

RULES, STANDARDS, GLOSSARY and POINT VALUES



RULES IN BLUE

PHILOSOPHY

The Supreme Trail Challenge is part distance riding and part obstacle course in a one-day competition. Trails will be long enough to test horse and rider conditioning and stamina, while obstacles will be challenging enough to measure trail ability. The test of a true trail horse and rider team is in the ability to cover a good distance, keeping the horse sound while successfully completing challenges regularly encountered by a working horse/rider trail team. Multiple STC rides may be held back-to-back; however, each will be only a one-day ride.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- **Condition Check:**
 - Pulse - number of times heart beats in 15 seconds
 - Respiration - number of times horse breathes in 15 seconds
- **Soundness Check:**
 - Legs and hooves - horse trots out in straight line and back, a check for possible lameness
 - Back and loin - judge moves hand over horse's back and loin, a check for soreness
 - Girth - judge moves hand along girth area and looks for rubs, soreness
- **Obstacle*:** team performs a trail maneuver, possibly with several steps, while judge watches & scores
- **Trail Ability (TA):** team performance on obstacles and observations

***Judge may conduct obstacle evaluations from a hidden location.**

ENTRIES AND ENTRY FEES

Entry Fees: Fees may change to accommodate various ride scenarios; however to be consistent with other STC rides, a maximum of \$50 for adult entry is suggested. The recommended entry fees are: Adult, \$45.00; Junior, \$40.00.

Discounts: Discounts must be available for NCTHA members, early entries and multiple family members and should be listed on the ride entry forms, flyer and website posting.

Camping & Meals fees: Camping and meal fees are optional. They should be included with the cost of the entry and should be collected separately by the ride secretary or by the camping facility or catering service.

RULES, STANDARDS AND POINT VALUES

DIVISIONS / CLASSES / TIMING and DISTANCE

There are three divisions: Level One, Level Two and Level Three.

Two classes in each div.: Junior (age 17 & under - **Riders under age 10 must be accompanied by an Adult**) – Adult (18 yrs and over).

	Qualifications				
	Horse Age	Rider			
Level One	4 registration or tooth inspection	Little or no trail or distance experience, OR Needs training on distance and obstacles.	Easiest	3-4 mph	10 - 15 miles
Level Two	4 registration or tooth inspection	Should have previous trail experience or attended rides in Training/Clinic division.	More Challenging	4-5 mph	20 - 25 miles
Level Three	5 registration or tooth inspection	This is the equivalent of the open division in CTR. Rider should be a seasoned and experienced competitor.	Most Challenging and Difficult	5-7 mph	25 - 40 miles

In case of extreme weather conditions or other adverse circumstances, ride management has the right to shorten or change the trail as needed to accommodate existing situations.

Only adults may enter the ride on stallions. Juniors must wear helmets when mounted.

ARRIVAL – WHAT TO EXPECT

ALL participating horses, including safety horses, must have a negative Coggins test. Present Original Copy only at ride site.

STABLING

- Horses can be stabled in any safe manner. Electric pens may not be used as their safety is questionable.
- Stallions must be secured to prevent break away (even if they slip a halter) from their tie/stabling location. Management has the option to inspect and make suggestions for safe stallion tying. Stallions not properly secured that get loose in camp MAY be pulled from competition. Judges to decide, decision is final.
- Riders are expected to keep and leave their campsites clean and free of trash. Manure and hay may be scattered unless management requests it be bagged for disposal.

CHECK-IN

- Starts on the afternoon before ride day. Late arrivals must report on ride day morning one hour before the posted/announced time of ride start for evaluation by judges before starting on trail.
- Soundness, at initial check-in, is a simple pass or fail evaluation. Horses displaying Grade 3 lameness or above or displaying extremely sensitive back, loin or girth areas will not be allowed to start.
- Each judge will adhere to the defined procedure of using the flat palm of the hand with a little heel pressure for evaluating backs, loins and girths. No gouging, poking or digging into the back will be allowed.
- For soundness evaluations, horses will be trotted straight out and back approximately 125 ft. If soundness level is hard to determine or questionable, riders may be asked to trot horses in circles, in hand or by lounding, for further evaluation by judges.
- Horses determined, **by two or more judges**, to be unsound due to lameness, extreme sensitivity of back loin or girth areas will not be allowed to start the ride. Judges decisions are final.

BRIEFING

- Ride briefing for trail discussion will be conducted the evening before the ride. Late arrivals will be given a shortened version of the briefing in the morning before ride start.
- Each level will be given maps and ride plans with required time windows, average speed and distance.
- Trail master will discuss trails and maps.
- Question and answer session.
- Level 1 question and answer session to be held after briefing.

TACK / ATTIRE / EQUIPMENT / SHOEING

- A saddle is required.
- A bridle with reins must be used. Headgear may vary, hackamores, bitted bridles, side-pulls, are examples of headgear that may be used. **If riders can display control**, horses may be ridden in halters w/reins.
- Out of control horses, as determined by judges or ride management, will be excused from the ride.
- There are no restrictions concerning shoes, hoof boots or leg/ foot protection.
- Junior riders must wear helmets when mounted. Helmets are optional for Adult riders.

THE RIDE

GENERAL

- The ride will include P&R&S check-points, plus multiple on-trail and some in-camp obstacles. Warning signs must be placed before P&R&S check-points. These signs are to be within sight of the actual check-point. The distance between the warning sign and the actual check-point is not to exceed approximately 100 yards.
- Obstacles, as much as possible, will be natural, but in some cases may simulate natural trail obstacles.
Examples: opening gates (hinged, as well as rope), going through water, leg yielding, crossing fixed bridges, going through ditches, negotiating logs and brush piles, loading the horse into a trailer, backing in a straight line as well as in an L shape, hill climbs and descents, in-hand maneuvering of the horse, going up and down horse-friendly steps as might be found on a rocky trail and stopping promptly when cued by the rider.
- Rides will be timed events, each with time windows used for starting, arriving at various points on trail and completing. Teams are to start, arrive and finish within established time windows. At the finish line, teams will be penalized **one point per minute** for completing the prescribed course outside time windows either early or late.
- On trail, teams arriving outside time windows will not be penalized; however, riders are strongly encouraged to stay within windows. Doing so, insures teams are maintaining a regulated pace established to keep horses from being overridden. Teams traveling too slowly or too quickly risk arriving at judging check points either before or after judges are present. If judging check points are missed, teams will receive a score of zero (0) for the missed scoring opportunity.
- On-trail distance markers will be placed at regular intervals to assist riders in monitoring time and miles traveled.

ON TRAIL

- Riders must stay mounted to progress on trail. . (Exceptions: 1. For safety, when trail conditions dictate, a rider may dismount and lead for short distances. Ex: paved roads, bogs, slick rock, trail drop-offs, etc. 2. Riders may lead horses from P&R&S warning sign into P&R&S check-point.
- Teams MUST follow the prescribed marked course. Failure to do so will result in penalties being assessed by judges based on the severity of the infraction. Judges decisions are final.
- Simple, “gate and go” condition and soundness checks at regular intervals by judges to insure horses are fit to continue. These checks will be scored and used as part of the overall team score.
- Riders will dismount upon arrival at P&R&S checkpoints. **Note:** With judges’ permission, riders may remain mounted for P&R check and soundness trot-out.
- After each Pulse and Respiration check on trail, judges will evaluate soundness. This may be an in hand or mounted trot, either, straight out and back, or a “trot by” past the judge.
- Any horse with a pulse or respiration count of 17 or more, in 15 seconds, will be held for 10 minutes and rechecked. If both pulse and respiration are not below 17 after 10 minutes, for the horse’s safety, the team will be pulled.
- Minor dings and scrapes on horses legs will not be noted or scored as part of the soundness evaluation.
- As there are no boot or leg protection restrictions, at the discretion of judges, horses presented for soundness checks with **severe** interference or overreach **wounds** may have these considered in the overall soundness evaluation score.

AFTER THE TRAIL IS COMPLETED

- Each team will present for final P&R check immediately upon crossing finish line.
- Each team must complete an in camp obstacle after final P&R check.
- Final soundness evaluation will be held approximately one hour after final time window for entered division has closed.

SCORING

- Teams will be scored with a positive system. Each team will start with a score of (0).
- Teams will be given the opportunity to earn points as they progress through the ride.
- Total possible points per level will be based on number of observations, obstacles and P&R&S checks held within each level at each ride.
- Total possible points per level may vary between rides.
- Each team’s final score will be a sum of that team’s total TA (trail ability) scores plus P&R&S scores.
- Rider and horse will receive ONE combined score that will be based on horse and rider team performance.
- Pulls:
 - In lieu of completion points, teams pulled at final check-out for unsoundness of limb, back, loin or girth will receive points equal to the team’s earned Trail Ability score at ride’s end.
 - Teams pulled on trail, whether voluntarily or by judges, for unsoundness of limb, back, loin or girth will retain Trail Ability points earned up to point of being pulled.
 - Teams pulled on trail for unruly, dangerous behavior of either horse or rider, whether voluntarily or by judges, will receive no points and will finish the ride with a score of zero (0).
 - Teams disqualified for other rule infractions, judges to decide, may or may not receive earned TA points.
- In the event of tied scores, judges will break ties before awards are announced. If teams have the same overall score, higher placing will go to the team with the highest Trail Ability (TA) points.
- Judges will remain at ride site one hour after awards ceremony to settle any scoring or placing problems. Decisions are final once ride is completed and judges/management have left ride site.

DRUGS

- **Performance enhancing drugs are illegal.**
- **Random drug testing may be conducted.**
- **The latest update of AERC Rule 13 and the rule 13 appendices drug policy will be followed.**

POINT VALUES

Condition (maximum)

- Pulse: 5 points
- Respiration 5 points

Obstacle (maximum): 10 points

Soundness (maximum)

- Legs and Hooves: 5 points
- Back and Loin: 5 points
- Girth: 5 points

CONDITION and SOUNDNESS

Pulse (taken for 15 seconds)

- 12 beats & under: 5 points
- 13/14 beats: 4 points
- 15/16 beats: 3 points
- 17 & above: 2 points, hold for 10 minutes
If not 16 or below after 10 min, team **PULLED**

Legs and Hooves (5 points maximum)

- Sound: 5 points
- Grade 1 or 2: 3 points (inconsistently observable at the trot, difficult to observe)
- Grade 3: 0 points (consistently observable at trot under all circumstances) **PULLED**

Girth area (5 points maximum)

- Sound: 5 points
- Slight sensitivity: 4 points
- Moderate sensitivity: 3 points
- Extreme sensitivity: 0 points **PULLED**

Respiration (taken for 15 seconds)

- 9 beats & under: 5 points
- 10/11/12/13 breaths: 4 points
- 14/15/16 breaths: 3 points
- 17 & above: hold for 10 minutes
If not 16 or below after 10 min, team **PULLED**

Back and Loins (5 points maximum)

- Sound: 5 points
- Slight sensitivity: 4 points
- Moderate sensitivity: 3 points
- Extreme sensitivity: **PULLED**

***At soundness checks on trail, only soundness of legs and hooves will be evaluated.**

TRAIL ABILITY - OBSTACLES, BEHAVIOR and MANNERS

Obstacle

- Excellent: 10 points
- Very good: 8 points
- Good: 6 points
- Poor: 4 points
- Attempted, but failed: 2 points
- Passed (no attempt): 0 points

AWARDS

- 1st – 6th place will be awarded in each class of each division; Level One, Level Two and Level Three.
- No prize money will be awarded.
- Each team that finishes will get a completion award.
- The title, Supreme Trail Team Champion, to be awarded to **ONE** team at each ride. Teams competing in all are eligible. This award will be presented to the team receiving the highest overall score.
- Only the same horse and rider team combo will be eligible for any series or year-end awards.
- Points earned in all divisions by the same team will be combined for year-end overall awards.

RULE CHANGES

STC rules may be changed by the BOD when a proposal for a rule change is submitted to the BOD; a motion for the change is made and seconded, followed by a favorable vote. Approved rule changes, in most cases, will take effect on the first day of the first year following the approval. In cases of emergency, rule changes may take effect immediately upon approval.