

Road Trials and Carriage Driving Part II

Once I decided to use a carriage to compete in the Road Trials, I found myself starting over in my training. Although we remembered the basic commands, we would need to learn a new piece of equipment. Starting with a new team has its challenges. Each team member is working on their own skills. We are also all (including me) working on different levels.

Slick and Emmy are learning to work together and understand that there will be two that will be lying down in the grass. As they find their way, I have to keep in mind that they are learning something new. I have incorporated into my commands the “wait” command. Something new for Emmy. Although she is unsure why I am asking her to do this, it will all come together once the whole team is put together. I think that Slick is just enjoying the attention. He will do anything to get it. He has been left behind each time that Emmy would compete in a Road Trial. Now it is his turn.

Red has been working as a single horse since December 7th. He has become comfortable with working in both the obstacles and on the easy part of the endurance course. Red is still at a walk in harness. As he becomes more and more comfortable with his new job we will add more skills to him. Tomorrow Red will return as a team horse and asked to cross a bridge and also walk through water. The trainer says that this is a hard skill for a harness horse. The horse will want to jump the water or even shy to the side of the bridge. Either of these moves would prove disastrous with a driving horse. With returning Red to a team horse, this will allow him to complete the task correctly. He will have with him his old team mate that has confidence to complete the water hazard and also the bridges.



Slick and Emmy are in the basement learning new commands and working on old ones. The carriage has been move indoors to add to the excitement and also the warmth. Although I am still pointing to “get under” and “get out”, Slick and Emmy are getting quicker at responding. I have added the “wait” command while standing. This is a new command for both of them. After a little confusion, they seem to have decided that it is OK. “Wait” while standing and also allow me to walk around is added. This is also new and both Slick and Emmy wanted to turn around with me to see where I went. They wanted to keep their eyes on me at all times. After several days they began to almost

twist their head around like they were bewitched. At least they were not moving. Funny Dalmatians.

Just as I did mounted, it has come to the time that I must leave the comfort of the ground and give commands from the sky. With Bruce's help holding the Dalmatians, I stepped into the carriage and called the dogs to "get under". To my excitement and with encouragement, they moved to the back of the carriage and stayed there. Slick and Emmy did the same thing when I first mounted. They looked for



me and did not look up. Once they looked up they just stayed there looking at me. I guess that they were wondering either where the food was or what was I doing up there. As usual, I ended on a positive note.