

HOW SMOOTH ARE YOU? A Game With Only Winners

Requirements:

- A foam cup marked with centimetre graduations inside and outside.
- Enough non-staining coloured water to fill the cup to the brim.
- A strip of Blu-Tac.
- A motor vehicle used for towing the horse float.
- A horse float.
- Some money (amount to be determined by your driving)
- A driver who is smooth and gentle.
- A deserving charity.
- An observer who is willing to have a go at the game as well.

Method:

- Blu-Tac the foam cup so it is level and firmly attached to the middle of the vehicle bonnet.
- Fill cup to the brim with coloured water.
- Go for a practice drive in your patch.
- Refill the cup and attach the float to the vehicle ensuring that the coupling is secure, the safety chains are attached, light connection is in, all lights are working, doors are all closed and secured, tyres are all at the correct pressure, the registration is current and the float is roadworthy and safe. Phew!
- Go for a drive of at least 20km. (In the interests of energy conservation you may wish to hold off playing this game until the next outing with the horses). Drive as you normally would, towing a float: this can be verified by your observer. If possible include a roundabout, a T intersection and some off-road work. Include reversing during the drive.
- Tally up the amount of water spilled from the cup.

Rules:

- If you destroy or crush the cup when attaching it to the bonnet or if the cup departs from the vehicle during the drive, add a \$20 penalty. If either of these things happen you have a lack of feel for a foam cup. Too much or too little force or pressure was used to achieve the desired result. This could apply with a horse as well!
- The first spilt cm from the cup carries a penalty of \$5.
- The second spilt cm from the cup carries a penalty of \$10.
- If you spill any further water (cm 3 and onwards) each cm carries a penalty of \$20/cm.
- In the interests of fairness, only a full spilt centimetre takes the driver to the next penalty level.

At the end of your drive, calculate the amount of water lost and the penalty. Commit to making the penalty a donation to a worthwhile charity. (Horse supplies are not considered as a charity). Acknowledge where and when in the drive, the water was spilt and work on those areas to become as smooth as silk at the controls. *See footnote.

The win/win/win aspects of this game are; Your horse will get a better ride. You become a smoother driver, which could mean you become a safer driver (Look Up and Live). There will be less wear and tear on your vehicle and float. A charity will benefit and the foam cup manufacturers sell more foam cups!

* Footnote. If you spilled one or two cm of water congratulations! You are either a very smooth driver or you weren't trying. Did you bribe your observer?

Being a smooth driver is easy. Relax and smile. Drive ahead of yourself. Keep your eyes moving and become aware of everything that is going on outside and inside the vehicle. Maintain at least a 4 second gap between your vehicle and the one in front. This works at all speeds. Go easy on the pedals and the steering wheel. Think of the way jet airliners are flown; Smooth, otherwise the passengers object. Try to brake without the jolt at the end as the vehicle finally stops. Plan your turns and lead into them and out of them gently with the steering wheel. Be aware of the road surface and camber. Indicate early. And as speed increases, so does the amount of water lost plus fuel consumption increases dramatically, the ride is less comfortable and wear and tear increases on the vehicle and float. Plan on leaving earlier instead of driving faster.

Tips:

- Don't stick the cup in front of the driver. Spilling water may obscure his/her forward vision (just the thing we are trying to develop).
- Don't focus on the cup... observers job!
- Speed will increase the amount of water lost, fuel consumption, wear and tear and money donated, (not to mention increasing the horse's discomfort).
- Be mindful and understanding of other drivers who are not trying to drive smoothly (identified by lack of foam cup on their bonnets, aggressive accelerating, cornering and braking and giving you funny looks).
- Have fun!