

Saskatchewan Equine Expo

OTTB Challenge Rules

Overview

The OTTB Challenge is a competition in which trainers acquire a recently retired racehorse and prepare it over a period not to exceed fifteen months for competition in one or two of 5 riding sports. Formats for competition are designed to test the quality and progress of each horse's training.

The OTTB Challenge takes place at Prairieland Park during the Saskatchewan Equine Expo 2021.

Mission and Goals

Saskatchewan Equine Expo created the OTTB Challenge to showcase the trainability and talent of off-track Thoroughbreds, and to inspire trainers to secure the futures of these animals through training. In addition to benefiting the horses, the Challenge is intended to help individuals establish themselves professionally or as amateurs in their respective disciplines and to showcase local trainers.

Trainer Eligibility and Application

- Eligibility

Individuals can submit an application to be an OTTB Challenge participant. Applications can be found on the Saskatchewan Equine Expo website. Applications will be screened on an ongoing basis and applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application on an ongoing basis.

- Application Fee

Each person will pay a \$50 application fee with the application. The fee is non-refundable.

Open and Closing Date

Applications may be submitted to Prairieland Park from September 1, 2019 through October 1, 2020.

- Selection Criteria

A Selection Committee will review applications as they come in and approve or disapprove based on evidence of the individual's ability to safely and competently take a horse with only racing experience and retrain it.

- Approval

Prairieland Park will contact applicants upon receiving a complete application with application fees paid, to notify them of the status of their application.

- Withdrawal

Once a person is accepted into the Challenge he or she may withdraw at any time by notifying Prairieland Park office via phone or email.

- Trainer Replacement

In situations where an approved trainer has a horse registered in the Challenge, and that trainer becomes unable to participate due to extraordinary personal circumstances, the trainer can seek permission from Prairieland Park to nominate a replacement trainer. The nominated replacement trainer must submit a Challenge Trainer Application and submit the appropriate fee. The Prairieland Park Challenge Selection Committee will review the application and notify both original and replacement trainer of its decision.

- Catch Rides

In situations where a Challenge trainer is unable to ride at the Challenge but has been the primary rider and trainer of the horse for the weeks leading up to the event, he or she may make a written request to Prairieland Park to allow a catch rider to show the horse. Catch riders will be approved only in cases where the approved Challenge trainer has an extraordinary personal circumstance preventing him or her from showing the horse at the Challenge. In cases where catch riders are approved the horse will be shown in the name of the trainer and prize money will be awarded to the trainer.

Horse Eligibility and Registration

Horse Eligibility

To be eligible for the 2021 Challenge, horses must meet the following three requirements:

1. *Must be registered with The Jockey Club and have a lip tattoo or Jockey Club microchip.* Thoroughbreds from foreign countries must have equivalent registration and identification.
2. *Must have raced or had a published work 2018, 2019 or 2020.* The definition of a race or published work for the purposes of this rule is one that takes place during a period of time when the horse was in race training and was recorded in Equibase or Equineline for North American racing or equivalent foreign recording systems in other countries, including both flat and steeplechase.
3. *Must not have started in training for a second career before December 8, 2019 other than a maximum of fifteen allowable rides or training sessions that introduce skills specific to non-racing careers.* See conditions below.¹⁰
 - a. Horses that cross-trained in other disciplines during their active racing careers are eligible as long as they did not show or compete in those other disciplines.
 - b. Non-discipline-specific ground work such as longeing, long lining, and round pen work from the ground do not count as training for a second career.
 - c. Horses that competed in sports other than racing before December 1, 2018 are ineligible. Showing in-hand is not considered a sport under this section and does not affect eligibility
 - d. Prairieland Park will accept the trainer's pledge that a horse is eligible unless it is made aware of evidence to the contrary. Third parties are welcome to present evidence of ineligibility directly to Prairieland Park. Prairieland Park will investigate such allegations and report its findings to the person making the allegation. The identity of the person making the allegation must be made known to Prairieland Park but will not be shared outside of the Equine Expo committee and staff without permission.
 - e. Prairieland Park will remove horses from the competition that it deems ineligible regardless of whether the determination is made before, during, or after the Challenge event.

Horse Acquisition

Trainers may acquire eligible horses at any time through any source. Note that while acquiring a horse and starting training early may appear to be an advantage, horses that race in 2020 are also eligible for the 2021 Challenge.

Horse Ownership or Contract

Trainers may own their Challenge horse or ride under contract for the horse's owner. Trainers are encouraged to have written training agreements that include a commitment by the owner to allow the horse to participate in the OTTB Challenge. Note that prize money will be paid to the trainer.

Horse/Trainer Relationship

For a horse to be eligible to compete, the trainer must have been the primary rider of the horse after October 1, 2020, and the trainer must ride, drive, or otherwise direct the horse in the Challenge competition, unless a catch rider is approved.

Horse Entry

Trainers may enter their Challenge horses as soon as they acquire them. All trainers must enter an eligible horse no later than December 1, 2020. The entry will include the following:

- Jockey Club name
- date of last race or published work
- name of previous owner
- name and contact information of current owner
- narrative describing how you or owner acquired horse
- narrative describing any training done between retirement from racing and December 1, 2020
- discipline's (up to 2) that you intend to compete in at the Challenge.

Trainers grant Prairieland Park permission to publish all information in their horse registration form except for their email, address, and phone number.

Horse Withdrawal and Replacement

Trainers may withdraw a horse from the Challenge at any time by phone or email to Prairieland Park.

Trainers may enter up to 2 horses.

Entry Fees and Other Costs

Entry Fee

The entry fee for the first horse is \$200 plus GST to be paid at the time of entry. The entry fee for the second horse is \$150 plus GST. Cancellation of horse entry fees shall be refunded with a valid veterinarian certificate. Non-vet withdrawals will not be refunded.

Stabling

Stabling is included during the Challenge, but does not include bedding or feed. Please bring your own water buckets. Stalls must be cleaned upon departure. Tack stalls available for a fee upon request.

Trainer Code of Conduct

The Equine Expo committee and staff welcome direct input, including constructive suggestions. Evidence of ineligibility, horse abuse, or other serious concerns about any trainer in the Challenge is also welcome when presented directly to the Equine Expo committee. Use by trainers of social media and other public forums to make allegations against their peers or against Prairieland Park will be cause for review by Prairieland Park and could lead to removal from the competition.

Preliminary Rounds and Expo Rounds

Preliminary rounds, if required, will be held immediately prior to the 2021 Saskatchewan Equine Expo. Rounds will be scheduled based on entries after entries close.

The top five finishing horses in the preliminary rounds, if required, will compete in the Expo rounds during the Saskatchewan Equine Expo. The schedule for the Equine Expo will be determined by Prairieland Park in advance of the Expo.

The top four finishers receive prize money. These placings will be based entirely on their Expo performances and the scores from the preliminary rounds do not affect the final placings.

In the event that there are fewer than four entries in a particular discipline, prize money will be awarded based on a minimum time or score expected of a green horse in that particular discipline. Prairieland Park will inform the participants of the requirement once entries close if there are fewer than four entries.

Barrel Racing

Horses will complete two separate runs of the standard barrels pattern. The barrel racing component of the Challenge will be run using SBRA rules.

The five horses with the lowest combined time from their two runs will run during the Expo.

Scoring

The top five placings will be based on the combined times from the two Expo runs. Times will be recorded to the third decimal place and in the event of a tie the time of the second run will be used as the tie breaker.

Equipment and Attire

SBRA rules for equipment and attire will be adhered to.

Dressage

Format

All horses will perform a US Equestrian Federation Training Level Test in a standard arena (20 meters x 60 meters).

In addition, all horses will perform a demonstration ride of up to 4 minutes in length before the judge in a standard arena to include walk, trot, and canter in both directions. Riders should perform whatever movements best demonstrate the level and quality of their training within the United States Dressage Federation (USDA) Training Pyramid. Note that judges will penalize efforts to perform movements beyond a horse's level of training and development.

The top five scorers will compete again during the Expo.

Scoring

The Test is scored on a percentage scale of 0 to 100 using standard score sheets.

The demonstration ride will be judged with scores in the following six categories on a scale of 0 to 10: rhythm (10 points), relaxation (10 points), connection (10 points), impulsion (10 points), straightness (10 points), and level of development (10 points). The maximum achievable score will be 60.

Final placings for the top five finishers will be the Expo scores. Ties will be broken with the collective remarks score from the test and then by the score of the demonstration ride.

Attire and Equipment

Equine Canada rules for dress and equipment will be in effect.

Freestyle

Format

This category of competition allows trainers to present horses in disciplines other than the other 4 offered, or to perform in any manner that demonstrates the trainability and talent of the horse.

1. Music will be played if provided in advance.
2. Microphone for trainer to narrate performance can be used with advance notice to Prairieland Park.
3. Each horse will be given a maximum of five minutes to perform. An additional 5 minutes will be provided for set-up and take-down of props if requested in advance. In cases where props take more than three minutes to set up and remove performances must be shortened to ensure that the next horse can start on time. No contestant will be allowed more than a total of ten minutes for performance plus set-up and take-down.
4. Contestants will describe in advance any props that will be used and provide their own crew for setup and removal. Plans to use fire, firearms, pyrotechnics, or any props that might be disruptive to horses must be pre-approved by Prairieland Park. Judges may end the performance at any time and disqualify the entry if they determine that the horse or rider are at risk, or the horse is suffering from abuse.
5. Those who wish to demonstrate ranch work or roping may request that a cow or steer be brought into the arena.

Finale

The top five scoring horses will perform again during the Expo. They may perform the same routine or a different one. Format and rules will be the same as for the qualifying performance.

Scoring

The judge will award scores up to 100 points with maximum points in each of the following categories as follows: harmony and connection between horse and rider (50 points), difficulty of performance (30 points), entertainment value (20 points). Ties will be broken with the harmony score, then difficulty, then entertainment.

The final placings for the top five horses will be the Expo scores.

Attire and Equipment

Riders should choose attire and equipment that is safe. Non-traditional or potentially controversial equipment may be pre-approved by Prairieland Park in advance of the competition.

Hunter/Jumper

Format

The jump height will be selected by the trainer and may be 2'6, 3, or 3'3.

The competition includes 3 parts.

1. Flat Work – Each horse should enter the arena at a trot, halt, and salute the judges. They will then proceed to perform a 60 second demonstration of flat work to include, in any order, the following:
 - a. Walk
 - b. Trot
 - c. Canter both directions with simple change or flying change of lead each direction
 - d. Lengthening and shortening of stride at canter
 - e. Halt and rein back.
2. Round One (Hunter Style) – Immediately after the flat work riders will canter a jump course of between eight and ten fences. Height will be 2'6, 3, or 3'3 and will be selected by the trainer.
3. Round Two (Jumper Style) – Riders will canter a second jump course set at the same height as the first of between eight and ten fences. This course will present turning or adjustability questions typical of a jump-off course and should be ridden with efficient turns and at a forward pace demonstrating competence in a timed-jump-off situation without loss of balance or adjustability.

Scoring

1. Flat Work – The judge will award scores on a scale of zero to 100 based on the quality and level of work that serves as the basic training of a hunter or jumper, including balance, adjustability, and acceptance of rider's aids.
2. Round One – Judges will award scores on a scale of zero to 100 based on rhythm, straightness, confidence, correct jumping form, and acceptance of rider's aids. Horses jumping 3' will receive five bonus points and horses jumping 3'3" will receive ten bonus points.
3. Round Two - Judges will award scores on a scale of zero to 100 based on forward pace appropriate for a jump-off, and efficiency of turns. Forward pace will be strongly rewarded unless it comes at the expense of balance and rideability. Horses jumping 3' will receive five bonus points and horses jumping 3'3" will receive ten bonus points.

The five horses with the highest combined scores for all three phases will compete in the Expo.

Expo placings will be based on the total scores of all 3 parts during the Expo.

Attire and Equipment

Attire, equipment and turnout should be appropriate for hunters or jumpers in accordance with the rules of Equine Canada.

Obstacle Challenge

Format

Trainers will execute a series of obstacles, in order, with a maximum course time of 6 minutes. The format and rules will follow the Canadian Cowboy Challenge rules for the Open Division.

Scoring

Judges may award up to 10 points per obstacle, 10 points for horsemanship and 3 points for time.

The top five scoring horses will compete at the Expo. The final placings for the top five horses will be based on the Expo scores.

Attire and Equipment

Attire and equipment requirements will be those set out in the Canadian Cowboy Challenge rules with the exception of an allowance for English tack.

Prize Money Distribution

Distribution of prize money will be as follows:

20% of total prize money will be allotted to each discipline with the top 4 finishers in each discipline receiving:

1st place: 10% 2nd Place: 5% 3rd place: 3% 4th place: 2%

Sale of Challenge Horses

Trainers wishing to sell challenge horses should notify Prairieland Park in advance. The announcer will identify horses that are for sale and trainers are encouraged to speak to prospective purchasers at the Expo. All sales are private and not the responsibility of Prairieland Park.

Horse Welfare

Abuse and Neglect

Alleged instances of horse abuse or neglect during the 2021 Equine Expo (OTTB Challenge) will be investigated by Prairieland Park and be grounds for elimination. Evidence of abuse or neglect during the event should be brought directly to show management. Allegations by trainers of abuse or neglect made in public forums will be considered a violation of the Trainer Code of Conduct.

Soundness

Judges in all Challenge disciplines are authorized to eliminate horses for unsoundness.

Equipment

Equipment rules vary by discipline and are consistent with the traditions and practices of those disciplines. See discipline descriptions and links.

Publicity, Trainer Blogs and Online Reporting

Prairieland Park encourages trainers to promote their participation in the Challenge through local mainstream media, equestrian media, and their own networks. Trainers agree to forward to Prairieland Park links to press coverage of the OTTB Challenge that is generated by their efforts.

OTTB Challenge Trainers are encouraged to maintain training reports, blogs, and otherwise report on their progress with their Challenge horse. Prairieland Park will include links to web sites featuring those reports in its marketing materials.

Use of Trainer and Horse Images, Blogs, and Video

Challenge trainers agree to allow Prairieland Park to reprint, share, and otherwise promote blogs, images, and video of their Challenge horse, as well as to use images of them and their horse taken at the Challenge for promotional purposes.

Judging

Scoresheets will be made available to competitors after the competition.

Judges may not judge competitors for whom they have served as coach, trainer, employer, or employee during the preceding thirty days. Judges will also not judge members of their immediate family.

Management

Members of Saskatchewan Equine Expo committee and contractors are eligible to participate in the OTTB Challenge as trainers as long as they do not serve in the capacity of judges. They may also serve as coaches, trainers, employees, or employers of participating Challenge trainers.

Rule Changes

Prairieland Park may amend these rules at any time. If amendments are made all Challenge trainers will be notified of the changes within seven days.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Q - What does the entry fee pay for?

A - Administration of the event, prize money and judges.

2. Q - Can I send my horse out for training?

A - Yes. The Challenge trainer may engage the help of another trainer, even sending the horse away for training, as long as it is back with the Challenge trainer by October 1, 2020, had the Challenge trainer as primary (majority of rides) rider since that time, and is ridden, driven, or otherwise directed (such as ground work for freestyle) at the Challenge by the Challenge trainer. We allow this flexibility to benefit the horses.

3. Q - Can I buy a horse as a replacement that somebody else has been training?

A - Yes, if the horse meets all of the eligibility requirements of the event

4. Q - Why do a dressage demonstration ride and not just a second USEF test?

A - Consider what happens when a buyer comes to evaluate a young dressage horse, or when a professional rides a young horse at a European sport horse sale. It is the rider's job to demonstrate the horse's talent and the correct training that defines its value. We want Challenge trainers to have the freedom to show these horses off as though their job was to impress a buyer, not only with the horse's talent but also with its training and temperament. Have fun with it but stay within your horse's comfort zone. Creating resistance will cost you dearly.

5. Q - Why are jumpers being judged?

A - Imagine a traditional jumper class of 50 to 100 green Thoroughbreds jumping 2'6" or 3' courses. At least 60% would jump clean on a bad day. Placings at the top would be based on speed. Nobody believes that jumping these horses at this stage of their careers at speed is wise. Instead we have created a test that rewards trainers who have instilled basic skills in their horses and shows the public how a show jumper is trained effectively. We believe that horses who excel in this format will have demonstrated their value and been launched in promising careers.

6. Q – Why is Saskatchewan’s Top OTTB awarded by popular vote rather than judged?

A – When comparing horses across disciplines no established judging standards exist. One person’s preference is as valid as the next, and the public’s preference is more valid than that of a small panel of judges. Our goal is to make these horses popular, so we reward the team that inspires the crowd.

7. Q – Do I have to buy my horse from Marquis Downs?

A- No. While Marquis Downs may be a good location to look locally for Challenge horses, you can use a horse that raced or worked at any track anywhere!