

Equestrian Autocrat Guidelines

By David Cadwell and Donna DeBonis

WHY HAVE EQUESTRIANS AT YOUR EVENT?

Combat activities were the skills that every knight had to know to be considered a knight. To sharpen these skills, knights and those who had aspirations of being knights would spend endless hours learning the use of weapons on horseback. We recreate these activities in the SCA with the martial drills. The ring tilt teaches accuracy with the lance against a mounted target, while the quintain prepares the rider for the shock of impact when jousting. The Saracen's head exercise develops the ability to use a sword at the same time the rider is weaving his horse around obstacles at a fast speed.

Hunting, a premier sport of the medieval period, was a pivotal social event as well as a chance to put knightly skills to use in the absence of war. In the SCA, many kingdoms have held mock hunts that range from one day to weekend camping events.



Donwenna on Antares (An Tir September 2005)

The only activity of the time that required little specialized skills was transportation. It was the rapid transit of the day. As a result anyone who could afford to ride did so. In the SCA, we recreate the experience of medieval transport with costumed trail rides known as pilgrimages and quests.

If all there was to equestrian activities was the chance to feel what it was like to wield a sword from horseback or to experience setting yourself against the impact of a joust that would be enough. But there is more to equestrian activities than that. For the populace of the Middle Ages, tournaments were the spectacles of the day. Those folks that for one reason or another can't participate in equestrian activities themselves can still thrill at the sight of a procession of horses in full bardings and riders holding lances with pennants fluttering from their tips. Many equestrians have gone to great efforts to present spectacular and authentic examples of tack and barding. No one who has been privileged enough to see Sir Manfred von Schwarzwald in his full mounted regalia will ever have to speculate what it would be like to have a Teutonic Knight riding down on them---they know! Those that have witnessed Duke Armand de Sevigny's horse, Bayard, wheel then launch himself into a gallop know what it is like to see a Norman knight in action!

The next time you hear of an equestrian event remember you are welcome, even if you don't own a horse. Equestrians, like everyone else in the SCA, love an audience.

PRE-PLANNING THE EQUESTRIAN EVENT OR

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW TO HAVE HORSES AT YOUR EVENT

To launch a successful event, plan to keep the equestrian activities adjacent to the rest of the main event, so that everyone can easily see

the horses and riders perform. If the Equestrian Autocrat is not an EqMarshal than he must have one to help plan the event from the beginning. The EqM will be responsible for guiding the EQ Autocrat at each juncture. Ideally the consulting EqM will also serve as the Equestrian Marshal-in-Charge of the event.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING TO HAVE HORSES AT EVENTS

Weather

In non-temperate parts of the country, weather will be a factor at certain times of the year. Horses have to be trailered to the event site and so road safety conditions must be considered. Horses and riders will need a covered arena to protect them from inclement weather. Horses will need to be kept in stables overnight for weekend events. Unless these factors are considered, horse owners will not bring their horses. Discuss with the EqM, horse owner's concerns regarding specific weather conditions for the event.

Site accommodations

Horse owners can bring their horses to a primitive site (one without stalls & arena), but must have the following:

Parking

A truck and trailer takes up at least the space of three cars set end to end plus space on either side of the trailer itself for which to tie up the horses when tacking them up. The truck/trailer parking should be adjacent to the stables or paddocks. About two acres would be acceptable.

Camping

Horse owners will prefer to camp near the stables or horse paddocks.

Horse camping (paddocks)

Portable electric paddocks are preferable to picket lines because it keeps the horses better confined and away from the populace. The paddocks are usually set up attached to the horse trailers. Ideally five acres would accommodate trailers, trucks and paddocks.

Portapotties

At least two should be present near the horse area for the riders and spectators.

Water

Each horse may drink as much as 10 gallons a day. The water should be easily accessible. If water must be hauled over to the horses, then use of a truck and water tank should be arranged. If a water faucet is nearby, then hoses should be brought on site.

Shade

Either trees or stables should be available for the respite of the horses.



THL Agelos Evienece on Titus

Equestrian Activities Event Area

Plan to cordoned off this area and have it marked in the site handout as "off limits" to pedestrians.

REQUIREMENTS FOR TYPE OF EVENT

Tournament, quest, trail, processional (confirm with EqMIC):

Tournament area

A wide flat area or arena is needed. The ground should be free of holes or ruts and approximately a minimum of 300 yards long by 150 yards wide. Approximately one acre minimum up to five acres would be adequate.

Trail or quest

A demarcated horse trail that is allowed for horses is needed.

Processional (Royal Progress)

A minimum five yard wide lane with an exit out to one side at the top of the aisle is needed.

INSURANCE COVERAGE

Currently the SCA BoD requires specific activation of the 'equestrian insurance.' This must be activated at least 30 days prior to the event and costs \$50. If the activation request is applied for in less than 30 days before the event, then an additional penalty of \$50 is charged. If the site owner must be named as 'additional insured' then additional \$50 is required for a total of \$100. The Kingdom Equestrian Officer must be notified of the event and a copy of the Insurance certificate sent to him for his files. The specifics for requesting the Equestrian Insurance activation can be found at: www.sca.org/docs/eq-insurance.pdf.

The actual data needed for the request is at www.sca.org/docs/insurancecert.pdf.

SIGNAGE AND WAIVERS

You will need to print out the Roster Equestrian Waivers for your state (Canada uses the General Equestrian Waiver). Everyone must sign it if they are actually participating with the horses.

Post the SCA BoD-approved Equestrian Sign at the riding area. You will find the Equestrian Waivers and the sign at: www.sca.org/docs/AdultEquestrianWaivers.pdf.

EQUESTRIAN AUTOCRAT CHECKLIST

At least 5 months before the event

- Event idea approved at sponsoring branch business meeting
- Contact local EqM to act as consultant and/or EqMIC
- Contact site owner and with the EqM, determine suitability of site, costs, and accommodations
- Arrange for rental horses (determine accommodations, costs, transport, and wrangler contract)
- Find out about site requirements for horse waste removal or disposal area
- Contact the kingdom list minister to arrange training of list personnel for equestrian event scoring

At least 4 months before event

- Confirm event idea with sponsoring branch and arrange for budget
- Contact KEO and inform them of the event
- Order the equestrian insurance

- Put event on kingdom calendar
- Create an event webpage and an E-list
- Submit event copy for kingdom newsletter
- Publicize event on kingdom E-lists, hand out fliers at events
- Arrange for equestrian equipment to be made or refurbished
- Send out invitations to Royalty
- Gather volunteers to work gate, merchantocrat, and to put up any decorations
- Arrange for EqMIC and groundcrew, EqMs, and Minister of the Lists

At least 3 months before the event

- Verify site accommodations are adequate
- Verify site reservations with the site owner
- Continue publicizing the event with fliers and on email lists
- Confirm the equestrian insurance activation
- Confirm an EqMIC for the event
- If Royals attend, then contact Their chief lady in waiting or chamberlain to make accommodations for Them
- Confirm rental horses and remind riders to put in reservations for them

At least 3 months before the event

- Continue publicizing the event
- Verify equipment is ready
- Update the event website, E-list files, and calendar.

At least 2 months before the event

- Verify you have all your volunteers in place
- Purchase or make prizes and/or award scrolls
- Confirm gate money will be present for troll booth
- Make site tokens
- Gather all paperwork: scoresheets, all waivers, and EQ signage
- With the EqMIC, walk the site and check on site accommodations again
- Map out the site for parking, paddocks, camping, and tournament area
- Arrange for directional signs, and area signs
- Confirm on-call veterinarian near site
- Continue to publicize the event

At least 1 month before the event

- Make site hand outs with schedule, rules, and map
- Contact site owner, rental wrangler, Royals, EqMIC, lists, groundcrew chief, and any other co-autocrat to confirm that they have everything they need
- Update the event website and E-list
- Continue to publicize your event

3-7 days prior to the event

- Confirm all of your co-autocrats are in place
- Pack your forms, signs, and waivers
- Pack the equipment
- Pack the prizes

The day before the event

- Hang up the signs
- Post the on-call veterinarian phone number
- Set up the water trough, hoses, haul in the hay, shavings, and/or straw
- Set up the equipment

The day of the event

- Make sure the signs are still up
- Run the event as planned
- Clean up the site at the end of the day

After the event

- Send reports to KEO, IKEQC (if run), and to the sponsoring branch
- Send thank-yous to all your helpers, the site owner, and the wrangler

EVENT WEBSITE AND E-LIST SHOULD CONTAIN THE FOLLOWING INFO:

- Who—the sponsoring branch
- What—type of event
- Where—the site name and directions
- When—dates and times
- Schedule
- Rules
- Practices
- Event flier
- Contact info

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Agelos Evience is the third son with no inheritance. So in 1089 and with the gift of horse, weapons, and armor, he set out in the world. Agelos soon found work with the forces of William II at the border between England and Scotland.

Dave Cadwell has been in the SCA for over 30 years. He was the Interkingdom Equestrian Champion four years in a row (AS 36 - AS 39) and served as the Kingdom Equestrian Officer for two kingdoms (An Tir 2004 and Caid 1996). His jousting troupe is called Joustabout (www.joustabout.com).

Donwenna la Mareschale (known as Beast Healer) is a 12th century Welsh-Norman warhorse trainer and competes in jousting tournaments. Recently, she resurrected the An Tir Hunt Guild, which has become a society-wide phenomenon (www.huntguild.org).

Donna DeBonis, DVM, owns a veterinary clinic in Oak Harbor, WA. She has been known to seek the latest information about anything related to equestrian activities within the SCA and to write how-to articles about them. For more information and links to her articles, visit her website (www.lanceofstanne.com).



Donwenna riding Antares.