



Bluebonnet Rescue Horse Training Challenges

Rule Book
2019



The Bluebonnet Rescue Horse Training Challenges are competitions in which volunteer foster homes and professional trainers work with a Bluebonnet Equine Humane Society foster horse for three or four months (starting in mid June for the October event and mid-January for the May event).

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 and download a fostering application before filling out a Challenge application to begin the process.

Deadlines

October Event application deadline: June 1. May event application deadline: January 15. Horses will be assigned in the order in which participants submit their applications. Bluebonnet Equine Humane Society may accept late applications on a case by case basis.

Horse pick-up: Participants need to email the Challenge Coordinator when they've picked up their horse (within 48 hours). Failure to meet this deadline will result in a deduction of 5 points from the participant's Training Challenge scorecard.

Evaluation Form Deadline: Evaluation forms must be submitted within two weeks of the date you pick up your training challenge horse. Failure to submit an evaluation will result in a deduction of 4 points from the participant's Training Challenge scorecard. Late submissions will result in a deduction of 2 points from the participant's Training Challenge scorecard.

Adoption application deadline: For non-pros: If you plan to adopt your Training Challenge horse, you must notify the Training Challenge Coordinator via email by 9 pm CST of October 1st for the October event and 9 pm CST of April 12th for the May event. **We still strictly adhere to this rule and to these dates.**

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 \$50 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, and 100% of 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. 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](tel:9797770768) or [979 272 7404](tel:9792727404) or Jennifer at [254 881 2180](tel:2548812180) or [832 425 8129](tel:8324258129). **Do not send email for emergency care.** More information [review the 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. If trainers demonstrate any excessively forceful training practices during the Challenge, warm-ups for the event, or any other time, the trainer can be docked points or removed (disqualified) from the competition at the discretion of the Training Challenge Coordinator.
- 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 and potential dismissal from the Training Challenge:

- 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. At no time should there ever be any evidence that a whip was used on the horse. If there is swelling, welts, raw skin or blood or if the horse flinches when being touched, it is an indication that the whip has been abused by the trainer. If it is determined that a whip has been misused by a trainer, he or she will be disqualified from the Training Challenge and, if he or she has applied to adopt his or her Training Challenge horse, the application and adoption may be discarded and denied at the discretion of the Training Challenge Coordinator, Adoption Coordinator, or Fostering Coordinator.
- Spurs are permitted provided they are used correctly and humanely. At no time should there ever be any evidence that a spur was used on the horse. If there is swelling, welts, raw skin or blood or if the horse flinches when being touched, it is an indication that the spur has been abused by the rider. If it is determined that spurs have been misused by a trainer, he or she will be disqualified from the Training Challenge and, if he or she has applied to adopt his or her Training Challenge horse, the application and adoption may be discarded and denied at the discretion of the Training Challenge Coordinator, Adoption Coordinator, or Fostering Coordinator.
- 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.
- Trainers will all be required to ride with soft hands; no jerking on the horse's mouth will be permitted. The bit is a tool and should never be used as a weapon.

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.

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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 by awarding +2 points per event in which they wear a riding 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 two horses. Trainers that wish to train more than one horse may request special consideration via email to the Training Challenge Coordinator. The trainer must be able to provide reasonable evidence of time available to commit to training two horses. A trainer who takes two horses for the purpose of competing with both horses in a Training Challenge may not withdraw from the competition with one horse while remaining in the competition with the other horse. If, however, a veterinarian deems one of a trainer's Training Challenge horses to be lame or otherwise unfit to compete, the trainer may continue with the remaining horse.**

October Training Challenge Divisions:

- **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 or those who have behavioral problems. They may have already had groundwork or other in-hand training.
- **Non-Pro Under Saddle:** Non-professional adults and pre-approved youths (14 and over) 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 Non-Pro Under Saddle Division are those who have had previous training and work under saddle.
- **Non-Pro In-Hand:** Non-professional adults and pre-approved youth (12 and over) 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.
- **Non-Pro in Hand 12 and Under:** Youths who are under 12 and are supervised by a professional trainer or parent with extensive horse experience who 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. Competitors in this division be accepted on a case by case basis.

May Training Challenge Divisions:

- **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 or those who have behavioral problems. They may have already had groundwork or other in-hand training.

Non-Pro Walk/Trot/Canter Division (riders 14 and over) Non-professional adults and pre-approved youths (14 and over) 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 Walk/Trot/Canter Division are those who have had previous training and work under saddle.

Non-Pro Under Saddle Walk/Trot Division (riders 12 and over) pre-approved youths (12 and under) 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 Walk/Trot/Canter Division are those who have had previous training and work under saddle. Younger competitors will be approved on case by case basis.

Non-Pro In Hand Division - Non-professional adults 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 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 (Exceptions will be made if the Foster Home Coordinator sends the horse to a trainer in the preceding six months to assess what the horse knows or to correct dangerous behavioral problems). If you wish to compete with a foster horse already in your possession, note that on your application.
- Participants in the Non-Pro 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 for the October event and January 1 and February 15 for the May event. **We will accept late entries on a case-by-case basis. Those contestants will just have less time to work with their horses.**

- **Competitors will NOT be allowed to switch divisions without consideration from the Training Challenge Coordinator.** 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. The decision to allow a change of divisions is at the discretion of the Training Challenge Coordinator.

Classes (Definitions and Rules):

****Scorecards and a list of possible obstacle challenges will be published online and emailed to our competitors one month prior to the competition. Trail maps may, at the discretion of the Training Challenge Coordinator, be published just prior to 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. In the case of time restrictions, body conditioning may be judged while the horses are in stalls.

- **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 4 minutes to complete a course that will include a minimum of 7 and a maximum of 9 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. Some points may be awarded for any horse under saddle who dismounts and walks their horse through any obstacle. Teams will be judged on completion of obstacles, completion of course in correct order, transitions, willingness and calmness of the horse. Trainers will scratch if they do not navigate the obstacles in the correct order and/or enter and exit the obstacles in the correct places. 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 4 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. If a trainer chooses to use music, the music selection must be commercially available (Amazon, etc) or the trainer must email an .mp3 of the song to the Training Challenge Coordinator. All music selections must be sent to the Training Challenge Coordinator no later than 14 days prior to the event. No trainer will be permitted to supply their own music the day of the event **WITHOUT EXCEPTION**. 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, and seeing that the horse is balanced and relaxed. The judges are also looking to see that the handler demonstrates "softness" with the equine as well as positive training and

positive reinforcements are used instead of harsh corrections. In-hand horses may be shown with a saddle but trainers may not stand in a stirrup, mount the horse in any fashion, or have the horse bear any of the trainer's weight in any fashion; to do so will result in an automatic disqualification in the Freestyle class and no points will be awarded.

- **October Training Challenge TOTAL SCORES will be a combination of scores in the compulsory classes of Body Conditioning, Trail and Freestyle, Facebook score, Helmet score, and points received for turning in evaluations, horse difficulty score, and notifying the Coordinator when you pick up your Training Challenge horse.**

Body Conditioning 10 pts

Freestyle 30 pts

Trail 30 pts

Facebook Posts 18 pts

Helmet (up to) 4 pts

Evaluation (- 4 if not submitted/-2 if late)

Pick Up Notification (-5 if TC Coordinator not notified)

- **Horse Difficulty (up to) 8 pts (0 points awarded if not submitted)**
- **May Training Challenge TOTAL SCORES will be a combination of scores in the compulsory classes of Body Conditioning, Western OR English classes and Freestyle, Facebook score, Helmet score, and points received for turning in evaluations, horse difficulty score, and notifying the Coordinator when you pick up your Training Challenge horse.**

Body Conditioning (Halter Class) 10 pts

Freestyle 30 pts

Western OR English class 30 pts

Facebook Posts 18 pts

Helmet (up to) 4 pts

Evaluation (- 4 if not submitted/-2 if late)

Pick Up Notification (-5 if TC Coordinator not notified)

Horse Difficulty (up to) 8 pts (0 points awarded if not submitted)

Additional Rules and Information:

- Since one of the goals of the Training Challenge is to help horses get adopted, and in an effort to help find horses home we have added a horse promotion portion to the Training Challenge. Additional points will be added to each score for promoting the horse on Facebook. **The Training Challenge Coordinator will create your page for you.** Post only information that you KNOW is true about your horse. If you THINK your horse has a medical condition, contact Denise to get approval for veterinary care; avoid posting what you THINK COULD be wrong with the horse. Once a medical issue is confirmed by a medical professional (i.e., a veterinarian), you are free to post that information on the Facebook page. If you post erroneous information or hyperbole, your page may be edited by the Training Challenge Coordinator. If you persist in posting erroneous information, your page will be removed and you may be removed from the Training Challenge.
1 point - Posting a profile picture that includes the horse and trainer on the Facebook page.
5 points - 1-2 original updates and/or original photos or videos of the horse **per month** (memes, shares of other people's posts, etc. do not count)
10 points - 3-5 original updates and/or original photos or videos of the horse **per month** (memes, shares of other people's posts, etc. do not count)
18 points - 6+ original updates and/or original photos or videos of the horse **per month** (memes, shares of other people's posts, etc. do not count)
- 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 the time trainers pick up their horses until the competition. (This does not apply to Pro trainers). An exception may be made by the Foster Home Coordinator and Training Challenge Coordinator if the horse is exhibiting dangerous behavior.
- **All competitors will be required to submit an evaluation form within two weeks after picking up their Challenge horse/equine. Failure to do so will result in a deduction of 4 points. Late evaluations will result in a deduction of 2 points. 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 \$50 stipend each month, payable to Foster quarterly. Bluebonnet Equine Humane Society will reimburse \$50 of every farrier visit, 100% of paste de-wormers, 100% pre-approved veterinary care, and 100% of pre-approved corrective farrier work and medications. In order to receive your stipend, you MUST bring your horse to the Training Challenge event. Failure to do so will result in the forfeiture of your stipend.

- 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.
- **Sponsors:** Participants may recruit individuals and businesses to sponsor their horse in the Challenge. Sponsors may help cover the cost of feeding the horse, gift equipment, gift services, etc. Sponsorships made directly to the trainer or foster home are not tax-deductible, but trainers/foster homes may promote sponsors on their Challenge Facebook page, in signage on their stall, etc. If the trainer or foster home provides the name of the sponsor to the rescue (jenn@bluebonnethorseexpo.com), the sponsor's name will also be listed on the horse's Bluebonnet webpage.
- **Open to all Texas residents and surrounding states**