

KyQHA/AQHA TRAIL TRIAL RULES

Revised 03-25-09

OBJECTIVE: To better develop the rider-horse “Partnership.” Trail Trials tests the Rider-Horse Relationship. Recreational Riders and trail horses experience vast and diverse stimuli in the normal course of a day’s trail ride. Trail Trials uses these stimuli and gives the “partnership” the opportunity to gauge its abilities. The stimuli consist of natural obstacles as well as fun obstacles. The goal is for the “partnership” to exhibit fundamental skills and harmony.

REQUIREMENTS: Coggins and applicable state health certificates required.

PARTICIPANTS: Competitors can ride multiple horses as long as entry fee is paid. Any horse can be ridden by multiple riders and horses do not have to be owned by the rider. Trail Trial Hosts and Coordinators will be eligible to compete. Each competitor will be designated a number for competition and will display said number on rider’s back during competition.

REGISTRATION: Registration will begin promptly at 9:00 a.m. with the first horse being called to the course at 10:00 a.m.

PRIZES: First five places in each class.

YEAR-END AWARDS: To be eligible for the year-end award, it must be the same horse and rider. Scores will be cumulative from the judges score sheets at all Trail Trials. The participant must attend two of the three Trail Trials AND the KyQHA annual ride. All three Trail Trial scores will be used in determining the year-end total. In the event of a tie, the horse and rider that has placed over the most number of entries will be deemed the winner.

CLASSES: Registered Quarter Horse--Proof of registration required at sign-in.
Open—All breeds including mules, ponies, and grade horses.
Youth—Ages six (6) through eighteen (18). Helmets preferred.

JUDGES: The judge(s) will be knowledgeable but will not be required to be credentialed or an AQHA judge. The number of judges required will depend on the course. Most courses tend to dictate the need for more than one judge due to time constraints and topography. One of the judges will be designated as the senior judge if more than one is required. All judges will be introduced prior to the start of competition and explanations will be provided regarding the course.

SCORING: Each obstacle will receive a score from zero (no attempt) to ten. No bonus points will be added. Obstacles will not be timed; however, obstacles should be negotiated in a timely manner. The classes are judged on how the horse and rider “partnership” works together. This working unit should negotiate obstacles with calmness and patience, moving safely through each obstacle. Horses should be aware, attentive, and not spook, shy, or spin. They should not clip, tick obstacles, or stumble. The “partnership” should demonstrate the capability of picking its way through the course and should willingly respond to the rider’s cues. Course patterns will be open to all participants prior to competition. Emphasis is on manners and response to the rider and quality of movement. Horses should be relaxed and not display resistance. Credit will be given to “partnerships” negotiating the obstacles with style and some degree of speed providing correctness is not sacrificed.

Loss of points can occur because of:

- Tick of a log or obstacle
- Failure to meet correct stride
- Skipping over or failing to step into required space
- Knocking down or severely disturbing an obstacle
- Stepping outside or falling off an obstacle
- Jumping off or jumping out of an obstacle
- Dropping rope gate or other required items used in obstacles
- Refusal, balking, or evading obstacle by shying or backing more than two (2) strides
- Blatant disobedience, kicking, bucking, or striking
- Not finishing an obstacle
- Falling to the ground by horse or rider
- Upon third refusal of horse, fall to the ground by horse or rider, or not attempting obstacle will result in a score of that obstacle of zero (0) and rider will be requested to continue to next numbered obstacle.

TIE BREAKERS: The judge will determine two obstacles as the tie breaker. Competitors will not know which obstacles are designated.

OBSTACLES: There will be fourteen (14) to sixteen (16) obstacles. Depending on the course, there may be occasions where there is one (1) obstacle that incorporates several obstacles that flow together. A few examples of obstacles are: water crossing, uphill, downhill, an outhouse, logs of various sizes, bridges, gates, drags, moving obstacles, backing between or through various items, ground tying, and loading. Some obstacles are designed to see if the partnership is able to trust each other. For example, roping a steer head is designed not to see how good the person can rope, but how much patience the horse and rider give to each other. Obstacles will be numbered and all participants will proceed through the course by consecutive number of the obstacles.

COURSE: All obstacles will be marked. The obstacles will generally be the type a trail rider would encounter on a normal day of trail riding or obstacles that would simulate activities on a trail ride. At least seven days prior to each event, the Trail Trials host will submit to the Coordinators the description of the course and all obstacles prior to the date of competition for safety purposes and suitability.

TACK: Riders must wear footwear with a heel, such as boots. Tennis shoes are not allowed. Suitable shirts and pants for riding are required. Horses must be saddled and bridled. There will be no bareback riding or bareback pads allowed.

UN SOUNDNESS: No unsound horses will be allowed to complete.

SPECIAL NEEDS: Riders needing special accommodations will be permitted. Judges or hosts should be informed at registration. Accommodations include, but are not limited to, mounting blocks, etc.

REGISTRATION: Registration will begin at 9:00 a.m. with the first rider beginning the course at 10:00 a.m. Registration will be ongoing and will not cease until the last rider has begun the course.

ENTERTAINMENT AND MEALS: After Trail Trial competition, a meal will be provided in addition to a short trail ride.

FEES: \$30 per class and \$20 for each additional class entered by the rider. Fee includes end of event meal. Non-rider meal charge will be \$10 per person. KyQHA membership required for the year-end awards. Application can be made on the date of the Trail Trial.