

The Condition of Turkish Equestrian Sports and Clubs in Turkey

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Introduction

When the Turkish people poured westwards from their homelands located in Central Asian in the 11th century, they came on horseback into Anatolia. The horse, till then played a central role in Turkish life in the Central Asian steppes, and was probably first ridden and harnessed to vehicles in the area between the Black Sea and the northeast of Anatolia (Anonymous 2000).

The Turkish people brought not only their horses to Anatolia but many related aspects of their culture, one being the equestrian sport previously known as cirit or jereed. Today equestrian sport is widespread as it once was, in many the provinces of Turkey (Anonymous 2000).

In the present study, the aim was to emphasize the historical evaluation of Turkish Equestrian Federation and related to horse-riding clubs, the education levels of grooms, riders and trainers and competition activities.

The History of the Turkish Equestrian Schools

The history of the Turkish Equestrian Schools goes back to 1911. The first Equestrian School was established with the name of Equestrian and Application school with the directive of Military School Marshal Mahmut Sevket Pasha. The School was established with the beginning of the First World War (1914-1918). Between 1919-1923 cavalryman training center was constructed in military units in Abidinpasa for Sakarya war. In addition, another equestrian school was established under the management of major Kurtcebe in 1922 in Ilgaz. In 1923 Turkish Equestrian Federation was set up (Anonymous 2006a).

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In every era of the history, there has been an interest shown to equestrian and various activities were performed for development. Following the Turkish War of Independence, by the support of the teachers (French and Italian), the school was re-established in Orhaniye in 1925. The French and Italian officers till then have contributed to the equitation. The school has amendments up to date from 1927. The Turkish Equestrian Federation, as an officially active foundation in Ankara, in which horse riding clubs in our country has been related to, is carrying out activities and arranging organizations in cooperation with the General Directorate of Youth and Sports (Anonymous 2006a).

Equestrian, Jockey and Hostler Education

As in all sport branches, horse-riding requires technical knowledge and education. This education has been given officially prior to the Turkish Equestrian Federation and in addition by private foundations. With the support of Turkish Equestrian Federation, in a total of 10 administrative provinces, 21 horse-riding clubs are active in Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir, Antalya, Bursa, Kocaeli, Eskisehir, Adana, Konya and one is going to be inaugurated in Sivas (Anonymous 2006a).

In Turkey, Horsemanship and Equestrian education have been given by domestic and foreign specialist educator staff in open and closed training grounds. In this area of activities performed by various organizations, education programs were given by specialist staff and included basic equestrian education, hurdle running and every kind of equestrian educations. In basic principle priory equestrian education is being given and then dressage and following puissance educations are being given voluntarily. Besides horse therapy (hippotherapy) for people with mental defects and physically handicapped and horse pension services are given (Anonymous 2006b).

The Turkish Jockey Club (TJC) manages the organization of horse racings, improvement of the genetic make-up of horses and husbandry, besides these it also organizes social, cultural and educational activities under the control and supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs. It has founded a training center at Istanbul Hippodrome in 1985 to ensure a specialized education especially for training jockeys. The name of the Training Center has been changed as Ekrem Kurt Apprentice Training Center in the memory of Deceased Ekrem Kurt, who is one of our most famous jockeys. TJC, Ekrem Kurt

Apprentice Training Center is a unique institution in our country that trains the professional staff about horse breeding. The education period is two years. Up to date, from January 2006, there have been exactly 600 graduates (Anonymous 2006b).

The candidates, who are going to be admitted to Ekrem Kurt Apprentice Training Center should meet some requirements such as interest in jockey job, weighing between 35-45 kg, having a stature of 1,30-1,50 cm, at the age of younger than 16 years (Anonymous 2006b).

Theoretical and applied education are given in Ekrem Kurt Apprentice Training Center by educators comprising of Central Education Director, two equestrian teachers, one teacher for each of following courses; Turkish language, Mathematics, Social Sciences and Religion language and in addition one Veterinary surgeon (Anonymous 2006b).

Currently on Ekrem Kurt Apprentice Training Center Legislation program, there are no apprentice candidates attending to the races, during their education and knowledge. Apprentice student, following completion of 2 years of education, gets the Apprentice License. The Apprentice, who doesn't have a license, can not attend to the races. The Apprentice, who wins 100 races, becomes a jockey (Anonymous 2006b).

The training center, established in 1985 has founded it update level following various evolutional of conditions. Equestrian sport, more than a hobby, has been transformed to an industry. Every year a great need has aroused for jockeys, apprentices, training jockeys, coaches and riders .As with the planned and programmed studies of Turkish Jockey Club, there have been modernization and changes in the in Ekrem Kurt Apprentice Training Center. The horses that have been attended to the Training Center have periodically been examined clinically for their health status and treated with necessary applications and later on have been used for educational activities. As the latter conditions have been taking care, large projects towards future have been set up regarding TJC, Ekrem Kurt Apprentice Training Center (Anonymous 2006c).

The hostler carries an important role for the management, nutrition and breeding of the horses. In our country, in general, riders turn from father to son besides an education has been given in the name Hippodrome Directories. For this aim, as a 45 days course, rider candidates

have been educating on horses and equitation, horse management, feeding and watering, grooming, breeding and riding. To be admitted to the courses, the candidates have to meet requirements such as at least being graduated from a primary school, having completed the military service, being at the age of younger than 30 years and weighing less than 70 kg with no sex prediction (Anonymous 2006a).

In the horse-keeping enterprises where there are more than one hostler working, people with skills and success may become a major hostler. Besides, the hostlers may enter and be successful in the Horse Education Trainer examinations and then become a trainer (Anonymous 2006a).

License and Competition category

Currently in Turkey there are about 560 sportsmen who have license for riding. License can be obtained in two steps. First of all a certificate must be obtained in regard to being a sportsman related to the branch and then category certificate could be obtained from the Turkish Equestrian Federation for attending to the competitions. To date in 2006, registered in the Turkish Equestrian Federation are 56 first degree and 35 second degree trainers (Anonymous 2006a).

The competitions are evaluated through categories. The latest competition categories and people in these categories are listed below:

Category A: Master Rider (Jockey) (25-30 riders)

Category B: Mature Rider (Jockey) (60 riders)

Category B+C: Adolescent (Youth) Rider (Jockey) (100 riders)

Category C: Mature Rider (Jockey)(30-40 riders)

Category D: New Rider (Jockey)(more than 150 riders)

Category D+: Rider (Jockey)(exactly 80 riders)(Anonymous 2006a).

Trainer System

Horse trainers, in order to pull up the performance of the horse throughout its competition life, are selected from academically educated staff. Trainer certificate may be obtained following attending to the courses given by Turkish Republic Prime Ministry Youth

and Sports General Directory. These courses constitute 5 steps in which in the 1th.step ancillary trainer, in the 2.nd step trainer, in the 3rd step veteran trainer, in the 4.th step major trainer and in 5th step technical director certificates can be obtained. The graduates of the physical education trainers departments of the Universities can get 3rd step trainer certificate, other graduates from the physical education and sports high school can get 1st step trainer certificate (Anonymous 2006c).

In these courses theoretical and practical educations are being given by the senior lecturers from the universities. The duration of the courses in the 1st, 2.nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th steps are 12, 16, 16, 24, and 24 days, respectively. At the end of these periods successful candidates are being given the related trainer certificates. For instance an ancillary trainer that has 1th.step trainer certificate needs to work next to an above step trainer for 1 year duration in order to attain to a second step course (Anonymous 2006c).

Currently in the Turkish Equestrian Federation there are officially registered 12 international referees, 60 national referees and 300-400 candidate referees (Anonymous 2006b).

Literatures

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