R stops on the map (use a different color). The trail master will usually tell you at the ride briefing if the trail is a dirt road, single track, rocky, or the like. It may be helpful to make those notes on your map. Obviously, it would be hard to make up time on a rocky trail, but you could do some trotting on a dirt road.

You will notice that there is a minimum time and a maximum time. That means that you have 30 minutes from the minimum time to finish. Try not to be more than 15 minutes faster or slower than the time designated to be at certain points. Judges and ride management are often hurrying to get to observation locations, and their efficiency depends on your timing being accurate. Riding time is just that. The difference between your riding time and elapsed/total time is the time added in for P&R stops (15 minutes each) and lunch. If the pace is not listed on your map, you can figure it yourself. It is the miles divided by the riding time. You should know how long it takes your horse (mule or pony) to walk a mile (generally 15 to 20 minutes per mile). If you can walk a mile in 20 minutes, it would equate to 3 miles per hour.

Ok, you have some hints for map reading and timing. You will find what works for you.

DISTANCE ONLY ("DO") OPTION

If you like what NATRC has to offer but aren't ready to compete yet, the DO (Distance Only) option might be just for you.

Participants in DO ride for mileage only. They receive a scorecard, but are not be placed.

Participants must follow all NATRC rules, with the exception that leg protection is allowed

A horse may compete and the rider be DO, or both horse and rider may participate DO.

If the horse is DO, the rider must also be DO.

The DO team may elect to do one day of a two-day ride.

RIDE CHECKLIST

(Reprinted with permission from the NATRC Rider's Manual)

HORSE SUPPLIES

- Hay, hay bags
- Grain & scoop
- Buckets
- Electrolytes
- Salt or range mix
- Halter & lead rope & spares
- Longe line
- Manure fork, rake
- Saddle
- Girth or cinch + spare
- Saddle pad
- Crupper, breast collar
- Bridle, reins
- Rain sheet, stable sheet (light)
- Shipping boots/wraps
- Fly spray
- Wand/ whip
- Saddle soap

GROOMING SUPPLIES

- Brushes (assorted)
- Clean rags, sponges
- Hoof picks
- Shampoo
- Sweat scraper

REPAIR SUPPLIES

- Duct tape
- Leather thongs
- Leather punch
- Snaps/ rings

IN GLOVE BOX

- Coggins test papers
- Directions & map
- Health certificates
- Registration papers

RIDER SUPPLIES

Easy access

- Camera
- Flashlight
- Rain gear

Camping Supplies

- Cot, foam pad, mattress
- Hatchet, hammer
- Lantern
- Pillow, sleeping bag
- Tent, stakes
- Trash bags
- Waterproof tarp

Personal Supplies

- Alarm clock
- Deodorant
- Hair brush
- Hiking boots
- Insect repellent
- Jacket/ sweater
- Jeans
- Lotion
- Makeup
- Medications
- Mud boots
- Nail clippers
- Nail file
- Pencils/ note pad
- Poison ivy/oak cream
- Riding boots
- Riding pants
- Shampoo
- Shaving gear
- Shirts/ t-shirts
- Shoes
- Soap
- Spray Conditioner
- Sun-block lotion
- Tissues
- Toilet paper
- Toothbrush & paste
- Towels
- Tweezers
- Tylenol/ ibuprofen
- Underwear
- Warm hat & gloves
- Washcloths

To Take on the Trail

- Black electrical tape
- Canteen/ water bottles
- Halter
- Helmet
- Hoof pick
- Horse's lunch
- Knife
- Lead rope
- Leather thongs
- Lip balm
- Lunch, unless delivered
- Nylon ties
- Saddle bags
- Sponge on a thong
- Watch
- Wire cutters

FOOD SUPPLIES

- Aluminum foil
- Cooking utensils
- Cooler
- Ice
- Matches or lighter
- Paper cups & plates
- Paper towels
- Plastic utensils
- Potluck item
- Sharp knife
- Snack items

TRAILER SUPPLIES

- Blankets
- Fire extinguisher
- First aid kit
- Hangers
- Horse divider panels
- Lantern
- Pillows
- Propane
- Propane heater
- Quilt
- Sheets
- 6 T-posts
- T-post driver
- Trailer ties
- Trailer wheel chocks
- Wheel well covers
- Wire (extra)
- Wire ties

TRAILER/ TRUCK CHECK

- All items loaded
- Brakes checked
- Extra oil
- Fluids OK
- Fuel OK
- Hay
- Hitch on
- Hitch pin locked
- Horse doors secure
- Horses in and tied
- House-sitter keys
- Interior gates latched
- Jack support boards in
- Lights hooked up
- Light harness secured
- Lights checked
- Tire inflation OK
- Trailer doors locked
- Wheels unblocked