

SITE SELECTION FOR A DALMATIAN ROAD TRIAL

Dalmatian Club of America

(updated 4/15/22)

When selecting a site for a Road Trial, look for an area that is accessible and appropriate. Keep in mind the following requirements:

- 1) **TRAILS:** Are there sufficient trails available? The suggested trail length is 6 to 6¼ miles. This course design allows the mid-point rest period and start/finish to be at the start of the course. It also saves labor on marking the course. Successful trials have also been run on 3 mile and 12 ½ mile courses. Other possibilities: two 6 ¼ mile loops that meet at the starting point (RD does each once; RDX does each twice; rest period at start); or three 4- mile loops. Who will mark the trails? There must be a mile marker at each mile, and there must be directional markers and “on-course” markers along the trail.
- 2) **JUDGED EXERCISES:** Before the Judged Exercises, teams must traverse at least ¼ mile of distance before meeting with the mounted Judge. The five Judged Exercises (Hock, Hock with Distraction, Stay, Recall, Speed/Change of Pace) should be conducted on a mostly flat surface without too many distractions. The Judged Exercises may not be held in an arena & must be held in an outdoor, open area such as a field, pasture, or trail. If a fenced area is used, the fenced area must be approximately 100 yards by 100 yards or larger (300' x 300'; or approximately 10,000 square yards), with side fencing at least 150 feet apart. . The RD hock exercise requires two hundred yards, in an approximately straight line. The RDX hock exercise requires a figure 8 with markers 100 yards apart for a total of 200 yards. The speed exercise must be level or slightly uphill, with no rocks, potholes, or overhanging obstacles for 100 yards. The same length of trail may be used for more than one exercise. Does the proposed site offer an area that would meet these minimum requirements? Is the judged exercise area accessible to spectators without causing a distraction to the dogs (no cars moving in & out; limited movement of spectators; no un-entered dogs within sight; no other entered teams within sight of judging area; etc.)?
- 3) **PERMISSION/PERMITS:** How difficult will it be to secure the required permits or permission from landowners? Will exhibitors be allowed to ride the trails with their dogs the day before the Road Trial? Will dogs that do not pass the exercises be allowed to go out on a trail ride on the day of the Road Trial? Conditional-use permits can be applied for on federal or state lands, but usually require a year or more for approval. Private landowners must give written permission and may require proof of insurance and/or liability releases. Some cities require permits for any organized activity. Written permission and/or permits should be applied for/requested at least 1 year in advance
- 4) **AVAILABILITY OF RENTAL HORSES:** Although the Host is not required to provide rental horses, many exhibitors will not be able to bring their own horse. How difficult will it be to bring rental horses to the site? The ideal situation is to host a Trial on the trails attached to a commercial rental horse operation. If such a location cannot be secured, how will the rental horses be brought in? Is there trailer parking? Are you able to secure a rental horse provider who is willing to haul horses? Will “wranglers” be available as escort riders? Are the horses “barn-sour” or “buddy-sour”? If so, will a wrangler/escort rider be required/offered/suggested? Would there be an extra charge for an escort rider, or is this part of the rental price? How much will the horse supplier charge for an RDX horse (25 miles)? An exhibitor may ride more than one horse

to complete the mileage, so an exhibitor completing 25 miles could rent 2 horses & change horses in the middle of her ride. What would be the charge for this?

5) **CARRIAGE ACCESSIBILITY:** Is the proposed trail cart accessible? The Host should make every effort to find a trail that is carriage-accessible. If the trail chosen is not carriage-accessible, this must be stated in the Premium list. If carriages are to be allowed, both carriage exhibitors and mounted exhibitors must complete the judged exercises on the same course. For the endurance portion of the Trial: if the main trail is not carriage-accessible, the Host may designate a separate trail/course for carriages. All teams must complete the required distance.

6) **CARRIAGE AVAILABILITY** for the COACHING CERTIFICATE CARRIAGE TITLE: For a full Road Trial, the host must offer all 3 classes: CC/CCC (no distance); RD (12 ½ mile distance); & RDX (25 mile distance). For the CCC class, an exhibitor may rent a carriage & driver if available. Will there be a rental carriage/driver available for the CCC entries? This should be stated in the Premium List. An exhibitor who competes in the Judged Exercises as a mounted exhibitor must remain mounted (may not switch to carriage), & an exhibitor who competes in a carriage must remain in the carriage for the entire distance (may not switch to horse under saddle).

7) **WATER:** Is water readily available to horses and dogs? Water must be provided for dogs every three miles along the trail. Water should be available for horses at least every 6 miles. Each horse will require a minimum of 20 gallons of water for the day. If water is not available in the form of accessible creeks, you may need to provide buckets and troughs. Will you need to haul water out on the trail? Is the trail accessible to vehicles?

8) **SAFETY:** Horses are easily spooked, especially in an unfamiliar environment. Is the trail “horse-friendly?” Are there road crossings? You will need to provide at least 1 horse-wise steward for every road crossing or bridge. The trail should avoid running alongside a busy road. Keep in mind the safety of the dogs, also.

9) **REST STOP(s):** The rest stop will need water for horses & dogs and some shade. Are these available or will you need to haul them? Is the course designed to make the mid-point rest stop accessible? Is it located where the judge can observe the dogs/horses?

10) **OTHER PROVISIONS:** Where will spectators be located? Are there restroom facilities? Where will un-entered dogs be kenneled? (Un-entered dogs are not allowed on or near any part of the course or the judged exercises.) Is there shade for exhibitors, horses, the judge, the distraction dog? Can you put a sign-in sheet or other verification method at the furthest point on the trail? Can the trail be clearly marked at every fork or cross-path? Is there a “warm-up” area for exhibitors/teams? Teams are not allowed to warm up or practice with dogs at any time in the Judged Exercise area.

11) **LOCATION:** If this Road Trial is held in conjunction with a specialty show, is the site located within an hour or so of the specialty show? Is the site easily accessible for stewards, spectators, exhibitors, and horse trailers? Is there sufficient horse trailer parking? Exhibitor, spectator, and steward parking? If you are expecting exhibitors to travel a great distance, have you located the nearest hotels, grocery stores, etc.? How far is the site from other amenities?