

Wentworth Health Care Londonderry Pony Club Camp

Over the weekend of the 4th and 5th March riders of Londonderry Pony Club joined together for the long awaited return of the Londonderry Pony Club Camp.

This year the camp was generously funded by the Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network and Wentworth Health Care "Resilience and Wellbeing" Grant, which looked to support activities in the region that promote both physical and mental wellbeing, and allows members a chance to be involved in a fun, supportive learning environment. These grants were offered as part of the Australian Government's response to the 2022 flooding of our region. The received financial support meant that the camp was fully funded, right down to the last party pie, for all of our attending members.

The camp brought together over 80 of our members, with riders ranging from beginners to open, for the fun filled weekend. Saturday kicked off in rainbowed themed mufti, with riders performing troop drill exercises in their respective riding groups as well as a whistle drill challenge. Before too long, it was morning tea time with an ensemble of fruits and sweets available for riders, fueling them up for the next sessions.

Riders were then treated to their first guest of the day, Pony Club Australia International Polocrosse Team Coach, Matt North. Matt hosted a polocrosse demo and all riders learnt the tips and tricks behind a perfect throw, before saddling up and putting those new skills to the test on horseback in various sessions. Rotating with the Polocrosse was three other unmounted activities; Learning how to take our horses vital signs with Ranvet Animal Health and Nutrition Representative Sharne Haskins, learning how to help our horses recover with Liz Malcolm from Equissage Equine Therapy's, as well as some pony painting! Of course, between all these busy activities was another food refuel with a BBQ lunch and special treat from Classic Soft Serve Ice Cream truck!

By the afternoon, attention had turned to mounted games! Riders were first treated to a Mounted Games fundamentals lesson with our very own Cooper Richardson, who is currently a rider on the NSW Senior Mounted Games Squad! It was then a battle of the ages with riders forming teams, consisting of beginner led, beginner unled, transition and open riders, for the camp game wars! There were donuts, there were apples, there were (real) eggs and spoons, and there were a whole lot of laughter, right until sunset!

With horses tucked away for the night, and riders perhaps still on a sugar high, Dino's Mobile Pizza Van was the perfect dinner solution. Ask any slightly sleep deprived parent, and they will testify that the fun and laughter went well into the night with even more camp games to be had.

By Sunday morning, there were a few tired eyes but alas, they were quickly awoken to the smell of a breakfast BBQ! Members were then treated to the first guest of the day, VaultAire Vaulting team who performed a wonderful demonstration of their sport. All riders were then provided the unique opportunity to give it ago on both the training apparatus, and, for our open riders, having a go on the horse as well! Meanwhile, groups were also rotating through activities with Sydney Working Equitation, who brought out a number of their obstacles and taught our riders both how to expose their horse to new challenges, and about the benefits of the discipline. After a led introduction, riders of all groups mounted up and gave all the obstacles, and an eventual course, a go!

Fueling our riders today for morning tea and lunch was a wonderful selection of wraps, party pies and sausage rolls, hotdogs and party treats including everyone's favourite fairy bread. Whilst indulging in another fabulous feast of food, all members were treated to a very informative

presentation by Duncan McGregor, who spoke of recognizing the early signs of laminitis, as well as management and treatment from a farriers perspective.

Before we knew it, our 2 days of fun was drawing to a close, and the could only mean one thing- the return of the LPC camp tradition that dates backs to the early days of our club- the Ironman Challenge. The Challenge was open to all courageous participants who were willing to take the challenge, with an unmounted course, a novice course, and an advanced course. The course challenged sack jumping skills, balancing skills, lolly in flour finding skills, and plenty more! We were very appreciative to Sydney Working Equitation who not only allowed us to incorporate some of their obstacles in the course, but even stuck around to help time keep. With our last rider through the course, we were proud to award our three newest inductees to the LPC Ironman winners list, Harper G (unmounted), Maddi B (Novice) and Rosie M (Advanced).

And with that, the 2023 LPC Camp drew to a close. Team LPC would like to sincerely thank Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network and Wentworth Health Care for their funding generosity, as well as all of our special guests who gave up their time to share their wisdom and unique disciplines with our riders. As always, the camp was also not possible with out our dedicated volunteer team, whom made the weekend a beaming success!

Team LPC are now eagerly looking forward to our next major club event, the LPC Annual Gymkhana on May 28th, 2023.