

Extreme Cowboy Association Clinic

(FYI none of these pictures are mine, they were posted by various members of KCRC who posted on the Facebook page! Thank you!!)

The [Extreme Cowboy Association](#) hosts competitions where riders take their horses through a series of obstacles that show horsemanship, trust and refined aids in order to get the horse through the obstacle and in order to earn points. This is Craig Cameron's baby; he is the originator of the Extreme Cowboy Race.

This was a free clinic hosted at KCRC by the members that are actively involved in EXCA. I'd never done EXCA so figured this would be an awesome introduction. I was worried I'd have to run through the obstacles but I was told I could stay at a walk. It was good to get Dani out and about with all the activity of other horses running around in the warm up arena. I had to figure out how to tie Dani while we were corralled into the stands for a brief introduction. I didn't bring my lead rope with me since I don't have a place for it on the saddle and you should never tie a horse by the reins!!!

There's me below at the right playing with the rope.

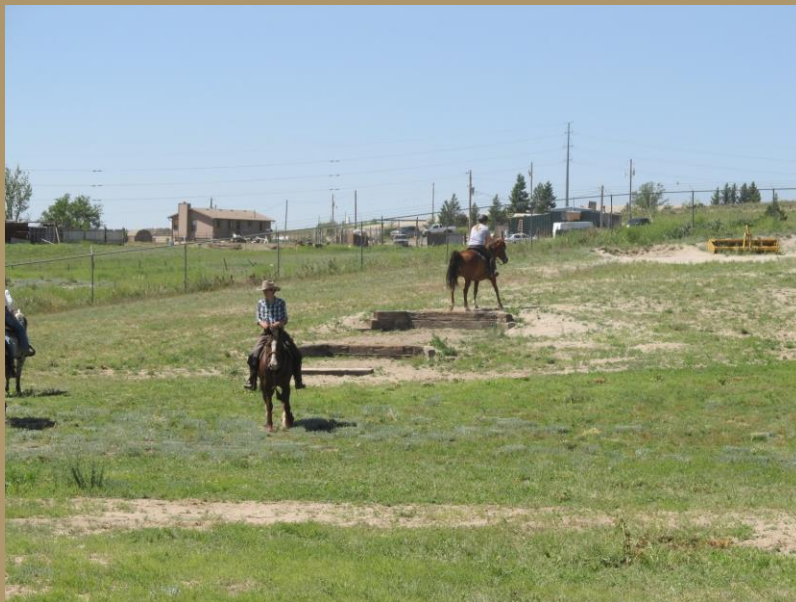


Luckily being at KCRC I could run her back to her stall, tie her there with some hay and run back to get the briefing. We then were broken into small groups of 3-5 to rotate through the obstacles. Not all possible obstacles were set up just a good number and variety. Dani and I were with two others, a couple on their two horses. Our first obstacle was a rope and barrel. You have to either rope the barrel, then trot around it; thereby wrapping the rope around it or you place the rope loop over the barrel and complete it that way. We only got to the part of standing on the ground trying to learn to through the rope and rope a rock in the sand. I was so not good at it but almost roped the sock at the end. Again I was sans lead rope so I didn't know how to secure Dani. I unlatched the reins from her bit and clipped one end to her halter ring and then loosely tied her to the rail behind me. Hoping she wouldn't do anything silly while sort of tied. She was good though.

Our next obstacle was a barrel with four poles at 90 degrees to each other. The goal is to trot or canter around the outside once, change direction and then go at an equal distance around the barrel and over the poles twice in that direction. We practiced at a walk.



After that we did the water hole. The two horses with me didn't like it at all and were balking at stepping in the water (puddle sharks live there don't you know!). Dani just looked down, sniffed and then walked through. We also did the **cowboy curtain** which she's been pretty regular about as I've done lots of ground training and in saddle training. Then we hopped up the three levels of "jumps" on the side of the hill (hello two-point, long time no see!). I've only done this with her in halter from the ground. The tallest one is about 1.5 feet. Going up that one I accidentally bopped my girl in the mouth. I felt bad but next time was better about it and she was forgiving. We also went down the obstacles. Always scary going down! I chickened out on the second step but did go down it at last. No ready for the tallest one. I can work on those and get the courage to hop up and down all of them.



The next obstacle was side passing over a poll. Nope, I haven't side passed yet so that's something to work on. Then we backed the turned through an L shaped pole obstacle. Dani was good at backing and turning outside of the pole obstacle but when I asked at the obstacle she didn't like it. I practiced outside some more, perhaps I can work on that on my own too since I have access to those poles.



The next obstacle was a ground tie where you walk around your horse, distance from them means more points. I didn't go too far from her but was glad she stayed. Good girl! Then we had to do a turn on the hindquarters (kind of like a spin but not). I haven't worked with her on this at all so barely knew what I was doing and confused her a bit but she tried. That's what I love about her, she may get frustrated at trying to figure out what I'm asking but she has a lot of try.



The scary object was the tunnel of junk. Plastic bags, jugs and other "trash" were set up between two fence panels and you had to move your horse through. The first time Dani paused; not out of fear but what seemed to be interest in if there was a treat in one of the bags. LOL. We went through again and again. So in love with my mare, the flapping didn't bother her much.

Removing a bucket from a barrel, lowering it to the ground and then placing it back on the barrel was the next obstacle. It made sounds and clinking. I made sure to have it brush Dani a couple times on the side and I made extra noise with it on the ground. She was solid. Then we had the "mounting" block. A table was set on 4 bales of straw....guess what....pony took a nibble. Oh my goodness. I could walk her around the obstacle but I couldn't get her to sidle up to it in order for me to dismount. At one point she thought I wanted her to step up on it but that wasn't what I was asking. Again, lateral movements

that go with sliding up to an obstacle and staying near it in a straight line is a common movement (opening gates, checking mail etc.)



When we were done I did a little trotting in a circle and dismounted. Lunch time! I brought Dani back to her stall, untacked her and made sure she had some hay to nibble on. Then I went for my pulled pork sandwich. YUM!!!



After lunch we were going to run through the obstacles like a race. This was going to take a long time as there were 30 something participants. We waited and waited as people ran the course. I was tired and my knees were hurting me. I started seeing dots so decided to call it quits and go take care of the pony, mucking, hay moving etc and then head home asap. I wanted to get out of the heat and into a luke-warm bath. We'd started the day at 8am and I left early at around 3 pm-ish. Several days that week I'd been in the heat working on the trailer, I was done with hot. It would have been nice to run the course but I just had to get out of the sun!



Anyways, I learned a ton and had a great time with my good girl. I'm so thankful to all the EXCA KCRC riders who volunteered their time to put this on for us! What an awesome day!

