

TREASURE VALLEY WHIPS - ARENA DRIVING TRIALS

A PRIMER FOR BEGINNERS

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Welcome to the world of carriage driving, combined driving style! Even if your goal is to become a better recreational driver and not formal competition, this club and these events are for you! One of our club's purposes is to introduce you to combined driving, which can be a daunting and intimidating venture for those new to the sport. While an arena driving trial isn't a full-fledged combined driving event, it does have enough of the same elements to give a driver the knowledge and confidence to take that next step. Careful, though, competition driving has been known to be habit forming!!

WHAT IS IT?

- An arena driving trial ("ADT") is a daylong, three-phase event including the dressage phase, the hazards phase and the cones phase, which in this case will all be held in the same arena.
- The ring set-up will be changed between each phase, so you can have a breather and watch some other competitors, too. We will try to have accurate start times so you can depend on a specific time to go – another HUGE advantage of combined driving over regular horse shows. Make sure and bring a blanket, unhook your equine between the phases and cover them up to wait for the next phase. No leaving hooked equines unattended, and **NEVER REMOVE THE BRIDLE FROM THE EQUINE OR THE REINS FROM THE TERRETS WHILE THE EQUINE IS STILL ATTACHED TO THE VEHICLE/CART/CARRIAGE.**
- Oh, and in this sport, we use the term horse to include ponies, mules, donkeys, VSE's (very small equines = minis), but sometimes we just use the term "equines" because that seems to cover everyone. All equines are welcome at these events.
- Each competitor drives each pattern or course individually – so they don't have to worry about other equines in the ring at the same time.

ARENA DRIVING TRIALS ARE INFORMAL!

- Equines are expected to be fuzzy in the winter in Idaho! Your equine would probably appreciate it if you knock off the largest frozen mud balls before the show, but this will be no beauty pageant. This is an informal learning time, including a friendly and hopefully educational competition. Of course, I believe that if you participate, you are instantly a winner. You'll find out why when you try it...

BEFORE THE SHOW:

- Contact the secretary or organizer (see show bill) a few days before the show. **ENTRIES ARE LIMITED TO ABOUT 15 SO IF YOU DON'T CONTACT US FIRST, YOU MAY MAKE A TRIP FOR NOTHING!** Plus pre-entering will allow you to ask questions and speed your time through the office when you get there on show day.
- What do Training Level and Preliminary Level mean? What level should I enter? Training level is designed for the beginner driver, or a more experienced driver with a greener horse, to combined driving events. It is the entry level into the sport of

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competition driving. Preliminary level is for those drivers who have had driven in two or more combined driving type events, or have the equivalent driving experience.

HOW THE DAY GOES...THE SCHEDULE:

- Arrive at the showgrounds, find a comfy place to park and set up. The office will be open by 8:00 am. There will be coffee and goodies available close-by.
- Check in at the office to pick up your exhibitor's packet, which will include course maps, numbers, etc. Sign your disclaimer/releases (and everyone who will ride on your carriage must sign as well – parents must sign for those under 18). If you have pre-entered, check the OFFICIAL BOARD located by the office. Starting times for dressage will be listed for those that pre-entered, the rest will be added as they enter.
- At 9:00 sharp, return to the office area for the drivers' meeting. The judge and organizer will talk about the day's competition, discuss issues and answer questions. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU MAKE IT TO THIS MEETING.

DRESSAGE:

- The competitors will report to the arena about 5 minutes before their official start time. If you have a 10:00 am start time, you need to report to the arena at 9:55. You will be asked by a steward to stop your horse for a safety check and wheel measurement. This is a simple procedure: the steward looks over your harness and cart, asks if you have checked all your equipment (see the pre-competition checklist in your exhibitor packet), then places a cone by each wheel and then has you pull forward – and that part is done.
- Each exhibitor will be given at least 5 minutes to accustom his or her equine to the arena and to warm up. The Judge will sound a whistle or bell at the end of that time to indicate that the exhibitor must start the test within 90 seconds. Don't worry, that will give you plenty of time to get to where you need to start. When you have completed your test, please trot out of the arena and clear the in-gate area to allow the next exhibitor plenty of room. Do not hang around the in-gate area after your go.
- Un-hook your carriage from your equine and THEN and ONLY THEN, take the bridle and rest of the harness off the horse. Tuck them in at your trailer and come back and watch the others and have lunch.

HAZARDS:

- The drivers will get a chance to walk each hazard with the judge and organizer and ask questions. The hazards are composed of four lettered gates, A, B, C, and D that must be driven in order and the proper direction (remember, the red letter has to be on the right). Training level will be required to go through gates A, B, and C, but not D. Preliminary is required to go through all four gates. In addition, you cannot go through a later gate (e.g. B) to get to an earlier gate (e.g. A), but once you have driven a gate properly, it is considered "dead" and you can go through it in either direction to get to the next gate. So, for instance, you could go through gates A and B, and then circle and go through A backwards to get to C. But you could not go through A, then C to get to B, because C is not yet dead. Training level drivers can use the D gate whenever they wish, because it is "dead" for them.

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- Hazards are supposed to be designed so that the driver has a few choices in how he or she wants to take the gates. If you have a mini, you may want to take a very tight turn to get to your next gate, whereas, if you have a larger equine, the long way may actually be the fastest for your animal. There is a lot of strategy in this part of the competition.
- NO CANTERING THROUGH THE HAZARDS IN TRAINING LEVEL. Any breaks to the canter lasting over 5 seconds will be penalized.
- There are some knockdowns included on some hazards. Knocking these down will incur penalties.
- There will be two hazards, one set up at each end of the arena. A start/finish marker will be set near the middle of the arena. Once you have been called into the arena, you should trot in, halt, salute to the judge and wait for their signal (bell or whistle). You then have 60 seconds to go through the start gate and drive the first hazard (#1) and its gates in order, A, B, C, (and D for Preliminary level drivers) red on right and then trot back through the start/finish gate. Allow the judge a moment to record your time and timers to reset their stopwatches. You may drive around the arena (not too close to the obstacles) and wait for the judge's signal. When you hear it, you will again have 60 seconds to go through the start/finish gate this time going through the opposite direction towards hazard #2. Drive hazard #2 and its gates in order, A, B, C, (and D for Preliminary level) red on right and then come back through the start/finish gate. Wait again for the judge to record your time, reset the watch and signal you again. You will then get to drive hazard #1 again, and then, after waiting again, drive hazard #2. After you have been timed in the each hazard twice, you are done!

CONES:

- The hazards will be taken down and the cones will be set up immediately after the last hazards competitor finishes their go. Once set-up is complete, drivers will have the opportunity to walk the course.
- CHECK the OFFICIAL BOARD for your cones start times/orders of go. Know the numbers and names of a couple of competitors that go before you. That will help you keep up with what is going on in the ring.
- Report to the in-gate before the competitor starts who is starting two slots in front of you. Stay close, but keep the gate area clear. Competitors will go every five minutes or so.
- Once your number is called, enter the arena, stop and salute the judge. When you hear the bell or whistle, you have 60 seconds to go through the start gates and start your course. Remember, the cones will be numbered in order, with the red markers on the right. The goal is to have a smooth steady trot through the cones (no cantering here, although it is typically allowed in regular combined driving events), with as few knockdowns as possible, but in a respectable time. Knockdowns are more costly (3 penalty points) than time points (.2 per second – would take 15 seconds of time to equal 3 course penalties) so it pays to be accurate and smooth. Make sure and pass through the finish gate, stop and wait to be excused. Leave the arena, put your equine safely away and come watch again.

The cones will be measured and distanced for each division and size of equine (horse or pony/vse), but not for each carriage, unless otherwise announced.

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AWARDS:

- After the scorers are finished, the results will be posted on the OFFICIAL BOARD. Scores should be posted after each phase, too. So the dressage scores should be posted over the lunch break, Hazards during the Cones, etc.
- Come hang around the office, because the secretary will hand out your final packet that will include a copy of your dressage test, with the judge's score and specific comments about your performance and other goodies.
- Check out the scoreboard and if you notice a discrepancy, politely (pretty please) bring it to the attention to the judge and/or organizer. We will try to get to the bottom of whatever it is, however, the judge, or in the judge's absence, the organizer, reserves the right to make the final decision.
- The awards will be presented! Depending upon entries, there will be regular classes for Training Single Horse; Training Single Pony/VSE, Preliminary Single Horse; Preliminary Single Pony/VSE; Training Pairs Horse, etc. etc. There will also be a Best Dressage, Best Cones, Best Hazards, Best Training Level and Best Preliminary Level.

CLEAN UP!

- If you can stay for 15 minutes or so and clean up around your trailer area, we will be allowed to continue using this wonderful facility.

THANKS AND GET READY FOR THE NEXT ADT!!!