



# EXTREME COWBOY RACE

The [Extreme Cowboy Association](#) (EXCA) is the original and only recognized association for the sport of Extreme Cowboy Racing. The Extreme Cowboy Race was originated by the first “Original Extreme Cowboy”, [Craig Cameron](#) in 2004 with a TV show on RFD-TV sponsored by [HorseCity.com](#).

I can remember watching that TV show with my friend, Melissa Simmons back in 2006, when I lived in Mt. Pleasant, North Carolina. At that time, Melissa and I were trail riding on our local trails in Cabarrus County, a few times a week. The most challenging obstacle we ever encountered was a small creek crossing. That day back in Melissa’s living room, we both just sat there watching Craig’s TV show in amazement as horse and rider teams raced around Craig’s ranch in Bluff Dale, Texas, riding over huge moguls of dirt, cantering through deep, curvy trenches, jumping up enormous horse sized stairs and galloping through round hay bale rings that were turned up on their side like a giant horse-size hula hoop. Melissa turned to me, in the sweetest southern drawl and said, “Joyce, we need to do that!” I looked at my silly friend and said, “What makes you think we can do that!” without missing a beat, she turned her head to me and replied, “what makes you think we can’t” ...and there it all began.

The next week, I was researching how I was going to get on that crazy TV show with my English riding horse, Josh. Yes, I rode in a dressage saddle since I was a kid growing up in Venice, Florida. Never owned a western saddle, however, I was not going to let that stop me from getting my 15 minutes of fame! In my back yard, I set up a “cowboy curtain” using my boy’s swing set, built a horse sized teeter totter, cantered through my neighbor’s step up flower boxes (my interpretation of a Texas three step) and practiced riding my horse into the trailer, then dismounting by grabbing the top of the trailer, swinging off the backside of Josh as my grand finale’.

The DVD was made and mailed of to the Horsecity.com producer of the Extreme Cowboy Race, Ryan Dorn. Within a month, I received my acceptance letter. Yes! I was accepted and season six of the Extreme Cowboy Race was going to be filmed in Augusta, Georgia at [the Hippodrome](#). I don’t think I’ve ever felt so much joy, fear and overwhelm at the same time. Oh My Goodness, what have I gotten myself into??? I’m going to be on TV, entered in a cowboy race, and I do not even own a western saddle!



Well, with the help of a good friend, I was loaned all the western tack I needed and was taken shopping to dress the part of an extreme cowboy racer! That first race I participated in was quite the experience. In the first round of competition of 18 racers, we landed in the top eight in the first round, qualifying to race in the second round, however my dreams of winning a new and first ever western saddle, ended in the

second round. Looking back now, I realize, with a grin, that I didn't know what I didn't know. I left that event with Cowboy fever! I don't think I ever rode in my dressage saddle again after that experience.

A year later, Craig Cameron called asking if I was interested in participating in the first ever, All Girl Extreme Cowboy Race at his Double Horn Ranch in Bluff Dale, Texas. Oh hell yeah! I was in! The only hitch was that I could not compete on the horse I raced in Season Six, I had to choose a different mount. Oh my, I only owned one horse...my training career was just starting to form by 2007, Safe Horse Training was just an idea at that time. I was still "borrowing" neighbor's horses to try out my new learned horsemanship skills.

Enter Khaamal, a 4 year old Arabian gelding a friend was letting me practice my despooning skills on. Certainly not the typical Extreme Cowboy Race horse, but one that would certainly be noticed on TV as a standout in the crowd of 20 ranchy looking quarter horses in the race.



When we arrived in Bluff Dale, Texas you could hear the snickers from my fellow contestants. The sideways glances were obvious indicators that Khaamal and I were not their competition...that is until we again finished in the top eight, knocking out sixteen more polished and experienced cowgirls. Unfortunately, once again, the top eight was as far as we would go.

That trip to Texas was such an amazing experience. Again, in hindsight, I have 20/20 vision now as to where I was in 2008 compared to where I am now with Safe Horse Training. I have gathered some fantastic friends along the way in my growth as a cowgirl, as well as a horsewoman. I still own that dressage saddle that I started with and occasionally have the opportunity to ride in it, but if given the choice, it will be that western saddle that I grab first.

After spending some time with Craig at his ranch, he offered me the opportunity (and challenge) to be on the National Advisory Board for EXCA for the Mid-Atlantic Region. It was quite an honor, as well as an amazing chance to bring Extreme Cowboy Racing to the east coast. For the three years I managed that position, I produced 27 sanctioned EXCA races from Maryland to Florida and hosted two very successful Craig Cameron Clinics in North Carolina. I proud to have been a part of the initial growth for Cowboy Racing and enjoy watching it's continued success nationwide.