

Green Creek Hounds Halloween Hunter Pace & Trail Ride

Western Carolina Hunter Pace Series
Held Sunday, October 28, 2018

Reported by Lynn Fitch & Jan Smith

The day opened spectacularly for the Green Creek Hunter Pace on 10/28. With a crystal clear, cloudless sky and a three-quarter moon visible over the pine tree tops every moment was a visual treat. Temperatures cooperated with moderate mid-60's and a light breeze.

As always Green Creek Hounds were gracious and generous hosts providing direction for parking, streamlining registration, offering shirts, hats, and stickers to purchase to commemorate the day. The food was freshly made including hot dogs with chili, vegetarian burgers, Thai cashew slaw, traditional coleslaw, pasta salad, chips and the most amazing assortment of homemade desserts from cookies, brownies, cakes to an awesome fresh berry and chocolate torte - all delectable enough to energize every rider!

The starting point was handled by well-known starter Joey Cabaniss who outlined the course, expected conditions and trail markers. Joey's good humor and jokes are familiar to those who are regular hunter pace riders and always get the riders in a joyful mood! The two divisions, field hunter and trail rider, followed a 8.7 mile trail while a shorter trail of 4.9 miles was available for younger riders and inexperienced horses. This is an excellent opportunity to give arena/school horses a look at the "real" world and build confidence in young riders. The hunter pace series offers all riders an opportunity to explore trails not available to the general public since most are held on private lands. The privilege of being able to ride through some of the most beautiful country in North and South Carolina is an extra bonus to those who participate in a hunter pace. While the Mini Pace trail was between four and five miles, the primary trail was 8.7 miles in length.

This was the Halloween Costume ride of the hunter pace series and many riders used their creativity to decorate their horses and themselves! There were psychedelic ballerinas, horses dressed as hounds and foxes, face painting extraordinaire, masked helmets and painted horses! Scattered throughout the woods were ghosts, witches, huge spiders and pumpkins highlighting the trails. Winners of the best costume were: Team 188- DJ Jeffries, Catherine Mooneyham and Jillian Woolridge wearing red wigs and purple capes. Other costumed riders were: Team 289 - a trio of angels - Dawn Harrison Carrie and Olive Wilsey wearing all white with halos; Team 460 - Laura Hendley and Rich Putnam dressed as Clemson tigers; Team 236 - Jerrica Clark, Jana Hinely and Paul Sloan wearing white T-shirts with rainbow colored trolls; Team 479 - Jessica Ames and Ashley Oliver dressed as a spider and a rainbow; and Team 121 - Karolin Eichler and Gabrielle Grubic whose horses were dressed as a fox and a hound!

With only one day of sun to dry the trails after a good rain most of the trails were soft with a few boggy area which could be easily navigated. The trails offered several water crossings to allow horses a chance to drink. For the most part, the trails were level, sandy, wide and easily traversed. A portion of the trails followed the WEG (World Equestrian Games) Endurance Ride competition trails which gave the rider of sense of what those world-class horses and riders experienced in western Carolina.

After being given the "go" by the starter the trail for both the long and short rides began with an inviting level, wide avenue into the pine forest. A very nice introduction to get your horse

relaxed and muscles warmed up. This led to a slightly narrower trail making a left turn then a right turn and, again, onto a nice straightaway inviting for a more forward pace. The forest in this area is mature pine trees with sparse underbrush. The course broke out of the woods and onto a wide, sandy trail which had been part of the WEG endurance rides. The footing, even after rain and many horses having traveled it, was solid. This provided another inviting, long wide trail for trotting or cantering/galloping as desired. A right turn brought riders to a swiftly running mountain stream giving the horses a chance to have a drink, then up a short, steep bank to a right turn along a narrower, single-file trail. This trail was suitable for allowing horse and rider to relax and meander along enjoying the woodland scenery. The short ride and the longer ride separated with the short bearing off to the left and the longer bearing to the right.

Optional jumping courses were clearly indicated along the course. The trail crossed another stream with good footing on both sides and through a scenic wood before opening onto the wider "endurance" trail. This trail continued for a longer distance allowing horse and rider to enjoy the beautiful day and become invigorated. After following along another rapidly flowing creek the trail turned left and crossed Green Creek making a right turn following the opposite side of the creek before making two more left turns to come to the finish line

The short trail broke away from the longer trail and entered a younger growth area of pine trees. The trail course had been recently mowed and provided solid footing. As it turned to the left it joined with a pre-existing trail through a woodland then traveled a short distance along Solen Williams Road before reentering the wooded area to follow Green Creek and join the course of the longer route to the finish line.

No event can be successfully held without the enormous help and effort by volunteers and this hunter pace was no exception. A great big thanks is given to the following: Food - Ann Fratcher, Jim Sumrell and Wes Moore; Half-way - Betsy McCray and Skip Leck; Logistics - Deborah Bundy and Kem Ketchum; Merchandise - Ann Troppmann; Parking - Debra Kornacki, Debbie Pasco-Jundt and Marc James; Parking Set-up - Luanne Johnson; Registration - Ginny Sullivan, Holly Mitchell and Lennore Threlkeld; Starter - Joey Cabaniss; Assistant Starter - Jim Troppmann, Course Layout - Christi Fowler. And, of course, none of this would be possible without the full cooperation and generosity of the gracious land owners!

And now to the results:

The Field Hunter Optimum Time was 1:50:35, with 68 Riders in 37 teams vying for the placements.

The blue ribbons were awarded to Jessica Ames from Asheville & Ashley Oliver from Fairview with a time of one hour, 50 minutes, 42 seconds; just seven seconds off the optimum! Christina Goen from Lyman & Emily Mitchell from Greer took the 2nd place red ribbons with a time of one hour, 49 minutes, 59seconds. Third place honors go to Erin O'Dwyer from Tryon & Hyland Sheffron from Columbus who were only one minute, nine seconds over optimum. The white ribbons are awarded to Maria Oglesby from Cleson & Jennifer Pagano from Six Mile after a ride time of one hour, 49 minutes and two seconds. Fifth place Amy Christensen & Beth Kelley, both from Landrum, were just one second further off from the optimum with a time of one hour, 49 minutes, one second. Katie Martin from Black Mountain took the green ribbon with a time of one hour, 52 minutes, 29 seconds, still less than two minutes off the optimum! And the trio of Tom Eizenberger, Lucy Hooper & Taylor Reed, less than 30 seconds from 6th place, took Honorable Mention honors.

Also out to enjoy the beautiful Field Hunter trails and wonderful weather were Birdie & Mike Axelrod, Jane Barrett, Brandon Blankenship, Jacklyn Bonner, Stacy Calvert, Candice Carr, John Chatterton, Debbie & Nora Croft, Anita Crouse, Anna Dalton, Kathy Davis, Nicola Deines, Karolin Eichler, Mary Farnell, Jonte Fischer, Beth Fiszer, Ann Fratcher, Jenny Gardner, Sara Gibbens, Tim Giles, Joy Griffin, Gabrielle Grubic, Susan Haldeman, Martha Hall, Lacey Hannu, Susan Haslam, Marcia Headrick, Diane Hicks, DJ Jeffers, Megan Jornigan, Gena Meredith, Cynthia Milligan, Cat Moneyham, Alex Mottershead, Richard Neel, Carrie Nicholson, Linda Plummer, Jules Porter, Elise & Maddie Rogers, Susan Russell, Alison Saari, Peter Shannahan, Emma Skelter, Andrea Stoll, Jenny Taylor, Jessica Thomas, Gail Thompson, Rebecca Tolson, Samantha Vaughn, Faith Wanicka(twice), Aileen Wawrzuszek, Beau Willard, & Jillian Woolridge

In the Trail Rider Division there were a total of 60 riders in 31 teams aiming to hit the calculated optimum time of two hours, 19 minutes, and four seconds.

A trio of angels from Hendersonville flew into first place with a time of two hours, 18 minutes and 31 seconds. Those pretty angels are normally known as Dawn Harrison and Carrie & Olive Wilsey. Leslie Shealy from Spartanburg took second place honors with a time just 45 seconds over optimum. A quartet of red neck hunters, Nancy Anderson from Pauline, Lauren McRae from Weddington, and Olynda Stretcher & Bobby Turner from Spartanburg, took the yellow ribbons with a ride time of two hours, 21 minutes, 43 seconds. Fourth place honors went to Laura Hendley of Greer and Rich Putnam from Tryon with a time of two hours, 16 minutes, 19 seconds. Diane Wilson from Asheville earned a pretty pink ribbon after turning in a ride time just three minutes 21 seconds under the optimum. 6th place honors went to Kathy Bucks of Belton, Kaileigh Pickron of Anderson & Emily Wilson of Williamston after a ride time of two hours, 23 minutes, 26 seconds. Still only four minutes, 24 seconds off the calculated optimum, Cindy James of Mountville took Honorable Mention.

Other trail riders who came for the Green Creek Hounds gracious hospitality, delicious food and wonderful trails were: Tara Boyce, Pam Burrows, Janet Burzlaff, Carol Callahan, Kelly Cannon, Jerrica Clark, Cindy Clifton, Val DeVine, Lynn Fitch, Jenna Gillespie, Desiree Hill, Jana Hinely, Christine Holm, Joy Hudson, Michelle Klopp, Debbie Knebel, Lisa Kotalik, Kaitlin Kubiak, Sarah Lawing, Anna Mallen, Cassie McCurry, Reed & Roanne McNutt, Karen Merrill, Kathy Nebel, Boots Plyler, Paul Sloan, Jennifer A Smith, Jennifer R. Smith, Teresa Snyder, Annette Spencer, Carol, Kristen & Tom Stanley, Josie Thompson, Cheryl Thorp, Lenore & Leslie Threlkeld, Stace Wadsworth, Morgan Watson, Jenna Wilson, Jennifer Wilson, and Sherry Wyatt

Also out to enjoy the day at the Green Creek Hounds Hunter Pace were four teams for a total of eight Mini Pace Riders including: Michelle Abel, Grace Buchena, Laurin Buckner, Hope Malkan, Brandy Johnston, David Raley, Suzanne Stettler and Elizabeth Winegar.

Next up on the 2018-19 WCHPace Series schedule will be the FENCE Fall Hunter Pace set for Sunday, November 18th, followed by the River Valley Pony Club's Fall event on Sunday, November 25th. We'll finish this calendar year with the Windridge Farm's Winter Hunter Pace on Sunday, December 9th before taking a break for the holidays. Be sure to check the website for the spring Paces to begin back on January 19th on the ever popular Clemson Forest trails.