

Rider Notes 2024

PLEASE READ BEFORE RIDING OUT

Welcome

First and foremost, welcome to St. Patrick's Coast Ride – Ireland's Premier Pleasure and Endurance Ride.

On Arrival

Enter via the main Front Gates of the Racecourse and follow the stewards' instructions to the parking areas:

- Pleasure Riders and Vetted Pleasure Riders turn right to park near racecourse buildings
- CTR and ER Riders turn left to park in vetting area.

All riders must check in at the ride office to get number bib and ride pack – number bib must be worn when vetting and riding; 2 emergency tags in ride pack must be attached (1 to rider, 1 to horse/tack). Pleasure Riders may upgrade to a Vetted Pleasure Ride (eligible for awards!) and enter a team at this time.

Please note ALL start times (including Pleasure Riders) are earlier this year due to TIDE TIMES.

Start Times – Competitive Trail Rides

8.00am – 9.00am (48km and above must start before 8.15am)

CTR vetting from: 7.45am

CTR ride speed: 32km and 40km at between 10 – 13kph
48km and above at between 10 – 16kph

Start Times – Vetted Pleasure Rides and Pleasure Rides

32km 8.30am – 9:45am

Any 32km riders not on the course by 9:45am WILL be downgraded to 16km

16km 9:45am – 12.30am

Pleasure Ride Vetting from 8.30am

Please note – your Start Time is your RIDE start time as noted by the timekeeper – not when you arrive, vet or tack up – you need to allow approx 30mins to register and vet (where applicable) so aim to arrive at the venue about 45 mins before your ride start time.

ALL riders must check in with the timekeeper to have their start -and finish – times noted.

FARRIER availability at venue from 8.00am (at rider's expense)

Vetting

All riders, including Pleasure Riders, can vet. Vetting for Pleasure Riders is voluntary but you will not be eligible for the Pleasure Rider trophy or a team prize if you do not vet and get your start and finish times officially recorded by the timekeeper.

You can upgrade from a PR to a VPR before starting on the day by registering with one of the vetting assistant stewards or in the ride office when you register – at no extra cost.

To vet, you present your horse to the vets before you start. You must be wearing your number bib.

Your horse will get checked over and heart rate taken before being asked to trot up in hand (30m and back). You can present in a headcollar if your horse is well behaved otherwise a bridle must be worn. Stallions must be presented in a bridle. You should not saddle up nor have boots on your horse. (Hoof boots are allowed but the vet may ask you to remove them for vetting). **Do not apply hoof oil.**

After the ride, you have 30 minutes (or time as indicated on the notice board in the ride office and at the Vet Gate) from your finish time to present to the vets again. The horse's heart rate must be 64bpm or below at this time to pass.

If you have any questions about the vetting procedure, please ask at the ride office when you check in or talk to the stewards or helpers at the Vetting area; they are there to help you.

Safety

There are numerous road crossings on this ride and care must be taken at all times. We have signed all crossings for both horses and drivers/road users but this, unfortunately, does NOT mean cars will slow down. At the crossings on the main and busier roads we have stewards to assist. **You are still responsible for your own and your horse's safety.** The stewards are there to help and not to dictate but we suggest that when they say stop or wait you do so. Riding in an unsafe manner will not be tolerated and the organisers reserve the right to stop you from continuing under such circumstances.

There should be NO horses in the inner racecourse area in front of the ride office at any time, except for the RDA who will collect, start and finish from the parade ring.

You may see cautionary notices on the route, TWO WAY, WALK, MUDDY, KEEP LEFT, RABBIT HOLES etc. and other such comments. They are there for a purpose so please respect them and take caution at these sections by reducing your speed and being aware of the ground conditions.

Some areas may have rabbit holes, in particular returning to the beach after the first beach section and coming up from the beach towards Ballykinler Village on the MoD lands. Please ride with caution and be aware of the ground in front of you at all times.

Emergency

If you have a problem on the route, please use the Emergency Number at the top of this document and on the tags that you were issued as part of your rider pack. Please ensure one label is placed on your horse/horse's tack and one on yourself. The Emergency Number contacts the ride office. Please be clear as to what the problem is and try and know where you are on the course so that we can locate you as quickly as possible. If you can continue *safely*, and without worsening an injury, to the next road crossing or checkpoint then please do so but tell the ride office of your actions regarding your location and decision.

Route Changes & Crops

Due to ongoing harvesting and weather at the time of the maps are being published, and these notes being prepared, changes could occur to the route.

Always follow the route signs and stewards' directions on the day - they will be up to date regarding any such changes. Harvesting and sowing may also be taking place on the day of the ride so please be aware of tractors and farm machinery in fields and on the roads.

Generally, on stubble fields, you can ride across them but if the crops are unharvested and still in the ground, or the field is for silage, always follow the tram lines (tractor tracks used to spray fields/crops) or keep to the edge of the field as marked by red tape.

Some fields may be newly sown but look like stubble – they will be marked so please follow directions on signs on the route.

Emergency Tags

In your ride pack you will find 2 tags – please adhere one to your person and one to your horse (ideally saddle).

A few Dos and Don'ts

Do always be courteous to landowners, stewards and members of the public at all times.

Do make sure your rider bib number and time are taken by the official timekeeper when passing through the start and finish of the ride so we know everyone is safely home.

Do ride at a steady pace appropriate to your horse's fitness and the terrain.

Do offer your horse water at regular opportunities.

Do close any gates that you open – we hope to have no gates on the route to open and close but last-minute changes could mean we have gates to open and close. If you find it closed - close it again.

Do NOT ride in groups of more than 4 people

Do NOT wear spurs.



Do **NOT** carry a long, dressage style, whip.

Do **NOT** stop for a picnic or any other reasons - it delays us releasing volunteer stewards at the end of the day.

If you do not finish and arrange to be collected from the course, then please make sure the ride office knows your name and rider bib number. Call the Emergency number.

Courtesy

We have about 45 farmers and landowners who allow us to ride over their property. Please respect this privilege. Harvesting may be happening at the time of the ride so do watch out for signs in case we have to alter the route from that shown on the map. Remember - if going through cropped fields either follow the tramlines where the tractors and sprayers have been or go around the edge of the field as indicated by red tapes and marker signs. **DO NOT RIDE OVER CROPS.**

The many road crossing and other stewards are all volunteers and are on duty to help and keep you and your horse safe. Please respect them, do not dilly dally along the way, do not stop for a picnic on the beach etc. as we need to relieve these people as early as we can after the ride finishes.

Starting

The start and finish for Pleasure Riders and CTRs are beside the Vet Gate. ERs start and finish their loops at the same location but the finish, in the event of a contested finish, will be on the racetrack – it will be marked.

ALL riders must check out and back in again by having their times recorded at the start and finish. Once you have registered, got your bib number and rider pack from the office you can proceed to the vetting, if required, and then on to the start located beside the Vet Gate.

There will be a farrier at the venue from approx 8am to refit/replace shoes - all work strictly at rider's expense to be settled at the time.

Water

There will drinking water (for horses) at several points, including about the halfway point located between the two beaches at the Coast Guard Cottages, and again at about the $\frac{2}{3}$ point at Lismahon Horsemanship, located after crossing the main Tyrella Road. Many fields also have drinkers that you will pass. Ensure that the water looks clean if used as some may not have been used in a long time. The grass fields are more likely to have clean water than crop or stubble fields. **Ensure your horse gets an opportunity to drink wherever and whenever available.**

Crewing

We encourage all riders to bring crews. A mobile crew is compulsory for ERS and CTR distances of 64km and over.

Your crew can meet you at designated crewing points on the route with water and refreshments for both horse and rider. Crews can get a map from the ride office showing these points.

Crews should carry water and a bucket as well as liquid and energy food for the rider. Back at the venue, the crew can help wash down and prepare the horse for vetting as well. Bring plenty of water, though there is some water available at the venue. Crew points can be great places to meet new friends. The crew points are mostly manned so there will be others to help as well. Crewing can be as much part of an Endurance Ride as the ride itself.

We encourage you to persuade a family member or friend to come along and support you – and have a bit of craic as well.

Check Points

At checkpoints and all road crossings stewards will take your number as you go through, please assist with this and give them time to note your number, especially if you are in a small group.

Finishing

Please make sure your number and time are taken at the finish so we know you are safely back. Once completed and your horse has been vetted, if required, please revisit the ride office, return your bib and collect your rosette. The photographer will also be there as well where you can view and purchase images from the ride. There will also be a catering van on-site.

Railway Lines

Strict guidance applies to anyone using or crossing railway lines at approved crossings. No planned trains will be running near the crossing points we will be using on the day of the ride but please always be cautious when crossing the tracks.

Information on safety at level crossings can be found in these links.

<https://www.ramblers.org.uk/advice/safety/level-crossings.aspx>

<https://www.networkrail.co.uk/communities/safety-in-the-community/level-crossing-safety/level-crossings-for-pedestrians/>



VFG (Vetting for Virgins!)

Vetting: What to do – *(applies only to VPR, CTR and ER riders)*

1. DON'T PANIC! - the vets are here to help you.
2. Before you begin your ride, you must present your horse for vetting. The horse must be untacked (no saddle, leg protection, bandages or hoof oil) and under control in either bridle (compulsory for stallions) or headcollar.
3. The vet will take the horse's heart rate (must be 60bpm or below to start), check general body condition and monitor for soundness while you trot up (in hand) 30m out and back. Run alongside your horse and keep the horse on your inside when you turn at the end of the 30m lane.
4. The same procedure will take place at the end of your ride and an additional heart rate will be taken 1 minute after the start of the trot up. Both tip-off these heart rates must be 64bpm or below. The latter heart rate is the one used to calculate your score.

Tips and Tactics –

1. Having a friend (crew) to help hold your horse and generally assist at the beginning and end of the ride will be invaluable.
2. Before presenting your horse for vetting at the start of the ride take a moment or two to walk and trot the horse in hand to loosen up after travelling.
3. Have the things you will need after you finish already prepared beforehand - water to cool the horse down, a rug to throw over in case it's cold and water to drink.
4. The aim at the finish is to reduce the horse's heart rate as much as possible before presenting - cooling your horse down, allowing him to drink and stale (urinate) all help to bring the heart rate down. Don't give hard feed to eat or allow him to gorge on grass but some horses settle better if they're allowed a pick of grass or hay.
5. You must vet within 30 minutes (or a time as posted in the ride office) of finishing the ride and deciding when to vet is your judgement call - vet too soon and you risk a higher heart rate - leave it too long and your horse may stiffen up!
6. DON'T PANIC - there will be helpers at the vet gate who can check your horse's heart rate for you if you are unfamiliar with a stethoscope and generally help with the whole procedure.

Remember you can upgrade to a Vetted Pleasure Ride on the day of the ride in the ride office when checking in or at the Vet Gate.

Pleasure Ride Trophy

The Kilgarry Breezer Pleasure Ride Trophy for St. Patrick's Coast

There is no extra cost to enter this – you just need to vet and ensure your times are taken.

It is open to everyone doing a Pleasure Ride except for ILDR members, who compete for a member's trophy during the year. You can compete if doing either the 16km or 32km ride.

Open Pleasure Ride Team Competition

All Pleasure Riders (members and non-members) can compete for the Open Team Award. Teams of 3 or 4 (2 x 32km and 2 x 16km, best 3 scores to count) and the team with the best score at the end of the day wins. It is not necessary to ride with other team members.



BHS Gold Member PR & CTR Awards

BHS Gold members can compete for the BHS award. Please show your BHS Gold Membership card when you register at the ride office to be eligible for these awards. For Vetted Pleasure Riders there will be awards and/or rosettes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd and for CTR riders there is a 1st place award.

Scoring for all trophies and awards is based on a recognised endurance formula that factors in the distance ridden, your speed/time taken and your horse's final heart rate. These figures are all put into the system and a score comes out giving us a winner. It is NOT about speed, it could be you winning! To gain a score you must do a VPR or competitive ride.

To compete for the team awards simply declare your intention and tell us the team name and members before you begin, then present your horse to the vets for a pre-ride vetting after you have checked in and collected your rider number. Make sure your start and finish times are recorded by the timekeeper and then, within 30 minutes of finishing, re-present to the vets for a final vet check – your horse's heart rate must be 64bpm *or below*.

Go on - Give it a go – vetting is not onerous for Pleasure Riders and the stewards and vets will do all they can to help and encourage you.

Why turn down the chance for a vet to give your horse a good lookover and for free.

Details on all above are available on the rider and class pages on the St. Patrick's Coast website.

Notes on the route

Marking

All routes are marked in Red tape. We are using Red tape and Yellow arrows on the roads. In addition, there will be some signage, in particular at divergence points where the 16km, 32km and 48km routes merge or separate – arrows are NOT colour coordinated on divergence signs. Read and follow the direction on them appropriate to your distance.

Blue paint (or red and white tape) is used for caution or warnings in addition to signage on some areas of the course.

There are also some sections where horses will be going in both directions. Please keep left and where this involves a cropped field, if it is not harvested, please keep in the LEFT tramline only. In some two-way sections you may see yellow arrows on the road going both directions – follow the one that is coming from the direction you have come from.

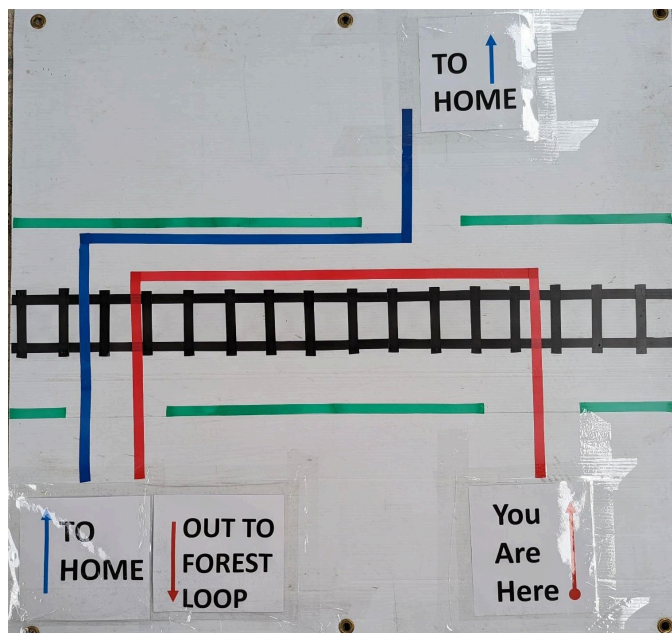
The arrows are quite small and near the edge of the road so when you join a road watch out for them – there should then be red tapes on the road but these can be removed by members of the public, or blown back and caught in the hedge, so please pay attention to the arrows and look carefully for red tape. We also put a blue line across roads where you should not be going. If you ride across a blue line, you are going wrong and should turn back.

Railway Crossing on the Forest Loop

This is a junction where people go wrong on the 16km route and then miss most of the Forest Loop.

Just after crossing the main road at the back of the stables you turn left up through a small wooded area. On coming out of the wooded area you will see this sign. Follow the RED line crossing the railway line twice.

On returning back to this crossing follow the BLUE line crossing the railway line ONLY only



Beaches and Approach and Exit

Both on the tracks and fields to and from the beaches may have **RABBIT HOLES** – we will be filling them in and/or marking them where we see them but you, as a rider, must ride carefully. Where marked we strongly suggest you WALK and keep your eyes open on the track ahead.

The beaches along this shore can have stretches of soft sand and you are cautioned to be aware and to stay vigilant at ALL times to the ground conditions.

Routes / Loops

16km [10 miles]

Green on Map

The 16km route is made up of 2 loops – the Gallop Loop and the Forest Loop.

The 16km loop rides out the back of the venue. It then does the Gallop loop going right around the old racecourse gallop and returns to the racecourse by a similar route. Please note that some of this loop is 2-way so ride with consideration for other riders. There is a steep hill on this loop but you can follow the edge of the field - going clockwise- and reduce the steepness a bit.

On returning to the racecourse keep along the boundary past the back of the stable (as marked) and across the main road - **DO NOT HEAD BACK UP THE FRONT OF THE RACETRACK**. You then ride the Forest Loop going out through a small wooded area on the right and over the railway twice (Cross the line, turn left – go 20m –then turn left again back across the railway line) heading through Ballydugan Estate to Hollymount Forest.

NOTE: At this first Railway crossing please cross the line and then cross back over it again 20 meters up the track – do NOT head straight across the line as that is the homeward route and you will miss the forest.

A loop within Hollymount Forest brings you out at Drumcullan and the Medieval Centre, where the 32km route merges. You then start the return to the venue back through Ballydugan Estate via the railway crossing again (this time cross the line ONLY once – and turn left into the field and not right, back into the wooded area) but use the field to make your way to the junction, cross the line again and make your way down the lane back to the main road crossing at the back of the stables – it will be marked.

At the end, weather and ground conditions allowing, you will finish on the racecourse itself.

32km [20 Miles]

Red on Map

The 32km loop heads out at the back of the racecourse and heads for the gallops, enroute there is a steep hill but you can follow the edge of the field - going clockwise- and reduce the steepness a bit. The route goes down the short side of the gallops (turning right when joining the gallops) and then at the end of the long straight section on the gallops continue straight on (16km and 32km routes diverge here). Follow the signs and route marking via CP2 until you reach the beach. Ride the whole way along the main Tyrella beach and eventually leave up a long lane to return back towards the beach over a field coming out at the Coast Guard Cottages and CP3. There will be water here.

If the tide is too far in to get round the rocks on the beach you can take the lane away from the cottages and turn left immediately after the gate, staying close to the edge of the field, and you can then re-join the beach again at the other side of the rocks.

Go past the very end of the 2nd beach to the start of the 3rd beach (the MoD beach). Cross the corner at the start of the beach and leave the beach up the track – this is not far and has large signs marking it as a coastal path. **DO NOT RIDE ON ALONG THE MoD BEACH** – but NB there will be 40km/64km and 80km riders who continue along the MoD beach.

Keep an attentive watch out for rabbit holes on the route leaving the beach.

You will eventually end up in Ballykinler Village (there is a shop selling food and coffee) where there will be stewards. Exit the village past the shop and then on up a concrete farm lane following the route markings – you leave the road on a corner – please be cautious when crossing. There will be several more road crossings (unmanned small roads), before reaching the main Tyrella Road at Lismahon Horsemanship, where there will be water. You will eventually come out onto the Ballyrolly Road – there is a short stoney section on this lane. This is the only extended bit of road work on the course. Leave the road just before it joins the main Clough to Downpatrick Road into a field on the right. Beware of cars coming off the main road. You then join the main road and ride up the verge on the side of it before crossing it, just past Tullymurry, and start to head towards home across some fields and farm lanes to the old railway line and eventually the Drumcullan Triangle and the Ballydugan Medieval Settlement. After crossing the bridge on the railway there is some newly drained and sown ground. It will have rubber mats on the ground – PLEASE WALK IN SINGLE FILE on this stretch.

Please note that you will be crossing and riding a short distance on the main road verge near Tullymurray. We will have stewards on the road but extra care needs to be taken at this point, the verge is narrow for a short section and traffic is constant and fast. Please adhere to the stewards and ride safely.

At Drumcullan the 32km route joins the 16km route and heads right and up the hill towards the old windmill. Follow the track to the old railway below the windmill and back across various fields and farm lanes, you will eventually cross the railway and be heading for home coming in at the back of the stables.

Ride around the back of the stables and join the racecourse where indicated. Follow signs as to where to ride on the course – it may change during the day.

40km [25 miles]

Red loop 32km [with Orange beach extension 6km]

The 40km loop is the 32km loop **with an extension on the MoD (3rd Beach)** to make up the extra distance – ride along the full length of the beach to the mouth of the estuary – marked in a orange line on the map - and return (there will be roving checkpoint stewards). In the event of poor visibility, you can tell when you reach the mouth of the estuary by the change in sand surface which will become deep – **TURN** at this point. Rejoin the 32km route, turning **left** up the track marked as a coastal path and continue as set out above.

48km [30 miles]***Red loop 32km – Vet gate - Green loop 16km (both gallops and forest sections)***

First complete the full 32km (red loop on map). On return to venue go into the vet gate – You have 30 mins to vet and a compulsory hold – the hold time will be published in the ride office and at the vet gate.

On restarting headout following the 16km (green on map) loop and do it in full – taking in both the Gallop section and the Forest section.

On returning to the finish you have 30 mins to present for your final vetting.

64km [40 miles]***(Red loop 32km [with Orange beach extension 6km] – Vet gate - Green loop 16km (both gallops and forest sections) – ½ Green loop 8km (gallop loop only)***

First complete the full 32km (red loop on map) **PLUS** the extension up the 3rd beach (as for 40km) described above and on return to the venue go into the vet gate – You have 30 mins to vet and a compulsory hold – the hold time will be published in the ride office and at the vet gate.

On restarting headout and complete the whole Green loop (both gallop and forest sections) and on returning to the venue instead of heading to the finish keep going out and do the Gallop loop again. On returning to the venue ride to the finish this time. You then have 30 mins to present for your final vetting.

80km [50 miles]***(Red loop 32km [with Orange beach extension 6km] – Vet gate – 2 x Green loop 16km (both gallops and forest sections) [including extra loop round the gallops 2km each loop]***

First complete the full 32km (red loop on map) **PLUS** the extension up the 3rd beach (as for 40km) described above and on return to the venue go into the vet gate – You have 30 mins to vet and a compulsory hold – the hold time will be published in the ride office and at the vet gate.

On restarting headout and complete the full 16km Green loop **TWICE**, repeating the gallops each time without coming back in to the vetgate. After completing the second of these extended Green loops, return to the vetgate and finish. You then have 30 mins to present for your final vetting.

Remember to make sure to go through the finish and check in / have your time recorded.

When completed return your number bib to the ride office, collect your rosette and check out the photos.

Venue Map



Finally – Enjoy your day...

