

Volunteering

I got to enjoy the Twin Rivers Horse Trials in a different and educational way. I was one, if not the first person, to sign up to volunteer on [Eventingvolunteers.com](https://eventingvolunteers.com).

You get to select your desired job and hours you want to work. So I got lucky enough to scribe for the CiC2*, jump judge the 2*, 3*, advanced, training and beginner novice cross country over the weekend. It was rewarding to sit and watch an entire division from a great vantage point. Scribing for the dressage judge and watching the movement of horse and rider at once was usual for me as coach and trainer, and for 40 minutes of my time I received a free lesson.

The rest of my afternoon was spent at the upper water watching the beginner novice division tackle a turn away from the barn area to jump a coop set under the oak tree. At 3:00 in the afternoon it was a tougher question for the greener horses as they had to be brave enough to jump into the dark. It was a challenge for the rider with the nappy or barn sour horse that was on the program of heading home, but for some with the agreeable game sort of horse it was not a problem at all. There were three ways to approach this coop from the water or land and it was interesting to see the choices folks made and how they managed the horse's responses.

Jump judging is fun but comes with some responsibility. Knowledge of the rules is helpful but not necessary as they are easy to learn and there is support from the officials if you have questions. The biggest responsibility is providing a level playing field for all the competitors. Warning spectators and those walking their own courses is the most crucial. It requires tact and timing so those involved can respond and clear the tracks. Everyone needs to be aware of the competitors on course and if you can't volunteer please be mindful and courteous to those that do.

Saturday morning the first horse on the course went out at 8:30, right on time! Everyone should know how nerve wracking for your volunteer coordinator it was to fill those last few judging spots. People showing up late or not at all. Recruiting the landowner to step in to judge until someone could be found should not happen at a show with 400 horses and probably twice as many people. Someone reminded me that it is the volume of lower level competitors that support in part the upper level divisions. The lower level riders should not have to make the show run too. We all need to do a better job of participating in our sport. It is not hard to spare 4 hrs before or after your ride to get to watch riders negotiate the same fence or combination. You will educate your eye to the best position, the best approach

and the best pace to successfully jump an obstacle. It is your very own "Who jumped it best".

Sunday morning, a half an hour before the start, they still needed more judges to start the Training division. I had seen some parents that I knew and said I would go recruit them. As I passed the Ride On Video bus I shared the dilemma with Debi Ravenscroft and she looked at a young lady of about 12 walking behind me and in her usual kind voice asked "Honey would you like to jump judge?". Without hesitating the gracious young lady said "sure." On our way to the office Morgan Taylor called her friend and told her was fence judging. "Did she want to help?" About 6 horses into the division I know it was Morgan and her friend both giggling and announcing into the radio that Number 241 was clear at fence 1. Jump judging can be fun with a little help from a friend! Morgan finished 4th in her Beginner Novice Division the day before and what I learned was that there are all the other riders in the other divisions that can volunteer. All we need to do is ask. So I'm asking you. "Will you volunteer? "

I got 2 free schoolings at Twin, three lunches, all the water I could drink, and am a little more educated for the experience of volunteering. If I volunteer for 4 hours at every event I go to I might win a saddle or the leading volunteer of the year award and will probably be able to school at every venue for free!

Remember no one goes into the ring unless someone opens the gate, no one starts on cross-country until the jump judges are in place and the next competitor doesn't show jump until the fence is reset. Volunteer!