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**Bluebonnet Rescue Horse**

**Training Challenge**

**Rule Book**

**2017**



**The Bluebonnet Rescue Horse Training Challenge** is a competition in which volunteer foster homes and professional trainers work with a Bluebonnet Equine Humane Society foster horse for four months (starting in mid June 2017) and will compete in the Challenge at the 2017 Bluebonnet Horse Expo at the Travis County Expo Center in Austin, Tx on October 21, 2017.

**Bluebonnet Rescue Horse Training Challenge Mission Statement:**

- To show the public that rescued horses and other equines can be useful, willing and enjoyable equine partners.

- To provide training and adoption opportunities for BEHS rescued horses.

- To provide a fun, competitive venue for Professional and Amateur trainers to display their horsemanship skills.

- To provide an opportunity for youth to work with and learn about rescued equines.

**General Information about the Event:**

The competition is open to any BEHS member who applies to foster and is approved, as well as professional trainers whose property is inspected and approved. If you are not currently an approved foster home or BEHS member, [join the rescue](http://www.bluebonnetequine.org/index.php/members/join) and [download a fostering application](http://www.bluebonnetequine.org/index.php/support/foster-a-horse) before filling out a Challenge application to begin the process.

**About fostering**:

* Foster homes pay for hay, grain, shavings, and part of farrier care. Since BEHS is a 501(c)(3) organization, fostering expenses may be tax-deductible. To help with these expenses, Foster homes will receive a fostering stipend of $30 per month/ per horse to help with feed, hay, and other expenses. This stipend will be paid quarterly.
* BEHS reimburses $50 of each farrier visit, paste de-wormers, and pre-approved veterinary care. You can use any vet you like to treat the horses you foster. You must, however, get pre-approval for all veterinary work. You must, however, get pre-approval for all veterinary work. For non-emergency work, you may get approval by emailing Foster Home Coordinator Denise Crossthwait at dcrossthwait@westandtalbert.com.  For emergency veterinary care, contact Denise at 979 777 0768 or 979 272 7404 or Jennifer at 254 881 2180 or 832 425 8129.   **Do not send email for emergency care.**More information [review the fostering FAQs](http://www.bluebonnetequine.org/index.php/support/fostering-faqs) on [www.bluebonnetequine.org](http://www.bluebonnetequine.org/).
* All foster homes (including Youth competitors) who compete must sign a contract stating that they agree to foster the horse for three months after the Challenge is complete (unless he/she is adopted beforehand) or forfeit their winnings. **This rule does not apply to professional trainers.**

**Standard of Care:**

- Every BEHS equine shall, at all times, be treated humanely and with dignity, respect and compassion.

- Training techniques used on BEHS foster equines will be humane, least amount of force techniques, keeping in mind the mental and physical well-being of the equine at all times. Any evidence of failure to do so will result in an investigation and possible disqualification from the Challenge.

- Any stimulant, depressant, tranquilizer or sedative which could affect the performance of a horse (stimulants and depressants are defined as substances that stimulate or depress the cardiovascular, respiratory or central nervous system)is strictly prohibited. Use of any performance-affecting drug on a BEHS equine at the Challenge will result in disqualification from the Challenge.

**Bits and Equipment:**

Violation of these rules will result in dismissal from the class and a score of 0 for that class:

* Equines in the Professional Division may be shown in a snaffle bit, hackamore, bosal or sidepull.  A curb bit may also be allowed if the Professional trainer feels their horse is ready, but caution is encouraged and extra points will NOT be awarded for showing in a curb bit. Equines in the Foster Horse Needing Finishing Division may be shown in a snaffle but, hackamore, sidepull, bosal or **approved** curb bit.
* Prohibited equipment includes jerklines, tie-downs, tack collars, draw reins, standing or running martingales, a curb bit without a curb strap, wire, curbstrap with tacks/rivets or solid metal curb straps no matter how padded, wire cavesson, bumper bits, metal bosals no matter how padded, metal lounging hackamore, chambons, headstalls made of metal (even if encased in a protective material) or twisted rawhide. Please contact Training Coordinator if you have any questions regarding equipment requirements.
* Natural horsemanship stick and strings or other types of longe whips, longe lines, riding crops and drive lines are allowed in the In-Hand Division classes and in all Divisions for the Freestyle class, as long as they are used correctly and humanely.
* Spurs are permitted as long as they are used correctly and humanely.
* If a horse is shown in a curb bit or a bit with shanks, only one hand may be used on the reins, and the hand must not be changed. In trail, it is permissible to change hands to work an obstacle. Violation of this rule is an automatic disqualification.
* Equines shown with a hackamore or snaffle bit may be ridden with one or two hands on the reins.

**Attire**

* Appropriate attire for the discipline you are showing in is requested for the trail class—this means a collared shirt and hat or helmet for Western disciplines and collared shirt, breeches and helmet for English disciplines.

Helmets will be required for any youth that are competing. Youth appearing in the arena without a helmet will be dismissed from the arena and asked to return with a helmet. Adult competitors are encouraged to wear a helmet.

* All riders/handlers will wear a boot with a heel while showing their horses either under saddle or in hand in all classes. Failure to do so will result in dismissal from the ring and possible 0 in that class.

**Divisions (Definitions and Rules):**

**\*\*Each trainer will be allowed to train and show ONE horse.**

* **Professional Division:** Professional is defined as any person who receives money in exchange for horse training services, riding lessons, or clinics. Horses eligible for the Professional Division will be those who have had no previous under-saddle training. They may have already had groundwork or other in-hand training.
* **Foster Horse Needing Finishing:** Non-professional adults (18 and over) and pre-approved youths that are willing to take on a BEHS equine as a foster horse for the length of the Challenge plus 3 additional months afterward (if the equine is not adopted) are eligible to compete in this division. Horses eligible for the Needing Finishing Division are those who have had previous training and work under saddle.
* **Foster Horse In-Hand:** Non-professional adults (18 and over) and pre-approved youth exhibitors that are willing to take on a BEHS equine as a foster horse for the length of the Challenge plus 3 additional months afterward (if the equine is not adopted) are eligible to compete in this division. Horses eligible for the Foster In-Hand Division are those who are too young (under 3 years old) for under-saddle work, or have any other issue (such as age or lameness issues) which would make riding inappropriate for that horse.
* Other notes on eligible horses: The Bluebonnet Fostering Coordinator and the Challenge Committee will select a pool of eligible horses. Participants will apply to compete in the Challenge. BEHS will assign the horse to the applicant. BEHS foster homes may compete with a foster already in their possession as long as no professional trainers have handled the horse in the six months preceding the Challenge Competition. If you wish to compete with a foster horse already in your possession, note that on your application.
* Participants in the Foster Horse In-Hand, Foster Horse Needing Finishing, Divisions may attend a maximum of ten training sessions, riding lessons or clinics with a professional trainer during the competition. The Rescue Horse Training Challenge participant should handle or ride the horse for the majority of the time spent in those training sessions, lessons or clinics.
* Participants will be responsible for picking up their Challenge horses between June 1 and June 15, 2017. **We will accept late entries. Those contestants will just have less time to work with their horses.**
* **Competitors will NOT be allowed to switch divisions.** If a competitor is having issues with their Challenge horse, they are encouraged to notify the Challenge Coordinator as soon as possible so that another horse can be assigned to them or other arrangements can be made.

**Classes (Definitions and Rules):**

**\*\*Scorecards and trail pattern will be published online and in email form to our Non Pro and Youth competitors in September 2017. Professional trainers will receive trail pattern the day of the competition.**

* **Body Conditioning Class:** Equines will be led into the arena (unsaddled) by their trainer and stand for evaluation by the judges. Animals will be judged for weight based on the Henneke body score system, coat condition, grooming, hoof condition and overall appearance. Equines are NOT in any way to be judged based on conformation or presence of previously incurred scars or injuries.
* **Trail Class: The goal of this class is to show case the ability of the BEHS horse to the public.** Horse and handler/rider teams will be given 5 minutes to complete an course that will include 7 obstacles. The obstacles will be selected from the following list: tarp, serpentine cones, hanging vines, balloon arch, jump (no more than 18”), bridge, back-through, 360 degree turn in a box, mystery obstacle, water obstacle, log drag, trot-/lope-overs, raised cavaletti, mailbox, gate, trailer-loading, pool noodles. Teams will be given three attempts on each obstacle.If the horse and rider or handler do not successfully compete the obstacle within three tries, they will receive a score of zero for that obstacle. Teams will be judged on completion of obstacles, completion of course in correct order, transitions, willingness and calmness of the horse. Professional trainers will be given the trail pattern the day of the event. Non Pro/ Youth will receive the trail pattern prior to the event. The Pro Division trail course will be different from the other divisions.
* **Freestyle Class:** The freestyle presentation is an opportunity for the trainer/foster home to showcase the horse’s abilities, training level and aptitude. Each team will have 5 minutes to perform their freestyle routine plus 2 minutes to set up any props. The use of music and/or costumes is strongly encouraged during the freestyle. Skills the judges are looking for during the freestyle presentation: For horses under saddle, ability to walk, trot, canter, stop, and back with a rider. For horses in hand, ability to walk, trot, stop and back in hand without being pulled/tugged or encouraged using a whip/stick. For ridden horses, the ability to pick up a lope/canter on the correct lead in both directions. Smooth gait transitions. Horse is balanced and relaxed. Handler demonstrates “softness” with the equine. Positive training and positive reinforcements are used instead of harsh corrections.
* **TOTAL SCORES will be a combination of scores in the compulsory classes of Body Conditioning, Trail and Freestyle and Overall Improvement**
* **Extra Prize Classes:** Additional prizes will be given out in the following categories (these are NOT compulsory):
* **Best Pro Ground Manners Video; Best Foster Ground Manners Video:** contestants will create a video to be NO MORE THAN 15 minutes long and should display the equine’s ground manners such as haltering, leading, standing for fly spray, standing for tacking and untacking, catching, bathing, putting a fly mask on and off, worming, standing for a farrier, etc. Skills NOT to be included in the ground manners video are any sort of ground-work (longing, ground driving, natural horsemanship games) or any sort of under-saddle work. **Videos will be due NO LATER than October 1st, 2017 and NO late entries will be accepted.**
* **Most Popular Pro; Most Popular Foster**: This is a Facebook social media contest. The winners will have the most active and popular (“liked”) Facebook pages showing the contestant’s active marketing of their Challenge equine.

**Additional Rules and Information:**

* All participants must be either professional trainers or current members of Bluebonnet Equine Humane Society in good standing.
* Foster horses may not be handled/ trained by any other individual or trainer from June 1 – October 21, 2017. (This does not apply to Pro trainers)
* **All competitors will be required to submit an evaluation form within two weeks after picking up their Challenge horse/equine. This evaluation form will be used to assign a score for Overall Improvement which will be part of each team’s final score.**
* Competitors will be responsible for the cost of feeding their horse, shavings/bedding, and farrier work during the Challenge and the foster period after the Challenge. To help with that cost, Foster homes will receive a $30 stipend each month, payable to Foster quarterly. Bluebonnet Equine Humane Society will reimburse $50 of every farrier visit, paste de-wormers, pre-approved veterinary care, and pre-approved corrective farrier work and medications.
* The Challenge is for one horse/rider (or handler) combinations. If more than one person is handling/training the horse, the horse must be shown in the Professional Division.
* Competitors are responsible for pickup of their Challenge equine and for transporting it to the Expo. No travel reimbursements will be made by BEHS.
* A foster home may pay a professional trainer for part or all training fees. associated with preparing a foster horse to compete in the Professional Division. The professional trainer must show the horse (foster homes will not be allowed to show in the Professional Division).  Foster homes are encouraged to discuss making these arrangements with the Challenge Coordinator.
* **Open to all Texas residents and surrounding states**

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