



THE OAK LEAF

APRIL

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Important Dates

Apr 05-08

Equestrian Canada Convention

Apr 15

Strength Training Sunday

Apr 21

Eastern Canadian
Thoroughbred Assoc. Banquet

Apr 29

Westar Combined Test

WWCRD? (What Would Coach Ruth Do?)

It's been an action-packed month and it is finally starting to feel like Spring! We have had 13 horse rider combinations participating in Strength Training Sunday's and we are watching some exciting results:

- Faster cardio recovery times in the horses
- Improved horse footwork
- Improved confidence of both horse and rider
- Improved position of our riders
- Helen & I are quicker at resetting for different groups ☺

We have been working with 2 heartrate monitors for the last few sessions and watching the results electronically as well as within the performance of horse and rider and the improvement is incredibly rewarding! There are no short cuts and these horses and riders are evidence to this.

We have a few exciting events coming up over the next month:

- April 5th – 8th - EC Convention, check out the details here: <https://www.equestrian.ca/events-results/convention>
- April 15th – Final Strength Training Sunday!
- April 20th - 24th Ruth teaching in BC (*Check in with Ruth if you have lessons booked in those dates*)
- April 21st – ECTA banquet – rumour has it we have riders getting awards!!
Check out the banquet details on the bulletin board.
Contact Joan to book your tickets: joan@oakhurstfarm.com
- April 26th – 29th Ruth teaching in NS & PEI ... same as above
- April 29th – Westar Combined Test!!! Check the Show book for details

In other news I am super excited about Helen joining the EC team as the new Coaching guru! I know that she is the best person for the job without question, and I am sure that her experience in the field will stand her in good stead.

Important Links

[Horse-Sport Review of Oakhurst3DE 2017](#)

[Equestrian Canada Memberships](#)

[Ontario Equestrian Memberships](#)

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With the title of this section being ‘What Would Coach Ruth Do’ I feel it appropriate to answer that question:

- Take part in everything available
- Run, don’t walk (*especially during scavenger hunts*)
- Love everything about Spring!
- Enjoy each other

Ruth

Stuff You Should Know

Coach Helen has started a new day job – as the Coordinator, Technical Programs – Coaching & Education for our National Sport Organization – Equestrian Canada! Don’t worry, she’ll still be teaching her lessons - but her cell number has changed. You can reach her by text at: 613-986-7029

Eventing Dressage tests will be scored without the 1.5 multiplier this year – scores SHOULD be lower, and easier to understand. Basically, your percentage of good marks is figured out and then inverted to penalty points. So - a Dressage test that scores 65% will mean 35 Penalty points earned.

Meg’s Monthly Scoop

Spring is really starting to feel like it is around the corner with the snow starting to disappear and Easter being here, which also means that show season is right around the corner!

With show season coming it means that entry forms need to start being filled out. So if you haven’t already, the next time you are by the white board there is a white binder. In the binder there is a sign up sheet for every horse show, put your name on the horse shows that you want to attend. This way, when the time comes an entry form will be made out for you. Ask your coach about this sign up process!

Now that snow is disappearing, this means that mud is coming! So a friendly reminder to watch where you hack so that the grass footing isn’t getting ruined. Along with this – remember that the indoor wash stall isn’t for washing off muddy hooves. Hopefully soon the outdoor wash stalls will be opened!

Sadly, the end of strength training is coming up. Sign up for the last session on April 15th!

Happy Easter Everyone!

Meg

Helen's Top 10...

10 Things the Coaches need to prepare for Show Season 2018

As we move into spring and our next competition season starts to feel imminent, I'm looking at my own prep (and Ruth and Meg's) for Coaching Team O through the next 6 or 7 months of shows. There's some prep work being done by us to prepare for our roles supporting our athletes:

1 – *Investing in proper footwear.* Every year about this time, we start looking at all of our summer footwear and trying to determine what is needed to get through the next show season. If we buy new boots now, we have time to break them in and get them comfortable *but not worn out* before the first 12+ hour day in a sandring, damp field, mud puddle, water jump, xc walk, hill climb, arena dirt and freshly bedded stall marathon in them. It's important to pick ones we like because we spend a LOT of time in them. We may have several options – depending on the weather but we're definitely deciding now – and discussing it between the 3 of us. A lot. Someone should put us on a boot testing focus group. We'd kill it.

2 – *Finding our raingear.* This includes the raincoat for cold weather and warm, rain pants (lined and unlined), the rubber boots to keep feet dry, watersocks or sandals we'll wear when we completely give up on being dry and embrace the wet, umbrellas and waterproofing bags for phones and chargers. Its serious business and after last summer, we're prepared.

3 – *Calendar planning.* You've seen Ruth schedule stuff. She should teach courses on it. You can bet we are already discussing who is going to what, where trailers will go when, and what our coaching assignments will be. It will keep changing and being tweaked until we get to the competitions, but the sooner you can let us know what you want to do, the sooner Ruth can let us know what we have to do!

4 – *Adjusting lesson plans.* Lessons topics were in that "General Preparation" phase – Jumping a corner, 10m circles, Leg yields, gymnastics, etc. We are moving rapidly into the "Specific Preparation" phase – practicing whole dressage tests, riding whole courses, etc. Soon enough we'll be doing all of the prep outside and it will start to feel like Game On time!

5 – *Strength Training.* OK. Walking a lot more. Coaching is hard. We don't get to sit on a horse. We have to walk and walk and walk. From ring to ring, from jump to jump and field to field. No more lounging about in the arena, our step counts are rising rapidly now in anticipation of the activity required this summer. Its too bad roller skates don't work on grass.

6 – *Testing our students.* Not algebra or anything weird but starting to throw challenges at them to make sure they are ready for what this season will bring.

Like including a new jump in a course that they were not quite ready for last fall, or incorporating a new movement into a test that they feel challenged by. We know they are ready for it, and our students are starting to realize it too.

7 – *Making travel plans.* We know some of the shows we are going to have limited accommodations nearby and we have started to book hotel rooms and figure out who is driving, etc. I'm too old to enjoy sleeping in my car. I'm on it.

8 – *Find good sunglasses.* This is no laughing matter. These babies get a LOT of time in the sun and there is a lot to consider:

- Adequate coverage – no sunlight must touch my eyeballs, if we have to squint all day, its not good. Makes us look angry.
- Good density - not that we roll our eyes or anything, just to block the sun...
- Epically cool design - they show up in a lot of pictures
- Decent tan line imprint - If we are going to wear these all day every day, when they come off, we can't look ridiculous. Ruth tried to self tan her feet once (long story!) and let's just say that redheads can't use the stuff. Unless they want to be orange.

9 – *Increase the water intake.* Mid summer the goal is to use porta-potties as little as humanly possible. Increasing our water intake now means we can cut back on show days (usually by necessity because we are standing by a show ring for so many hours we are eating sand!) and not be dehydrated. It may not make sense to you, but one of our coaching team was left at an event once because they ducked into a porta-potty right before the trailers left. No one wants a repeat of that!

10 – *Start building volume.* In the arena, we don't need a heck of a lot of volume for our students to hear us. But soon we'll be outside. In the wind. And rain. And fields, parking areas, warmup rings the size of footballs fields, etc. We'll need volume. Despite what everyone thinks, keeping a loud outdoor voice through several lessons in a row or a day full of warmups takes practice and strength. You need to push from the diaphragm. You need breath control. You need to enunciate. It's no joke. The shouting you are starting to hear in lessons is us practicing. We're serious about this stuff!

I'm almost ready for show season 2018 – are you?

Helen



Some of the avid Easter Egg Hunt crew at Oakhurst on April 01!