



Extreme Cowboy Race Returns to San Antonio.

Article by Anne Van Dyke photos by Mark Limsky



This past April, a cool breeze and warm sunshine welcomed riders to Brave Horse Center's first hosting of The Extreme Cowboy Race. The beautiful weekend saw 44 entries in multiple divisions as they competed for points, cash and prizes.

The Extreme Cowboy Race is one of the fastest growing equine sports in our country and is enjoyed in many other countries around the world as well. Fun obstacles allow riders the opportunity to show case their horse's skill in handling various situations that the many obstacles can offer. Horsemanship, safety and consideration of the horse is of great concern at these events.

Don't let the name scare you, though. The Extreme Cowboy Race is known as the family sport for all riding levels. The group as a whole is friendly, supportive of each other and just down right fun. You'll see riders from all divisions cheering each other on and offering plenty of high fives and encouragement.

Riders of all ages and skill levels compete in multiple divisions. Each division has obstacles that are designed specifically for that group. The vast majority of the obstacles that you will encounter at the events are typically things you will routinely encounter while on a trail ride or daily work on a ranch. Safety of the horse and rider is paramount. The obstacles are designed to test a horses's willingness, confidence, and control. A better score can be achieved with a loose rein and a safe execution of all obstacles, adding speed with control. The speed of these events adds extra excitement and thrill for riders and spectators alike. Get out there and set that course on fire as you race between obstacles, over bridges, and through the various challenges.

(click to enlarge)



Divisions start as young as 7 with the Young Guns and go up to Ride Smart for those over 55. And in between there are divisions for youth, novice, intermediate, non-pro and pro. If you are new to the sport, there is the Green horse division. The obstacles are less challenging and you won't feel

it necessary to add great speed. You can read the rule book at the EXCA website which will go into great detail on how the events are fun.

Each division and each obstacle are judged and timed and scores are given. The judging is based primarily on horsemanship and navigation of the obstacles and safe, controlled speed.

When judging the obstacles, the judge will look at the approach, the obstacle itself, and the departure. Some things that the judge will be looking for are smooth transitions and if you approach the obstacle with safety in mind Judges will pay particular attention to the rider's balance, cadence, soft hands (loose reins), the use of their legs and seat and speed with control. ♦ They will also look to see if the horse is on the correct lead going into an obstacle and leaving an obstacle as they move toward the next obstacle.



Can't finish an obstacle in the time limit, you will get points for attempting an obstacle even if you don't finish it. So, give it a try.

Attire for the race is easy. Tack is western or Australian- think "cowboy race". Riders wear a western style hat or certified riding helmet. Chaps and spurs are optional. Dress jeans or colored jeans are acceptable. Riders wear long sleeve button up shirts and must wear riding boots with a heel. Tennis shoes are not acceptable.

And any breed and age of horse is allowed to compete as long as the horse is sound and healthy and able to complete the course safely.

The course will have between 8 and 13 obstacles depending on your division. The judge will walk the course with each group so the riders are aware of the obstacles they will be riding.

Want to come check it out? Or come ride in an event? The next Extreme Cowboy Race event in San Antonio, TX will be Brave Horse Center's Summer Splash held July 29 and 30. For details contact Anne Van Dyke at 210 912-7048. To sign up contact: Lori Glass on Facebook at K Cross Ranch Trail Challenge

For more information about the Extreme Cowboy Race Association, please check out their website at: <http://extremecowboyassociation.com/>