Pre-Ride Briefing & Rider Rules

Read aloud or hand out; briefing may be mounted or unmounted

Follow the trail. Make decisions. Enjoy your horse.

An adventure, not a race | All disciplines welcome

Organizer contact: _____ **Finish / return by:** _____

Course boundaries / off-limits: _____

THE RULES WE ALL FOLLOW

- ☐ Stay with your team. Ride in pairs or groups of three or four, including at least one experienced rider. Never send one rider off to scout alone.
- ☐ There is no race. Ride at the pace suitable for the least confident horse or rider. No team tries to catch another.
- ☐ No overtaking at the canter. Keep a safe distance and remain in your agreed order; change order only at a walk when safe.
- ☐ Agree before changing gait. Don't trot or canter away unexpectedly. If your team catches another, walk and restore a safe gap.
- ☐ Anyone may say 'Walk' or 'Halt'. Warn your teammates about hazards; horse welfare and safety always take priority.

KNOW THE MARKERS

FOLLOW	TURN	TURN BACK
Main-route flagging	Direction arrow	End of false trail

Your organizer's actual colors and symbols may differ. Check the demonstration before departure. If the trail disappears, return to the last known marker only when it is safe; otherwise halt and contact the organizer. Stay inside the approved area.

OPTIONAL CHECKPOINT CHALLENGE

Look for numbered or pictured signs. Your team may remember the symbols in order, photograph them with a phone while halted, or record them on a card. Do not reach for signs, dismount, or use a phone while the horse is moving. The symbols are evidence of following the route, not a race for points.

If Something Unexpected Happens

Any rider can ask the group to slow down or stop

CLEAR CALLS KEEP THE TEAM TOGETHER

'Loose horse!'	A horse has escaped.
'Rider down!'	Someone has fallen; stop and get help.
'Ware hole!'	Dangerous footing ahead.
'Low branch!'	Overhead hazard; pass the warning back.
'Walk!' / 'Halt!'	Slow or stop the group together.

KNOW WHAT TO DO

A rider falls

All halt. Keep the area safe, alert the organizer and call 911 for serious injury. Do not move someone with a suspected head, neck or spinal injury unless immediate danger or lifesaving care requires it. A fall is not an automatic invitation to remount.

A horse becomes frightened

Stay calm, give the horse room, and halt or walk to a safe location if possible. Do not crowd him or make the team hurry. If he cannot settle, call the organizer; completion is optional.

Deer, rabbits, dogs or other wildlife

Keep your attention on your horse. Do not chase or approach animals. Warn your teammates, allow the animals to move away, and stop if a horse becomes unsettled.

A horse gets loose

Call 'Loose horse!' and notify the organizer with the last seen direction. Do not gallop after it. The organizer coordinates a safe response and alerts other teams.

Your team is lost

Stop somewhere safe; contact the organizer. Go back to the last confirmed marker only if you know the way and it is safe. No shortcuts, fence crossings or leaving the authorized property.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE - BRIEFING CHECK

- ☐ Markers, boundaries and checkpoints
- ☐ Teams, spacing and gait limits
- ☐ Helmet, tack and horse readiness
- ☐ Hazard calls and who can say 'Halt'
- ☐ Emergency contact and return time
- ☐ What to do if lost or delayed

At the finish: Check in with the organizer, report your checkpoint sequence, and follow the stable's plan for your horse before enjoying refreshments or receiving a certificate.