

The Newcomers Guide to the WCA National Field Trial

Hello and Welcome to your first WCA NFT!! We're glad you've decided to come!

Think of this guide as an FAQ to help you navigate your first NFT event. There are a number of differences between the NFT and a typical local trial that you may not have experienced. This will explain them. While this is how the event usually runs, there are always changes for any number of reasons. We appreciate your flexibility and good humor as we bring together a class event.

Where is Everything?

Camp is the hub of all activity. Here's a map to help you find your way around.



I can camp on the grounds?

Yes. There are a number of RV spots available in addition to boondock camping. The State Park charges per night camping fees, which you pay to the club (via your tab – more on that later) and the club closes with the state.

How is Cell coverage / Connectivity on the grounds?

It IS possible to take meetings on the back of a horse. I've done it. So, if you need to work while you're here it's possible. But not easy. Cell coverage tends to be variable. Sometimes you have 2 bars of 5G and sometimes you have one bar of 4G. It really does depend on the wind, weather, and time of day.

The Lake Murray Lodge has public WiFi for a more solid connection. If you need help, ask someone. We've all had to deal with spotty coverage.

How do I know what's going on?

The Clubhouse is the center of all activity. **READ THE WALLS.** Daily Schedules, official updated running orders, Banquet sign ups, etc. are all posted on the walls of the Clubhouse. Have a question? Find a friendly face and ask! There's lots of experience wandering round.

Where do I find the Secretary / Esteri?

The NFT Secretary / Esteri keeps her table under the heater in the back corner of the club house. She'll have answers to any question or be able to point you in the right direction. All finances run through Esteri. So, if you're turning in a receipt, purchasing something, or want to deal with your tab, this is where you do it.

Wait. I have a TAB?

Yes. Esteri keeps a tab for everyone. We find this is the easiest way to deal with keeping track of the NFT finances. You are welcome to check your tab at any time. Please close your tab before you leave. Esteri will take cash or checks (preferred), and we can run credit cards through the WCA Storefront. Esteri will not close tabs at the banquet, she wants to have fun too. It's preferred you close your tab BEFORE the banquet. You can put Fun Funds on your tab to use at the banquet for the raffles, silent auctions, etc. Fun Funds are fully refundable if you don't use them all. (It never happens.)

I'm just staying for the day, do I have to run a tab?

Nope. If you're just here for the day, just pay Esteri as you go. If you're staying longer, it really is easier to use the tab.

How are meals managed?

Breakfasts and lunches are available every day. Most dinners are provided with a couple of free nights to head into Ardmore. Don't know where to go? Meet some old hands, we all sit around and lie about our dogs, join in! And you'll often be asked along for their meal. We're a friendly bunch.

The committee works to get as many meals donated as possible. However, it never covers all our expenses. Some years there is a per meal charge. Some years we ask for a donation at the end to cover meals. If there's a clipboard to mark your meals on, then it's a per meal charge. If there's not, Esteri will be hitting you up for a meal donation when you close your tab.

Are there Do Not Miss events?

Yes! The Dual Welcome Party at Hardy Murphy Colliseum after the specialty shows kicks off the NFT. The Awards Banquet closes it. These are major events. They bookend the trial and are a lot of fun.

What's the Dual Welcome Party?

The Dual Welcome Party is where the NFT kicks off. Besides a great meal, you'll get running orders and your catalog. Key members of the event (Committee, Judges, etc.) are introduced. The Blind Bogey's will be available. And we'll kick off the trial with a Calcutta for the first stakes. There's usually a raffle to help defray the cost of the dinner. It's a time when the Show and Field sides mix and we all celebrate the dogs.

What's a Blind Bogey?

It's an easy and fun way to have some skin in the game, have a dog to cheer for. It's a lot like a pool you might have in the office. The dogs entered in each event are placed in squares on a page. The page is covered with another page so you can't see who is in each square. Then you "buy" a square. Once all squares are sold the back is opened and you can see which dog you "own". 70% of the money collected goes into the pot and is paid back to the "owners" of the placing dog. Monies from Withheld placements are donated to the Derby Stipend.

Judges may not participate in Blind Bogeys for stakes they judge.

What's a Calcutta?

The Calcutta is also a fund-raiser for the event, but is a bit more complicated than the Blind Bogey. During the Calcutta the dogs are auctioned off. Different dogs will go for different prices, based on crowd interest. 70% of the money collected goes into the pot and is paid back to the "owners" of the placing dog. Monies from Withheld placements are donated to the Derby Stipend.

People may group together to buy one or more dogs. Esteri should be informed of any coalitions immediately after the auction. Failure to do so will cost you a 6-pack of Shiner Bock. Or just thank your Secretary with Shiner Bock. That's 100% acceptable too. :-D

Judges may not participate in any Calcutta until their judging assignment is complete. They are excused from the room for the auction and are not given access to the results.

Wait a sec. I could leave the NFT with money in my pocket?

Yep. It happens for someone almost every year. Choose and bid wisely.

How does the Continuous Course work?

This is the reason there are no per brace horse rentals. The NFT tends to run in half day increments. In the morning everyone gets on their horses and heads out for the first 3 (for hour stakes) or 6 (for 30 minute stakes) braces of the day. The Dog Wagon ferries dogs to and from the course. Think of it as a super exciting 3-hour trail ride, with dogs, and birds, and blank pistols.

Are there rules for the Gallery?

Not rules so much as Guidelines. The Marshal is in charge. (OK, that's an AKC Rule.) The order of procession is: Handlers, Judges, Scouts, Marshal, Gallery. Scouts are highly mobile and may come from the rear, side, or front. Please make way for them – they have an important job to do.

As a point of etiquette. We do not ride on past someone who is trying to get mounted. It's a safety thing to help prevent a horse from walking off while someone is mounting. That's how knees get blown.

If the dogs become divided, stay with the dog that is behind. EXCEPT, if you are the owner / breeder of the dog that is moving on. Then, one or two people may stay with that dog, but not a crowd.

How does my dog get to me on course?

That's the job of the Dog Wagon. These are the folks who transport dogs too and from the line. If you're not renting a horse, volunteer to help on the dog wagon. It'll give you a completely different perspective of the grounds and trial.

If your dog is running during that half day, before you mount up and head out, be sure to let the dog wagon know where your dog is located. Please keep your dog in a clearly marked kennel. That way mistakes aren't made.

If you are a walking handler and aren't riding out. You'll catch a ride with the Dog Wagon to get to the line. Or, you can drive your own rig and follow them out. Though you'll want a second driver to move your rig while you are handling.

For the Walking Puppy Stake. We all caravan up and head out together. We pass through a locked gate, so everyone travels as a group. Bring what you need for the entire stake.

What does 3 honks on a truck horn mean?

It means come to the Clubhouse. Usually, we're calling placements for a stake or calling dogs who will be called back to retrieve (Adult stakes). If it's for callbacks. People will grab their dogs, orange to wear, carpool up and head out to the call back location.

Wait. The callbacks are where?

Lake Murray is a state park. No hunting on the grounds. We make arrangements with a local landowner to have the callbacks in one of his pastures. Either jump in someone's truck or get in the line of vehicles and follow everyone out. The call-back grounds are about a 5 min drive.

When are placements announced?

Placements are announced immediately after the stake ends. Then pictures are taken using whatever rosettes are at hand. Rosettes are returned after pictures and are given out at the Awards banquet.

How fancy is the Award Banquet?

As fancy as you wish. People generally bring something a little dressier. Think business casual. Or a blazer. A nice western shirt or blouse. The fancy western hats come out. A skirt or dress. Whatever makes you feel fine. But sometimes, clean is the best you can manage – and that's OK too.

Is there a raffle?

There sure is!! Sometimes the raffle is a combination of online and at the banquet. Sometimes not. But there are certainly things to get tickets for. We also pull the winning ticket for the nationwide shot gun raffle. So, the banquet is your last chance to get in on that.

I like to stay busy, how can I help?

There is always something that needs doing. Meals to make. Dogs to ferry. Birds to catch. Raffles to organize. Chairs and tables to arrange. Something. If you're not sure where you can be a help, ask Esteri. She usually has ideas.