**Leinster TREC 3-Phase One Day Event. (15.5.16)**

The Field Equestrian Centre, Ballyadams, Co Laois, was the perfect venue for Leinster TREC’s recent 3-phase One Day competition. Sunday, 15th May turned out to be one of the sunniest days so far this year and saw a total of 27 riders from all over Ireland, North and South, arrive at the venue ready to face the challenges of all 3 phases.

The Field EC has a huge range of obstacles laid out on an all-weather track surrounding grassy paddocks, and this was ideal for both the MA (Control of Paces) and PTV (Obstacles). The MA track was 120m long grassy track, on a gradual uphill, and riders’ control was tested by the proximity of a dark ‘castle’ jump alongside the track as well as a 3m wide gateway to ride through on route. Best over all levels in this section was Minna Junnikkala, riding Cocky, with a magnificent score of 53 points out of a possible 60.

The MA was followed immediately by the PTV, on the all-weather track. Chef de Piste, Ailbhe Gavin, made the most of the range of TREC Obstacles while also cleverly placing them alongside other features on the course. This meant that horses and riders had to be prepared and concentrate both at obstacles and between them, ready for each challenge ahead. The first 2 obstacles for Level 1, a Footbridge and a Tree Trunk provided the first challenge… slow and steady and then forward. For Levels 2 & 3, the most direct route to the Footbridge was through a stretch of water, with the Tree Trunk closely following after. Next challenge also asked for focus and control… forward going to a Step up or Path Crossing, followed by either a Reinback or Mounted Immobility, depending on the rider’s level. And so it continued around this well thought-out course. A Ridden Corridor, then Immobility…. A Led Incline, followed by Mounting alongside a ‘Cottage’ jump (not part of the course!)… a Hedge, followed by the Slalom… until finally, the last few Obstacles. This was a drop into a flagged water crossing followed by a Ditch for Levels 2 & 3, and then a Reinback. No let-up here, even near the end. Eager horses and riders could see the Finish line, but the control needed for the Reinback caught many out just before they could finish and relax!

The rider who achieved the best score overall in this section was Marie Gallagher and Haize, who ended up with a superb 134 points out of a possible 160.

Riders then had a sociable lunch break, before heading out on the POR (Orienteering) section, either as Individuals or Pairs, into the countryside around The Field Equestrian Centre. The lovely sunny day made the most of the stunning views on sections of their route, clear from Co Laois to the Wicklow Mountains and Level 2 riders actually crisscrossed between counties Laois and Kildare on part of their route.

Level 3 riders had a shorter route than usual, due to the 3 phase event being held over a single day, but Traceur Sheila Fuller included all the usual challenges. First surprise came in the Maproom, when they were handed an aerial photograph of the forest area around the venue, and maps were sealed. A set of marked points indicated their route out of the venue, starting by riding along a stream through the forest! Finally out of the stream, Bearings were then required to navigate to the next Checkpoint, quite a challenging start to the POR. The next section also had its surprises – riders had to navigate a route around a forested lake which wasn’t marked on the OS map and several were observed pausing, double checking map and lake! One of the L3 checkpoints was high up a forest track and riders enjoyed the fabulous views as they relaxed for a few minutes, before encountering their last surprise challenge of Grids as the final section of their route.

Level 2 and 1 riders had a kinder start to their afternoon, heading out the driveway to go either right or left respectively. All soon reached the first of many lovely grassy tracks and could enjoy a trot or canter. The routes also included riding through the woods and around the lake, but the traceur had been kinder and had drawn the lake onto their maps! Some even found time to take their horses into the water for a paddle. Level 2 riders then finished by riding back to the venue via the stream used by the L3 riders.

Fortunes varied on the POR and the best score of the day was achieved by L2 Pair, Susanne and Natasha O’Rourke, riding Apache and Bronte.

Leinster TREC are very grateful to Robert Owens, Proprietor of The Field EC, for the use of his wonderful facilities and for helping to make the day such a great success.