LEISURE DIVISION (LeD) for JUDGES

Overview

- LeD is a competition. Most riders will be new to NATRC. Treat obstacles as learning exercises, and remember most riders are there to learn about NATRC.
- Expect that judging the LeD will be comparable to judging the Novice Division. There will be a mix of experience levels---some experienced horsemen/horsewomen who are just finding NATRC or starting new horses, and some new horse people in general. Likewise, the fitness levels of the LeD horses will vary.
- Try not to make the LeD more complicated than necessary. Keep it simple, and don't try to teach NATRC's whole history and knowledge in a 10-mile ride.
- LeD judges are representatives of NATRC and ambassadors for our sport. For the sake of consistency, please follow NATRC judging guidelines.
- Be positive and nice to competitors at all times. Leave your bad day at home.

Preparation

- A single judge can judge an LeD ride. If you are less experienced, management may use up to two judges. Your roles should be consistent; i.e. one of you judge the horses, and one the riders. Or, one do check-in/check-out, and one do on-trail observations. Or alternate observations where one judge does both horse and rider at first spot, and then second judge handles next spot, and so on. It is inappropriate for both judges to judge the same observation; i.e., one judge does part of the horse/rider teams, and the other judge does another part. This situation creates inconsistencies in scoring and is unfair to the competitors.
- It works best for the LeD judge and/or the secretary to have a notebook for recording information quickly and then transfer to scorecards. Using the scorecards at the obstacle can become difficult.
- Arrange with the ride chair ahead of time to have a knowledgeable driver who is familiar with the trails and access points. Make a plan for judging spots prior to riders timing out.

Stabling

- Our insurance requires a "stabling safety check" for LeD riders who are camping overnight. You or another ride official may do this since it isn't scored. Coordinate with ride management on the types of stabling allowed. If any LeD competitor ignores your recommendations, make a note and inform ride management for the record.

The Ride

- Have a ride briefing for the LeD riders the morning of the ride.
- Send riders from ride briefing to the check in area where you will be waiting. Checking each horse within 2 minutes +/-, including a straight out and back trot, is easily doable.
- Have your "check-in system" in mind. For example, start at horse's head and check for bit rubs and tack issues. Then progress down near side checking withers/back/loins/girth, etc. for rubs, soreness or other issues. Check legs (visual ONLY) on near side. Work your way around rear of horse and repeat in reverse on off side - visual on legs, withers/back/loins/girth, etc. and then end at horse's head on off side. Ask rider to trot straight out and back. You are NOT acting as a veterinarian but rather are making sure the horse is sound enough to start the ride. Note any significant safety issues in the Safety and Courtesy section of the scorecard.
- Send riders from check-in to getting their horses tacked and ready to go. Give clear instruction on the location where they will time out and time back in when off trail.
- The LeD scorecard provides space for scoring five observations. Given the shorter distances traveled, it will be difficult to actually see the riders five times unless some observations are two for the price of one; for example, a downhill/uphill transition could be scored as two observations - a downhill and then an uphill.
- Early obstacles are ideally ride through. Avoid creating any hold ups at the beginning of the ride.
- Holding up riders with complicated obstacles will cause more problems than even in a standard ride. With shorter distances and a shorter timeframe, there is less margin for error. If you get bogged down with riders at a complicated obstacle, you will be hard pressed to make the next observation point. This becomes more of an issue in a large division.
- If using a time consuming observation, plan it for the last one of the day, perhaps close to the forward motion marker. This eliminates the issue of missing the next judging spot.
- Avoid coaching someone through an obstacle; at least until you feel the team has failed on some level. After the obstacle, time permitting, feel free to offer advice if you think it will be well received.

- Try to make constructive comments to add to card. Those will be more useful to the rider after the ride than just a point score.
- No obstacles delaying riders should occur within 1/2 mile of the P&R.
- Keep trots to P&R's short; if used at all - maybe ~1/4 mile. Many horses may not be in condition or be used to being around other trotting horses.
- Be familiar and comfortable with proper LeD P&R scoring prior to the ride.
- Confirm the management has placed *the forward motion point approximately 1 mile from the finish.* This keeps the ratio of required forward motion closer to that of the other NATRC divisions. This also gives you a little more time to get in a final obstacle where you can stop the riders.
- You may observe the riders *after* the forward motion point but may *NOT* instruct or stop them.
- At the end of the ride, when you get into camp, begin final check-out within 30 minutes after the last horse times in. You may start checking in horses while others are still on the trail.
- Final check should be a repeat of check-in with the same procedure followed.
- A good tie-breaker system recognizes the importance of good equitation on the part of the rider and sensible manners on the part of the horse.
- Remember, score the horse and rider as a TEAM.
- Expect management to hold the award meeting for the LeD riders ASAP after their checkout. Include a "debrief" of the ride.