



Lori Walker (right) and Kate DeVoe on Rainbow's Fancy, the ten mile second place team. Photo by Annie Betts

Following the Hoofprints

By Katie DeVoe

In this world, people always try to find a way to make themselves look normal and sane. When you ride endurance, this is a hard thing to accomplish, because there are not many things that are more tough than riding a horse 100 miles in one day. But somehow, endurance riders managed to find another sport that looked to be more difficult than endurance: Ride and Tie. So naturally, and because I am really a person who loves a challenge, I have always been interested in this sport. I liked the sense of the teamwork involved, and the challenge of running on the same terrain that I had asked my horse to run on the previous day. I knew that one day I was destined to attempt a Ride and Tie.

The opportunity arose after riding endurance for two and a half years. We had just finished our ride that day, my partner, Lori, doing 25 miles, and myself having done 50 miles. We were bragging about how good we felt, and lamenting that it was not a two-day ride. Of course, the joke came up, why not do the ride and tie in the morning? Not being one to back down, (thinking that my partner would) I readily agreed. It turns out that my partner is just as stubborn as I am, and since neither of us wanted to give in, we signed up for the Ride and Tie. Just about the only thing that we had going for us is that we had a sound horse, and decided to just do the ten mile Ride and Tie. I am the type who just does “weekend warrior” running. Which is actually more like, I only run at endurance rides, which are 4-6 weeks apart. We decided to use the horse who had only done 25 miles the previous day. The mare had never been tied to a tree and left in the woods, and the only time I ever rode her, she tried to buck me off. Like I said, we did not have much in our favor.

The next morning, I was up at six to help get our horse, “Fancy”, ready (all the while thinking to myself, why am I doing this?). It was agreed that I would ride the horse out of camp, and then at the finish, I would run in and Lori would ride her horse. All was going well until I realized that we would have to cross the creek, which I only tend to do when I am on the horse, not off. Stone hopping may not be my forte, but I am really not too bad at it. In three creek crossings, I only managed to get one shoe wet. Did you know that when only one shoe is wet, that foot is heavier? It makes a big difference when you are going up a hill at the end of the ten miles. Also, I think that I might have a scar from

doing a face plant at the bottom of a hill. I am not sure; it has been three weeks, and my knee still has not regrown all of the skin.

Despite the lumps and bruises, I had a total blast. There is nothing more exhilarating than running so fast downhill that the horse cannot catch up to you. I know that I will never forget sprinting across the finish line with Fancy cantering behind me. Nor will I forget all that I learned. Running on the same trail as my horse gave me an all new perspective of what my horse needs to do to maintain balance and speed. I now understand why horses do not like to trot on slanted trails, or trot up hills when they are tired. I know just when the hill is too steep for my horse to safely and comfortably trot down it. Most importantly, I learned that three individuals can be so focused in working towards a common goal that the miles will just slide on by. Now, when people ask me, how many miles do you have? I can answer, well, about a thousand endurance miles, and ten Ride and Tie miles.

I think that any person interested in competing in endurance should try a Ride and Tie, especially if they like to run. It enlightened me about what I was really asking my horse to do when we raced. Yes, it is a lot of hard work, a lot of dust, and a lot of nature, but I have never found anything that is as satisfying as completing a Ride and Tie.

About the author:

Katie DeVoe is sixteen years old and a senior in High School. She has been riding horses and competing in endurance riding for three years. Her other hobbies include playing in the high school wind ensemble and showing horses.

For more information:

For a schedule of upcoming events, and advice on how you can get started in the sport of Ride & Tie, please visit the website at www.rideandtie.org or call the Ride and Tie Association at 650-949-2321, or ride/run on over to:

The Ride and Tie Association
469 Casita Way
Los Altos, CA 94022