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The Right Kind of Horse?

Do I Have the Right Kind of Horse?

Representatives from every horse and pony breed have participated in long distance events.

Arabians are the most popular choice for this type of riding but, most light horse breeds and heavy horse crosses can participate and be successful.

Heavy horse breeds and those with bulky muscles may not be as suitable--just as a heavy weight wrestler is not the best candidate for marathon running.

Trying a "training ride" before competing will give you an idea of your horse's capabilities.

There are also minimum age for horses-usually 4 yrs or 5 yrs- depending on the event

This is important (age, training, experience) when other riders need to pass you on a narrow trail--your horse may be less likely to kick or "bump" another horse if his hind end can be "moved" out of the way.

Overall, the more obedient and responsive your horse is the more safe and comfortable you will both be.

Also, slight problems with the riders seat and posture can result in a sore back for your horse (and possibly for you) . There are few riders that couldn't benefit from a few "tune up" riding lessons or "Centered Riding" sessions.

Don't give up your riding or dressage lessons just because you are now "into trail riding". Equitation is as important on the trail as the in the ring--if not more.

Training rides are designed to introduce novices - whether human or equine - to the vetting procedures and trail conditions encountered in a real competition. "Old pros", vets and, lay judges are available to answer any questions you may have.

"Mileage rides" are also held to give participants who may be a member of a certain club or association a chance to accrue mileage against mileage awards, and novices a chance to familiarize themselves with the long distance riding experience. These are usually held in conjunction with an endurance ride and are not competitions.

If you are competing in ride 'n' tie you will want to condition yourself too...at least going for brisk walks to wake up those muscles a bit. You will also want to accustom your horse to being tied on the trail and left - perhaps having another horse ridden by so he learns that he is not being abandoned by the herd!