



GUILFORD HOUNDS

PREPARATION TO HUNT

Horse

Any breed of horse or pony is suitable for hunting. The horse should be physically sound and adequately fit for an outing of several hours. Highly excitable horses usually calm down considerably after a few times out. In fact, these excitable horses often take intense pleasure in hunting once they get used to the routine. It is not unusual for the horses to attentively listen to the hounds, turn to face them when they give voice, recognize calls on the hunting horn, and anticipate the moving-out of the field. A kicker should wear a red ribbon and stay at the back of the field. Horses should be reasonably clean, if not show clean, during formal hunting season. A horse's mane should be no longer than 4 or 5 inches. Braiding of the mane is customary, though not mandatory. For longer maned breeds such as Morgans, a running braid can be used to confine the mane. We do not advocate clipping the mane on breeds where it is their standard to be long. Braiding of tails is optional; tying the tail in a "mud knot" is appropriate at any time in the hunt field.

We anticipate hunts to last 1 ½ to 2 ½ hours. Though the hunt does not encompass galloping the entire time, the horse should be fit enough for short cantering/galloping spurts of roughly a mile before checking (stopping and waiting for hounds to pack-up or find the scent). If at any time you feel your horse is becoming physically stressed, notify your Field Master at the check. She will likely allow you to move to a slower field, follow the field at a slower pace, or hack back to the trailers. At no time should a rider simply drop out of the field without notifying the Field Master. In the case of an injury or fall of horse or rider, it is critical that word be passed up, yelling if necessary, to the Field Master.

It is not necessary that your horse jump in order to hunt. There will be alternative routes around obstacles.

BE ABLE TO CONTROL YOUR HORSE! Often this means "stepping-up" your bit choice in the hunt field from what you normally use. It is highly improper and dangerous to run ahead of the Field Master or right up on the heels of another horse. The inexcusable sin is to step on a Hound or get in the Huntsman's way. Anticipate your horse being stronger in the hunt field while moving with a "herd." If a severe bit is used, such as a gag, be sure you know how to properly use it and practice with it prior to hunting. Excessive punishment of the horse, and dangerous or unhorsemanlike behavior in the hunt field is frowned-upon. The Master or Field Master has full authority to excuse anyone behaving in such a manner from the hunt with no refund.

Tack

Since much of the appeal of hunting is tied to aesthetic tradition and the overall "look" of the formal hunt, we would like all of you to dress and tack-up in a fairly uniform way. Traditionally, English tack is used in hunting. Forward seat/jumping saddles are best and safest for covering natural terrain and obstacles at speed. Leather tack is traditional, however we do not object to synthetic saddles and tack. We do not want to discourage riders who only ride in Western, Endurance, Dressage or other tack types from riding with us. However, you still need to dress in English attire regardless of your tack type. Please use plain white or fleece shaped saddle pads (not square) under your saddle and do not carry excess saddle accessories without

confirming this with the Master prior to the meet. All tack should be show-clean and in safe condition. Cleanliness cannot be stressed enough. Riders in dirty tack may be excused from a day's hunt. Stirrup bars should be in the open position. Use of breakaway and Peacock stirrups are allowed and encouraged. If tack adjustments are required, ask the Field Master's permission prior to dismounting.

FIELD ETIQUETTE

The traditions of foxhunting are well founded. Those who adhere to the established manners and courtesies of conduct in the field will have much added to their enjoyment of the sport. As always the Field Master's words are gospel. Please pay particular attention to them. Often the Field Master has been briefed with specific information concerning the hunt and landowners' wishes. The traditions of allowing the Field Master the necessary breath to execute this responsibility are required. Allow sufficient space between your horse and the horse of the Field Master.

Please read Wadsworth's "Riding to Hounds in America" prior to hunting. It is the classic foxhunters' guide, concise, and available from the Hunt Secretary for a \$5 donation.

A few brief facts to ALWAYS remember in the hunt field:

Check in with the Field Secretary the morning of the meet. They will most likely be carrying a notebook and be stationed in a central spot. They will collect your Subscription or Capping Fee, verify your Coggins, have you sign a liability waiver, and guide you to a Field Master. Car followers, as well as any others attending the Hunt but not riding, need to sign a waiver. If you cannot locate the Field Secretary please find a member in a Scarlet coat and they will direct you towards the Secretary.

Follow your Field Master who will try to show you a good day's sport, mindful of the Huntsman's, Master's and Landowners' restrictions and wishes. Our Master desires the 1st Field to be close to the action and stay up with the hounds, galloping and jumping as necessary.

Do not pass your Field Master, but do not lag behind. Notify the Field Master if you intend to leave early or to change fields at the break. If you must, for some reason, leave the Field before the end of the day, it is customary to request permission to do so of the Master, and to thank them for the day's sport. At the same time, directions for home may be given so that you do not interfere with hunting. Your safety and the traditions of the sport are foremost in the mind of the Field Master. Unless invited to do otherwise, remain in the field. If you are not a Subscriber, remain at the rear of the field you are riding with.

Leave ample room between your horse and the others in the field (2 – 3 horse lengths).

Close gates. Whoever opens a gate, closes the gate. A companion should remain until the gate-closer remounts. If someone preceding you has the courtesy to open a gate and hold it for the Field to pass through, wait until that person has closed the gate and remounted before following hounds. Likewise, a companion should remain with a fallen rider until the rider remounts.

A member of the field should stay with a rider who is behind the field. No one should be left behind alone. Word should be passed up to the Field Master of any significant problems at the back of the field.

Use discretion when jumping, looking out for hounds that might be near the fence.

Do not bunch up at gates or jumps. If you cannot take your own line, do not follow too closely to the horse in front of you when going into a fence. Proceed in single file. Do not cut in front of a horse already making his approach to a fence. Do not jump while another rider is gapping a fence. Do not gap while another rider is jumping a fence.

If you have a refusal at a jump, move out of the way and go to the end of the field so as not to interfere with those behind you. Re-circle, and try again. Leave enough space between you and the horse in front of you to allow circling or pulling-up if there is a fall or refusal.

KEEP YOUR HORSE UNDER CONTROL. If your horse runs away, circle him, making the circle gradually smaller until you regain control.

HOUNDS ALWAYS HAVE THE RIGHT OF WAY!!! Never step on or kick a hound. Turn your horse to face hounds or Staff when they pass. If hounds are coming up behind others, shout "Ware hound (right/left)" to notify those in front of you.

NEVER speak to a hound, unless the Huntsman specifically asks you to do so.

NEVER pass your Field Master.

The utmost courtesy must be afforded to landowners. We are THEIR GUESTS and our sport would not exist without their generosity. Stay off of their crops and to the edges of fields. Do not run their cattle. Close gates after passing through or re-set panel wires if you are the last through.

If your horse paws at the trailer, fill in the hole neatly and pack it down prior to leaving. Kick out manure piles to spread.

Take any and all trash with you. This includes tissue you might have with you at "pit stops".

If any damage to property is noted, TELL YOUR FIELD MASTER or MASTER as soon as possible and make sure that they understand you. This may entail reminding them after the meet when arrangements for repair can be made or attended-to.

When Staff approaches, make way for them by clearing out of their path, turn your horse to face them and stand quietly. Notify others of Staff approaching by shouting "Ware Staff."

Stay QUIET! Talking should be kept to very low voices both for safety and so as to not interfere with hounds and Huntsman. A large part of the Huntsman's and Whippers'-in job depends on listening to the hounds and blows on the hunting horn

Notify others of dangerous conditions by shouting "ware hole," "ware glass," etc. and pointing, if possible, to the danger.

At checks, ask the Field Master's permission prior to dismounting, checking tack, making a "pit-stop" and the like.

Duck under branches. Do not hold branches out of the way with your hand, as it is dangerous for those behind you.

DOGS ARE NOT ALLOWED AT MEETS, even if they are kept in the car or on leash. We understand your love of canines, but DO NOT BRING THEM HUNTING. They pose a major distraction to the hounds as well as presenting a potentially dangerous situation.

BE PROMPT! Riders need to be mounted by 9:30 am, hounds depart at 10:00 am SHARP. Keep in mind on some hunts there may be a 30 minute hack to the hunt field. If you are not familiar with where the hunt will be held, call before the day of the hunt to verify the hunt location and if there will be a hack. We will not hold the hunt for latecomers. We ask that you stay with the group from beginning to end unless the Master or Field Master gives permission otherwise.

FOXHUNTING IN A NUTSHELL

Hunting is a very organized sport. Your understanding of what is happening will greatly increase your appreciation of the sport. You would be surprised at how many people hunt for years without really knowing what is actually going-on.

In America, the goal in drag hunting is to watch hounds work. In actual fox hunting, the goal is to view the fox and cry the "Tally-ho". With animal welfare at the forefront, few hunts pursue a fox to kill. They prefer to have them around to hunt another day.

The people at the hunt will be divided into "Staff" (the people that control the hounds and people) and "Fields" (the groups of people that follow the hounds). The Staff will wear scarlet coats. Those riding in the Field will wear black coats. The exception is Gentleman who have earned their Hunt Colors, who may also wear scarlet.

"Staff" consists of:

- ⊗ The Master of Foxhounds (MFH) who organizes the Hunt.
- ⊗ The Huntsman who is in charge of the hounds and tries to stay with them at all times.
- ⊗ The Whipper-Ins who assist the Huntsman with the hounds.

Other people of interest are:

- ⊗ The Field Masters who are in charge of the fields of riders.
- ⊗ The Field Secretary who collects subscriptions or capping fees as well as signed releases, copies of negative coggins, etc. and organizes all of the paperwork for each day's hunt.

"Fields" refers to the group of riding followers with which you ride. Sometimes, depending on the number of riders attending a meet, there may be several Fields, or Fields may be combined in the case of fewer riders. The "First Field" is generally the faster, jumping field. In the "Second Field", a slower field than the first, jumps are optional and there may be people trying hunting for the first time, and children on ponies.

A brief note about Hunt Colors. Hunt Colors refer to the colored material affixed to the hunt coat collar. The Hunt Colors for Guilford Hounds is Old Rose. The MFH awards the hunt colors to subscribers after a minimum of three consecutive hunt seasons. The colors denote a member who has displayed enthusiasm and dedication to the Hunt over time, as well as set an example to others of proper hunt etiquette. Awarding of the colors also allows the member to wear the hunt buttons. The people wearing "colors" are, indeed, treasured members of our Hunt.

Dress codes vary somewhat from hunt to hunt around the country. If a currently subscribed member of another hunt has his/her colors with that hunt, they will be allowed to wear those colors, or their scarlet coat, if permitted at their home hunt, at our meets. Out of courtesy, however, they should always ask permission of the Master prior to doing so.

PROCEDURES

After checking in with the Field Secretary, you will locate your Field (the group of riders with which you will ride.) Select a group with which you will ride – 1st or 2nd Field. Judge both the ability of yourself and your mount when deciding upon the group with which you will ride. It is suggested that first time hunters hunt with the 2nd Field as they and their mounts become familiar with the experience of riding to hounds.

Whichever field you are riding with, if your horse has kicked in the past tie a red ribbon in his tail and keep to the rear of the field at all times. Also, please note those riders who are on young, green or on unsettled horses and show them every consideration throughout the day.

Prior to moving-out, you will notice a silence and tenseness as hounds are let out, let to relieve themselves, and move past the Fields in the company of Huntsman and Whippers-in. Turn horses to face hounds and stay quiet and still as they move past.

Fall-in behind your Field Master as you move out.

Hounds will be "cast" (put in to hunt for the scent) by the Huntsman. Whippers-in will be stationed in appropriate areas to control hounds. Always stop and turn to face Staff when they approach.

Hounds will somewhat pack and/or scatter to hunt the scent. When one strikes the "line" (a strong scent), they should "speak, give voice, open, give tongue" (bark/bay), and the others should "honor" the finding hound (go to him, also speak, and take-off on the line as a pack). This is the point known as being "in full cry." Hereafter, the chase ensues, with the field following behind the Staff; to be more precise, staying behind their own Field Master.

When hounds "lose" (lose track of the scent), things come to a halt, which is known as a "check", while hounds try to "find" (search for the scent) again. Sometimes they are gathered by the Huntsman, moved and re-cast elsewhere. Just stay with your Field Master throughout all these goings-on.

Communications within the Hunt Staff is necessary to let each other know location, directions, status of the hounds, and many other things. This is done with the hunting horn. It is not necessary in the beginning to know these communications, but it is very important to stay quiet enough that Staff, including your Field Master, can hear them.

If successful, hounds will follow the line, find, and "account for" their prey. In our case, this means following an accurate track and finding the reward of diced hot dogs at the end. It is a real treat the day the Field gets to witness this accomplishment of many months and years of work.

Traditionally, no one leaves the hunt field or dismounts until all hounds are kenneled-up. When the hunt has concluded, the Huntsman will blow "going home" (two long blasts of the horn) to signal the end of the hunt. Thank your Master, Huntsman and Staff for a good days sport.

The camaraderie of friends and acquaintances is one of the most compelling elements of hunting. Captured in art, poetry, and song, the strong bond of fox hunting has been the source of inspiration for many throughout history. Days in the hunt field are definitely the time to set any personal differences aside and simply bask in the glory of the scene. It is a truly privileged soul that gets to experience this historic sport in our modern age.

Obviously, much more goes into the making of the hunt than these single days of pursuit, such as finding territory, training of hounds, formulation of Staff and subscribers, laying the drag line, maintaining territory (building jumps, trail clearing, etc.), and much more. But those are all things that come to be appreciated as one becomes further indoctrinated into the Hunt.