



Rookie Riders Program in Saskatchewan

A number of Saskatchewan stables have started offering the Rookie Riders Program!

In March of 2020 the SHF hosted the first Rookie Riders Instructor/Coach training, enabling the newly Certified Instructors/Coaches to deliver the Rookie Riders program at their facilities. Instructors from a number of Saskatchewan stables took part in the program.

Cheralyne Gibson, Horsemanship Director and Head Coach at the Valley Equestrian Centre has already begun incorporating the program into her lessons with young riders. Gibson took the coaching training with SHF in March of 2020.



“The Rookie Rider program teaches young riders about physical literacy before putting them on the horse. I really like that the riders develop skills off the horse in a safe way, so that by the time they have learned how to use their bodies, they are ready to get on the horse,” said Gibson.

Zoe MacDougall, a coach with Pelmac Stables, who also took part in the Rookie Riders coaches training, is excited about the benefits that the program will provide to young riders.

“Often times stables don’t take riders younger than 8 or 9 years of age. This will be a great program to encourage those horse crazy younger children to get into sports, specifically equestrian sport, and for us to have a good program, to direct them into,” said MacDougall.

MacDougall is also pleased with the flexibility the program offers, from the use of the barrel, to ground and mat exercises, to combined barrel and horse lessons, even offering flexibility with group sizes.

“It enables you to tailor the program to the young riders involved,” she said.

The program was created to be available for use year-round, which MacDougall believes will be of significant benefit to young riders. She encourages other coaches to consider taking the Rookie Riders Instructor/Coach training.

Following the training in March, Kyla Murch, coach/owner with East Edge Equestrian, set up a socially distanced summer camp for youth, which was built around the Rookie Rider program.

“The parents and kids loved it. The program comes with games and warm up exercises – things you wouldn’t necessarily think had anything to do with riding until you look at the fundamentals of the program. The kids are constantly learning through play, about the basic skill of riding – which prepares them for getting on a horse. It’s really an effective program,” she said.

All three of the new Rookie Rider coaches believe the program will draw significant interest and young rider participants.

Going by the number of requests for riding lessons for younger students, I think the market is there,” said MacDougall.

Gibson, Murch and MacDougall all plan to have the program running at their facilities this fall.

Saskatchewan coaches who have been certified to deliver the Rookie Riders program include:

- Barbie Harder jbharder6@gmail.com
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For more information on the Rookie Riders program visit this link

<https://www.equestrian.ca/programs-services/learn-to-ride/rookie-riders> or contact the SHF Technical Director at technicaldirector@saskhorse.ca or 306-780-9490.