

Julie Jackson-Biegert

I started endurance riding in 1999 and have since logged just over 4100 miles in endurance and about 1300 miles in Limited Distance. I have also competed several hundred miles in Competitive Trail. When I started, I knew nothing – only that I finally found a bunch of people who wanted to ride like I did. In the beginning, one 25 mile ride on a weekend was a huge accomplishment. I would be sore, but very proud of my horse and myself. Over time, after watching the 50 mile riders I got the urge to try a 50. A good friend who was experienced took me on my first one. Even though it took just over 9 hours I was hooked. My first endurance horse was a young Arabian cross gelding. He had excellent conformation for distance but over time, became too lazy for me and it was frustrating to ride him. He is now a well-loved trail horse for a local woman. My next endurance horse was Nitro, a purebred, unregistered Arabian. Nitro has been phenomenal and has completed eleven 100 mile rides and over 3100 endurance miles. He is now coming up on 16 years, and is still going strong. I compete at the FEI level (International) but also compete for awards in UMECRA and AERC. I train for Top Ten placing and see endurance (50 miles and above) as a race, not a ride. At the same time, my husband and I breed, train and sell distance horses and we ride a lot of Limited Distance rides as well as Competitive Trail for developing young horses. We do not race Limited Distance, but work on building a good base on our horses, teaching them to pace themselves and eat and drink on the trail and in checks. This applies in Competitive Trail as well. My philosophy is that there is a place for every rider in Distance, whether you are interested in winning or just the camaraderie of fellow riders. The key element is the desire and knowledge to take good care of your horse. In UMECRA, we value this above all and the mentors are here to help the newcomers learn how to do this.