

De Frates Horsemanship Obstacle Inventory

Current as of June 2022

Why Obstacles?

Using the principles of horsemanship to work horses over obstacles builds trust and confidence and will strengthen even the strongest of partnerships.

The horse learns that he can face new and potentially unsettling situations and live if he follows our lead. We learn to trust our horse as his bravery grows. As confidence abounds, so does the partnership we share with our horses. Plus, it's just fun!

How do obstacles challenge us?

To successfully navigate obstacles with our horses, we must improve our horsemanship in all four key areas. That means we must master our ability to influence our horses, as well as control our own Speed, Direction, Body, and Emotions. By improving our horsemanship in these areas we become laser focused and more tuned into our horses than ever before; as a result, our timing and feel improve and we are able to navigate any obstacle in our path.

Our Obstacle Park

The Obstacle Park at Flying P Ranch spans a 1.25 acre park-like setting that contains a combination of [IMTCA](#), [Trail Trial](#), [Equine Trail Sports](#), [Working Equitation](#), and [Extreme Cowboy](#) style obstacles. Permanent obstacles are located outside of our arenas in a dedicated but versatile course, while many adjustable obstacles have the flexibility to be set up inside an arena or in the park, descriptions below have the specifics. Our obstacle park is nestled safely within our fully fenced and secure property.

How do you determine an obstacle's difficulty?

Obstacles increase in difficulty over five levels, L1-5. Ratings are determined by how many parts of Horsemanship (Speed, Direction, Body, and Emotional Influence) are required to complete the challenge, the way a horse must navigate the challenge, as well as by the obstacle itself. Please keep in mind that ratings are subjective as each horse and rider combination is unique; what may be a L1 obstacle for one, could be a L5 for another. Consider our ratings as recommendations and approach each obstacle as if it were an L5.

Our Rating Scale

- | | | |
|-------|--------------|---|
| U | Level 1 (L1) | Suitable for all levels. Tests Horse &/or Rider in 1 area. |
| UU | Level 2 (L2) | Challenging for novices. Tests Horse & Rider in 1 area each. |
| UUU | Level 3 (L3) | Challenging for most. Tests Horse & Rider in 1-2 areas each. |
| UUUU | Level 4 (L4) | Challenging for advanced levels. Tests Horse & Rider in 3+ areas. |
| UUUUU | Level 5 (L5) | The most advanced obstacles that include a 'spook' factor. |

Permanent Obstacles

Rating	Obstacle	Description
U	Lincoln Logs	Navigate your horse through a series of criss crossed, log raised poles spaced 30" apart.
U	Tire Squeeze	Squeeze between two immovable objects, large tractor tires embedded in the ground.
UU	Gates	Master ride-through gates in the arena then try our intricate gate obstacle.
UU	Mailbox	Retrieve goodies from inside the mailbox. What will you find?
UU	Nature Scramble	A trail rider's nightmare, unstable logs, twigs, rocks, and other natural debris.
UU	Pool Noodle Curtain	A curtain made of pool noodles strung high between two trees.
UUU	Cake Box Climb	A 3-tiered box. 16' wide & 3' high.
UUU	Barrel Pull	Untether the rope and back your horse to pull this barrel as high as you can.
UUU	Barrel Push	Ask your horse to push the barrel mounted chest height in a small circle.
UUU	High-Tie Pull	Strung high above the horse's head, you must drag or pull this dangling torment past you from tree to tree.
UUU	Log Jump	A cross country style jump. You can walk over it, jump it, sidepass it and more!
UUU	Mechanical Cow	While it is a necessity for cutters, most horses have never seen a mechanical flag aka Cow.
UUU- UUUUU	Cowboy Curtain	Nestled between trees this 'curtain' awaits. Made of a variety of dangly things that flap in the wind.
UUU- UUUUU	Barrel of Monkeys	Pull on the rope to lift the lid off the barrel & expose the hidden mysteries within. Difficulty varies based on goodies inside.
UUUU	Car Wash	Squeeze through pool noodle infused barrels and curtains that shift & spin as you pass.
UUUU	The Chase	Barrel Push on steroids; as you push this barrel you will be chased by the opposite side.
UUUU	Rolling Bridge	Not just your ordinary bridge, this bridge rolls as horses walk across, almost as if the ground was falling out from under them.
UUUUU	The Bellagio	A water box with a floating top that shoots water skywards with every step as it sinks.

Coming Soon

The Ravine & The Pond
Team Teeter
Suspension Bridge

Navigate down through the rock walls into the depths of the ravine. What mysteries await you at the bottom?
Grab a friend and try to balance each other on opposite sides of this dual sided teeter bridge.
Firmly rooted on either side but suspended in the middle.

Adjustable Obstacles

Name^A = Can be set up inside an arena

Name^O = Can be set up as part of the obstacle park

Name⁺ = Can be combined with other obstacles

Rating	Obstacle	Description
U	Bouncing Balls AO+	Push them, bounce them, kick them, bite them, lift them over your head, etc.
U	Daisy Chain ^{AO}	Like Ring Around the Rosy, but on horseback with a circle of raised poles on a tire.
U	Pole Bending ^{AO}	Weave through a series of equally spaced poles, usually at high speed.
U-UUU	Bridges, Ramps & Pedestals ^{AO+}	Multiple bridges of varying heights, lengths & widths. Can be combined to increase difficulty.
U-UUU	Mazes ^{AO+}	Mazes can be made of poles, bales of hay, barrels, etc, and combined with other obstacles.
U-UUU	Picnic Party ^O	Balloons, dogs, children...What's not to love about picnics? Volunteers required.
U_UUUUU	Jurassic Bawk ^O	Chickens are really tiny Dinosaurs. Our girls are free range which makes them unpredictable & uncontrollable.
UU	Belly Tickler ^{AO+}	Prepare your horse to ride through bushes and tall grasses by walking through these skyward pointing pool noodles.
UU	Bubble Guns ^{AO+}	Did someone say Duel? We don't think guns are that dangerous, they only shoot bubbles, but your horse may think otherwise!
UU	Bubble Machine ^{O+}	Unsettling enough on its own, can be combined with other obstacles to increase the difficulty.
UU	Carry the Water ^{A+}	Carry a bucket of water from one platform to another without spilling a drop.
UU	Flag Carry ^{AO+}	Carry the flag from one location to another as it flaps in the wind.
UU	Saddle Bags ^{AO+}	You may use this useful piece of tack already, but these saddle bags have a surprise inside.
UU	Sidepass ^{AO}	Take your sidepass game to the next level by sidepassing over a log, pole, or other objects.
UU	Sprinkler ^{O+}	Ride through an articulating sprinkler. Can be combined with other obstacles.
UU	The Spider ^{AO+}	Scaring humans since the dawn of time, this spider is sure to spook your horse more than you.
UU	The Drag ^{AO}	As its name implies, dally and drag this noisy bouncy obstacle around.

Rating	Obstacle	Description
UU- UUUU	Construction Zone ^o	Large equipment, unexpected sounds, people in safety gear. Difficulty varies based on setup & volunteers available.
UU- UUUU	Lead the Blind ^{AO}	Dismount and blindfold your horse, then lead them on, over, under and/or through the rest of the challenge.
UU- UUUU	Teeter Bridge ^{AO}	A 14' long and 42" wide rocking bridge. The amount of 'rock' can be adjusted to increase the difficulty.
UU- UUUU	Skittles ^{AO+}	Skittles is a very well trained inflatable Dinosaur worn by a member of our team. Some horses love Skittles, some do not.
UUU	Around the World ^{AO}	Pick one end of a pole up off a barrel while the other end remains on another barrel. Ride all the way around and replace.
UUU	GOAL! ^{AO+}	Ask your horse to push a ball or a barrel through a maze to 'sink' the object in the pocket.
UUU	Emergency Blanket Poncho ^{AO+}	Sure, you can take your jacket off while mounted, but our emergency blanket style poncho is different; it's shiny, it's noisy, and you definitely aren't going to see it on a fashion runway.
UUU	Mattress Crawl ^{A+}	Unlike your parents, we will let you and your horse jump on it to your heart's content.
UUU	Parachute ^{A+}	Run over and under the parachute, just like when you were a child, only this time, do it on horseback.
UUU	The Sled ^{A+}	Well known for its use in football practice & converted for us to push around the arena.
UUU	Umbrellas ^{AO+}	You may not plan on going riding in the rain, but if you ever do you want to make sure you can stay dry up in the saddle.
UUU	Water Box ^{AO}	A pool filled with water. 'Nuf said.
UUU- UUUUU	The Drone ^{AO+}	Everyone is an amateur pilot these days, and every park has turned into a flight zone. Don't wait until you are out on the trail to teach your horse what to do when you encounter a drone.
UUU- UUUUU	Trash Box ^{AO+}	A 4'x8' box filled with a variety of plastic bottles, and other 'safe for your horse to step on' type 'trash'.
UUU- UUUUU	Tunnel of Terror ^{AO+}	An inflatable tunnel filled with a variety of dangly, pokey & blinky things. Difficulty varies depending on the 'things' added.
UUUU	Erick the Red ^{o+}	You know them as your favorite used car dealers main source of advertisement, but has your horse ever seen a Wacky Inflatable Tube Person?
UUUU- UUUUU	Mounted Shooting ^{AO+}	Shoot at a variety of targets with a bow and arrow, an eco-friendly airsoft gun or Black Power Pistol.