



cross country the “wow effect”

AT THE EVENT AT REBECCA FARM

The eventing course at The Event at Rebecca Farm is known for obstacles, or questions, that incorporate the beautiful backdrop of the Flathead Valley—from solid-as-a-rock railroad ties that test fearlessness of horses to intimidating jump borders that echo the angles of nearby mountain ranges—tempting horses and riders from across the nation to test their mettle.

“We love it when we hear people say, ‘Wow, I didn’t know a horse could do that,’” event organizer Sarah Broussard explained.

The most dangerous of any eventing element, not only does cross country test a horse’s jumping ability, it also demands a high level of trust between horse and rider. The rider is the only one to have seen the course prior to the actual event, so the horse must trust the rider in order to execute the obstacle or question. In turn, riders must understand what their horses are capable of jumping in order to complete the course.

Course obstacles are solid and intimidating, often placed near another challenging, natural obstacle such as a ditch or log. Combinations of obstacles present “questions” to horse and rider that each answers in a unique way.

Top riders and horses blend intelligence and experience over variable conditions—weather, terrain, obstacles, and footing—helping to ensure that top horses remain able and adaptable while competing over rough country.

Cross-country courses also have a unique time element: the course must be completed within an allotted time, thus requiring riders to appropriately pace their horses. Completing the course in too fast or too slow a time can result in penalties.

A horse’s refusal to jump an obstacle also results in penalties. All penalties are added together. The fall of a horse, rider, or both entails immediate elimination from the competition.

The highlight of the competition—if only for its dramatic obstacles and challenges—cross-country demonstrates the strength and bravery of horse and rider on a course that mimics battlefield conditions: jumping natural obstacles, riding long distances, and negotiating the hazards of the countryside.

