

Sunset Ranch Obstacle Challenges

Competition Overview

Each Obstacle Challenge Course is unique and will include 10 numbered obstacles. Obstacles are to be completed in numerical order. Detailed obstacle instructions for each level of difficulty will be made available to competitors prior to the Clinic/Competition weekend. Rider/Horse combinations may enter a class for a second round for schooling but the score from the first round will be used for SROC Year End Points. You may enter more than one horse in a competition .

Horses may have multiple riders/handlers. All disciplines are welcome! Tack must be consistent with the discipline you choose. If the judge determines a piece of tack to be unsafe or not humane you will have an opportunity to make an equipment change and return to the competition. NO tie downs or martingales are allowed. Bitless bridles are ok **IF** horse/rider exhibit good control. **Helmets are REQUIRED for riders under 18 years of age and are encouraged for adults**. Equines who are known kickers **MUST** wear a red ribbon in their tail. The judge has the right to determine if a horse/rider combination is unsafe to compete.

The Competition Course will be open for walking 30 minutes prior to the competition for riders/handlers and coaches. This time is set aside for competitors to walk through the course on foot without their horses and ask any final questions of the judge.

There are **2 Divisions** in SROC: **Open & Junior**.

1. The Open Division includes all riders over 18.
2. The Junior Division has 4 levels of difficulty available to young riders:
Junior- Intro- This level is for beginner youth riders- SROC defines "beginner youth riders" as riders who are still gaining confidence and control at the trot. The Junior Intro Division will have a set of instructions for some obstacles that are less challenging than other levels. These changes will be clearly outlined in the obstacle instructions. **Junior Division riders may also compete at L-1, L-2, or L-3 and will be pinned separately** from the Open Division.

Level of Difficulty Descriptions

SROC Competitions offer 3 levels of difficulty for their competitors to choose from:

Level 1 - Horses should show responsiveness to the aids: leg, bit, voice etc... Horses should be maintaining gait and direction. This Level is intended for inexperienced horses or riders/handlers. Level 1 horses may walk or trot between obstacles. Level 1 may have a caller to read the obstacle order aloud.

Level 2 - Some beginnings of flexion/softening to the bit/hands and bending in the direction of travel should be evident under saddle. Willingness to obey the handler/rider and lightness to the aids should be evident in all skill areas. Relaxation and subtle communication should be seen throughout a course. Level 2 In-Hand and Liberty may walk or trot between obstacles. Level 2 Mounted Classes will trot between obstacles. L-2 horses need a solid turn on the forehand and a turn on the haunches to be competitive.

Level 3 - Consistent flexion/collection and bend in the direction of travel is expected at this level. Canter work should be controlled, balanced and rhythmic to compete in level 3. Level 3 in-Hand and Liberty handlers may walk or trot between obstacles. Horses will trot between obstacles in Mounted level 3 classes.

The 3 Skill Areas: In-Hand, Mounted & Liberty

In-Hand

The In-Hand Division is open to any horse and handler. Any type of halter and lead combination is permitted. Training sticks/whips may be carried. No nose chains/lip chains allowed.

Mounted

SROC Mounted Rounds are open to all disciplines and all breeds of horses.

Liberty

Liberty rounds are to be completed without a physical tie between the horse and handler. Because we will be using a reasonably large arena for our competitions the following best practices are suggested for each level:

L-1 Liberty horses may leave the halter on the horse and tie the lead rope around the neck.

Level -2 Liberty horses may leave on their halters.

L-3 Liberty Horses will in fact be naked! Yep-Naked!

Scoring

0-missed obstacle OR 3 refusals, 1- Very Bad or not attempted BUT went through start cones- 2- Very Bad or not attempted BUT went through start AND end cones. 3- Poor Attempt, needs work. 4- Almost Complete, 5- Completed, 6- Acceptable, 7- Reasonably Good, 8-Good, 9-Very Good-, 10 -Excellent/Olympic Quality.

Score Cards with judge's notes will be available for competitor review at the completion of the competition. Original score sheets must remain with the show office for year-end award calculations. Precision & Freestyle Rounds are offered in each of the Three Skill Areas: In-Hand, Mounted and Liberty.

Supplemental Scores

In addition to the 10 obstacle scores there are **3 Supplemental Scores** at the bottom of the score sheet making the total number of points possible 130. In the event of a tie the total of the 3 three supplemental scores will serve as the tie breaker. The three supplemental scores are as follows:

Showmanship How the rider/handler engages the course. Higher marks will be given for smooth lines, straight approaches to obstacles, flow throughout the course and flair! It's a horse show- show off your stuff!

Partnership The overall harmony between horse & rider/handler. Subtle communication is the key! Lower marks will be given for resistance from the horse i.e. mouth gaping, ear pinning, disobedience, dullness or delay in response to cues, and distractibility

Horse & Rider/Handler Turn Out Horse will receive a score from 1-5 and Rider/Handler will receive a score from 1-5 (10 possible points). Considerations: cleanliness of horse and equipment, braiding appropriate to breed/discipline; completeness of rider/handler's clothing. English attire could include but is not limited to: shirts/breeches, belts, scarves, vests, jackets (weather permitting), helmet or coordinating hat. Western Attire could include but is not limited to: button down shirts, boots, western hat, belt, scarf, vest. **Color coordination with your horse and equipment / attention to detail will be rewarded!**

Common Mistakes & Related Scoring

-Knocking down part of the obstacle- This will result in a negative score: 4.5 or below.

-Refusals- Loss of forward motion for 10 seconds or backward steps: Automatic 4.5 first occurrence. 3 X = a score of 0 for that obstacle.

-Missed start or end cones- Automatic 4.5 or below for the obstacle.

-Off Course- This will result in a negative score : 4.5 or below in the Supplemental Score of Showmanship. Please make use of the numbers and the opportunity to walk the course prior to the start of the competition.

The Precision Round

Precision Rounds may be completed in any of the three Skill Areas: In-Hand, Mounted or Liberty. **Prior to beginning ANY round, competitors are required to salute/nod to the judge.** Each obstacle on the course of 10 has a set of start and end cones. Start cones may also serve as end cones-this will be clearly outlined in the obstacle instructions. Scores from 1-10 are given for each obstacle, $\frac{1}{2}$ points may be used. 2 points will be awarded if start and end cones are used (one point for each). The remaining 8 points will be awarded for clear execution of the written directives for each obstacle.

The Freestyle Round

Freestyle Rounds can be In-Hand or Mounted. Freestyle Riders/Handlers may pick any 5 of the obstacles on course to engage with in any way they choose. Showmanship and flair are strongly encouraged- have some fun with it! Obstacles will be scored 1-10 on the level of difficulty chosen and 1-10 on the execution of the task selected allowing for 20 points possible for each obstacle. Including the 3 supplemental scores there are 130 points possible for a Freestyle Round.

The Speed Round

The Speed Round uses the full obstacle course as written for the precision round, ridden as fast as possible. Start and End cones must still be used, instructions must still be followed with the exception of halts and Stop Settles. Any cone missed adds 10 seconds, any obstacle knocked down is plus 10 seconds. The fastest time wins!

The Liberty Round

You and your horse will have **6 minutes** to interact with the obstacle course at Liberty. Pick five obstacles to engage with in any way you choose, show us what you and your horse can do! Free time is always included as an obstacle allowing for tricks or other moves handlers want to showcase in their time on course. Before beginning your 6 minutes you must tell the judge your intended interaction with each obstacle and/or the framework of your free time skills. Each obstacle you choose will receive two scores 1-10. **20 points**

are possible for each obstacle: 1-10 for level of difficulty and 1-10 for the execution of the task chosen. In addition to the obstacle scores 30 supplemental points are available. 10 points each for Recall, Physical Assists and Connection. Each time horse and handler lose connection points will be deducted based on the level of disconnect. Each time a handler needs to touch the horse to give direction, points will be deducted. There are a total of 130 points possible in a Liberty round. Liberty rounds are to be completed without a physical tie between the horse and handler. The following equipment is allowed to help re-direct horses as they are advancing through the levels: L-1 Liberty horses may leave the halter on the horse and tie the lead rope around the neck. Level -2 Liberty horses may leave on their halters. L-3 Liberty Horses should be naked. All levels may use training sticks and treats.

