

## A First Time Guide to the Full Summer TREC Competition

Are you interested in TREC but a bit daunted about taking part in a full TREC competition? This might help you make up your mind. For those of you new to the whole thing, don't worry, it's a relaxed fun weekend and there will be many people ready to help you. Remember many of you will be in the same boat.

First timers will be doing the **Level 1 Competition** and it's a good idea if you enter the **pairs** event as then you can help each other. The weekend usually starts with the level 2 and 3 orienteering. Then there might be a **briefing for competitors new to TREC** and usually a **course walk for all** on one evening, perhaps followed by a **meal**. It is useful to go these events, to meet your fellow competitors and enjoy a friendly evening. The competition for Level 1 usually starts on Sunday with the orienteering (POR), followed later in the day by the Control of Paces (MA) and the 16 obstacles (PTV) - don't ask me it's all in French, where the competition started! Remember TREC is based on a fun riding event using skills and situations you might encounter on a hack, including using a map. You will get a schedule before the event which will give you details of things you need to know and help get you organised. It's a bit complicated at first, but once you have done one competition it gets easier and there are lots of people to ask.

When you arrive, and you can stay overnight on Saturday if that suits you, you will need to **report to the Secretary** to get your ID tags, get some checks done and collect some information for the day. You should already know your times for the 3 phases. It may be possible to stay in your horse box or to camp at the venue. **Coralling** is also sometimes available.

Then it's off to the competition. First a check of tack. There are a number of items that you have to have for TREC, not too extensive for Level 1. Normal riding clothing is worn, and of course a suitable **hard hat**. **High Viz clothing** for you and the horse is needed for the Orienteering. A **Body Protector** is recommended, but not compulsory. Once checked, you then have ten minutes in the map room to copy the **map** before



starting the Orienteering (POR). You will be given a **speed** to maintain. Don't be too worried about this as at Level 1 most of the POR is done in a walk with some trotting.

You will also be given a **record card** to take with you. PS don't worry about getting lost out on the route, you will be found and you can have your phone with you as long as you don't use it- Unless it's an emergency!

Whilst on the route, which will be 10km -15km for Level 1, competitors will come across **checkpoints** at unspecified places and in unspecified numbers. Entry to the checkpoint is indicated by two flags, red on the right and white on the left. Your time will be recorded when you arrive and leave a checkpoint. Competitors must go directly to the checkpoint by the correct route and should not change pace. Competitors usually stay for 5





minutes at the check point, but this is at the discretion of the judge, if there are a number of riders waiting. The **record card** will be marked at each checkpoint with the time of arrival and departure. It must be remembered to get the record card back before leaving the checkpoint. The record card is given in at the last checkpoint, as it will be used to help with the scoring. **POR Tickets** are also likely to be used on the route. These are unmanned checkpoints and are used to check that the correct route has been taken. If they are on the correct route they are 'good' tickets and if on the incorrect route they are 'bad' tickets. You won't know which is which! They have to be recorded on the competitor's record card. This phase is

marked out of 240.

So having completed the Orienteering and hopefully not feeling too tired, the next phase is the **Control of Paces** (MA). You usually get a break between the two. The MA only takes a few minutes, but is important as 60 marks are available. You will need to do a **slow canter** followed by a **fast walk** over a set distance – between 50m and 150m.

Finally the finale is the **Obstacle Phase** (PTV). For the full competition you do **16 obstacles**. These are things that simulate what you might encounter whilst out on a hack in the countryside. Typical things might be: overhead branches, a canter corridor, an S bend, rein back and so on. Each obstacle is marked out of 10, so the total mark is 160. One good thing about TREC is that is you don't want to do an obstacle you just tell the judge and move on. My horse, Tommy hates the maypole and we often miss it out. You won't be eliminated, but you will lose the mark. The obstacle course will be displayed at the secretary's tent.



The Corridor



Cantering through the corridor



## The S Bend

Attempting the S bend: flexibility needed



The overhead branches:  
Look how low you have to go!

So that's the competition. If you haven't been put off, what next? EATG will be putting on a number of events over the year. They will be advertised on the EATG website, [www.eastangliatrec.co.uk](http://www.eastangliatrec.co.uk) so have a look. There are also often training events to familiarise you with TREC, so look out for them too. But even if you haven't had a chance to do any training, you can still enter a TREC competition. So come along and have a go.

If you are not sure if this is for you, but are still interested, why not **help** on the day? TREC needs a lot of stewards to run competitions. If you think you can help at any time, please email Jill Perry on [jperry-trec@live.co.uk](mailto:jperry-trec@live.co.uk) with your name and contact details plus type of help you can give.

If you are now inspired and can't wait, but aren't a member of EATG why not join now for £10, as your entry for all competitions run by EATG will then be at a reduced rate?

For more information on TREC events go to the TREC GB website. [www.trecgb.com](http://www.trecgb.com). There are also other local TREC groups all around the country. We, at the East Anglia TREC Group, look forward to welcoming many new TREC enthusiasts to a great way of enjoying stimulating riding for you and your horse.