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Coaching Update: National Program with a National Impact

(For coaches, instructors, interested candidates, equestrians and parents.)

What's New in EC Coaching?

At the recent Equine Canada convention, the national coaching team officially launched the new English Competition Coach program (replaces old Level 1). There was also a sneak preview of the evaluation criteria for the upcoming Competition Coach Specialist (replaces old Level 2) certification, the new Western Basic Training (replaces the old General Component rider prerequisite) and the new training for High Performance coach candidates (replaces the old Level 3).

The primary goal of the EC Convention coaching activities was to ensure that Master Evaluators from all provinces were fully equipped to assist their provincial organizations in training evaluators in their region, so that the new program can be available. The EC Convention launch activities were also open to auditors, and several coaches and coach candidates attended to learn about requirements of the new system. There was an unprecedented attendance of over 70 people at the workshops and launch events which were held offsite at the Nepean National Equestrian Park.

Launching the new certificate means that there are now two streams of equestrian instruction certification available. The Instructor stream is geared to those with clients who are primarily non-competitive. The Coach stream is geared to those who mainly coach clients to competition. In the past, the old coaching levels did not differentiate between the different requirements of the recreational vs. competitive coaching contexts. More information on the two streams is available on the Equine Canada website.

What if I'm Already Certified?

Coaches and instructors who have already achieved certification do not need to do anything regarding the new program, other than the normal maintenance requirements for maintaining certification status. A certified coach wishing to obtain a new certification in a different context, would apply for the new certification on the same basis as any other candidate. All currently certified EC coaches and instructors do professional development hours, a Making Ethical Decisions exam, and keep a current First Aid/CPR certificate to maintain their coaching certification status.

How Do I Become Certified?

Preparatory training and certification evaluations are scheduled by the provincial equestrian association supporting the NCCP/EC coaching program. It is important to apply to the local association authorized to run the program, early to get on waiting lists. Training courses and evaluations are often scheduled when there are sufficient participants on the list. More information on the certification process and pre-requisites is available on the Equine Canada website.



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How Do I Find an EC Certified Coach/Instructor ?

All coaches and instructors who have been certified through the Equine Canada coaching program, or who have a recognized International Trainers' Passport are listed on the Equine Canada website under the 'Find a Coach' feature. It is an alumni list that honours the professional achievement of any coach or instructor that has gone through the certification process. Currently certified coaches are clearly indicated to assist potential students/clients in finding a coach near them. Parents can also confirm the certification status of their child's instructor or coach.

What is the EC Coaching Team?

The task of developing a program that reflects the needs of the specific sport and athletes of the future, is the job of a large team of experienced equestrian coaches, program administrators, evaluators and other stakeholders. The EC 'National Coaching Team' consists of the 60+ members of the national coaching committees: National English Coaching Committee, National Western Coaching Committee, National Saddleseat Coaching Committee and National Coaching Committee.

The membership for these committees is comprised of Master Evaluators and provincial coaching co-ordinators from across the country representing each province. Membership of the National Coaching Committee also includes the Chairs of the High Performance discipline coaching committees (Jump, Dressage, Eventing, Reining).

This structure ensures that programs are designed with careful thought and the long-term interests in view. The programs developed are consistent, providing a clear pathway for coaches and riders. It also ensures that the program logistics work (can be implemented) according to the same standards in all provinces, and are accessible across the country.

There are strict criteria in the governing Policies and Procedures for membership on the coaching committees. In a non-profit sport organization such as Equine Canada, committee members volunteer their time for the future of the sport. Progress in new programs is due to the generous hard work of people who share the passion for the sport, the horses, and future riders' safety and available opportunities.

Contributors who went the extra mile to help make this year's launch possible were formally recognized during the annual coaching update at the EC Convention and coaching team meetings. There was tremendous momentum in the national programs this year. Other achievements were also recognized from coast to coast.

Some of the key contributors recognized were:

Grant Field, (ON) National Master Evaluator, English Coaching Chair, National Coaching Committee Chair

For: Going the extra mile in time invested in steering the coaching committees toward successful conditional approval and launch of the new Competition Coach program.



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Victoria Andrew, (ON) National Master Learning Facilitator and Evaluator

For: Tremendous personal investment of time in document creation for the new program approvals & new training courses, training evaluators and Learning Facilitators in the new system.

Other team members who were recognized for exceptional efforts and contributions to the coaching program in 2010:

Ruth Fowler, (AB), Western Coaching Chair

Terry Johnson, (BC), Saddleseat Coaching Chair

Barbara Newlands, (ON), Western Coaching Committee

Wendy Hudson, (NB), Western Coaching Committee

Betty-Ann McPhedran, (MB), Western Coaching Committee

Mary-Clare McLaren, (NS), English Coaching Committee

Mary-Ruth Moore, (ON), English & Saddleseat Coaching Committees

Jennifer Irwin, (ON), OEF Coaching Education

Wendy Sewell, (BC), Horse Council BC Coaching Manager

Horse Council BC

For: Successful pilot evaluations for the Competition Coach certification. 7 BC coaches were the first to be successfully certified as Competition Coaches in the new system.

Newfoundland Equestrian Association

For: First 'home grown' Instructor of Beginners (obtained rider levels and coaching certification all on the Island).

Nova Scotia Equestrian Federation

For: Running the first Competition Coach Workshop (new theory course for coaching candidates).

Ontario Equestrian Federation and Horse Council BC

For: Running the most robust Rider Levels programs- 580 (ON) and 290 (BC) Rider Level certificates were awarded.

What is the National Coaching Vision?

The EC Coaching program is the only equestrian instruction program in Canada which is recognized by Sport Canada, and internationally by IGEQ. It is a key goal of a national program to provide opportunities for athletes and coaches to develop to their maximum desired potential. In a country like Canada, geography and population density differences are a challenge for all sports in providing national consistency, quality and equal access to services. The coaching team works very hard to share ideas and find ways to implement the program that will result in it being possible for a rider or coach anywhere to have access to the program, at the level they need, and to have the same type and quality of experience their peers across the country would have.

NCCP certification recognizes and attests to good coaching. Certification represents a standard of excellence on par with the strongest international sports in Canada. The best way to develop



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future high performance equestrians, is to provide quality instruction at all levels of participation. Most equestrians start off as a recreational participant, and end that way. For most participants, practicing equestrian sport is about safety, wellbeing of horses and good horsemanship. As with most national sports, it is understood that athlete training means training for all participants, with a small percentage that compete. In equestrian sport, approximately 22% of equestrians hold competitive sport licenses. More than 80% of instruction is done in the beginning and intermediate recreational and recreationally-competitive contexts by Instructors of Beginners and Level 1/Competition Coach Coaches.

Whether a coach or instructor decides to become certified in a new context or not, professional coaching means ongoing professional development. In addition to completing the approvals process for the remaining coaching certificates (Competition Coach Specialist and High Performance), a large goal for EC Coaching for 2011 is to provide more development opportunities for coaches and instructors. The role of the national sport organization like EC, is to provide guidance and direction for coach and rider development. Regional partners who implement the program, work with Equine Canada to achieve the national mandate. Many provincial associations are partnering with EC to reach the national goals, and have scheduled training and development opportunities already.

More information about the coaching and Learn to Ride programs is available on the Equine Canada website.

Sincerely,

Heather Sansom
Manager of Coaching
Equine Canada