

TTU EQUESTRIAN TEAM ON DISPLAY AT HORSE SHOW

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Herald-Citizen Photo/Camille Fliss-Mayberry



Laura Beagle helps her friend and teammate Whitney Honeycutt into the stirrups as she prepares to compete in the novice division of the horse show held at Hyder-Burks Agriculture Pavilion this past weekend.

COOKEVILLE -- The Hyder-Burks Agriculture Pavilion echoed with the sounds of creaking leather saddles this weekend as college students from Tennessee and Kentucky competed in a Intercollegiate Horse Show Association Western horse show hosted by Tennessee Tech. Students from colleges in both Tennessee and Kentucky rode horses with names like "Viper," "Rocket" and "Millie," demonstrating their skills of walking, jogging and loping their horses.

About 13 riders were from Tennessee Tech's Intercollegiate Equestrian Team, according to **Tech trainer Rebecca Huddleston**.

"We compete all year in order to get a certain number of points, and when you receive a certain number of points, you'll advance on to the regionals competition and then possibly on to nationals," she explained.

Members of the team practice on Huddleston's farm at least once a week, working on how they present themselves and how they handle a variety of horses.

The team's annual budget is around \$9,000 a year, and members are responsible for participating in fundraisers to bring in about 70 percent of that number. However, there are no out-of-pocket expenses for participants other than taking care of meal costs when they travel.

The team takes care of hotel bills and other expenses for the competitions.

"It's a good program within the collegiate because students don't have to have their own horses," Huddleston said.

"They don't have to have the expense and responsibility of owning a horse while they're in school. We have beginner classes, all the way through nationally qualifying riders and they are competing against people of the same level."

Out of the approximately 40 horses that competed over the weekend at the show, Huddleston estimates that 26 belonged to herself and her clients.

Tennessee Tech's Equestrian Team will next compete this weekend at Murray State University in a Intercollegiate Horse Show Association hunt show.

For more information about the team, contact Dr. Tom Willis at 372-3558 or twillis@tntech.edu.

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