No horsing around
UL's first equestrian club begins next week

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The University of Louisiana at Lafayette's first equestrian sports club is preparing for its first team practice: no horse required.

The team will meet for the first time on Sept. 5 at the Cambridge Stables, off of Milton Road in Maurice. Membership does not require a horse or any horse riding or equestrian competition experience, according to Kori Delcambre, a UL Lafayette class of 2015 alumna, who played a vital role in putting the team together.

Though there will be optional intercollegiate competitions throughout the semester with universities such as Louisiana State University, Tulane and Texas A&M, members can choose not to compete and participate only in weekly practices. Delcambre said she simply wants to share her enjoyment for horses and riding with others.

"If you've ever been around them, you know that horses are like therapy," Delcambre said. "It's not going to be stressful or high pressure or anything. I'm just going to try to keep it easy going, compete some and get our name out there."

There is a $500 membership fee (either monthly or upfront at a discounted price) for the semester, which covers facility usage, their horses and equipment. Delcambre, 25, said she has loved horses for as long as she can remember. She has been riding horses for 19 years, has taught lessons on and off for the past five years and has participated in various competitions throughout her life.

However, while attending UL Lafayette, she didn't have many opportunities to compete because there was no school team.

"So I wasn't on a college team, unfortunately," she said. "I wish someone would have started one when I was there so I could have been on it."

She said she wants the club to give UL Lafayette students an opportunity she didn't have.

"This is one of the only colleges out of a handful or so that doesn't have an equestrian team in the country," added Kristin Cobb, a junior accounting major who is also largely responsible for starting the team.

Delcambre added she even noticed a demand from high school students she teaches for UL Lafayette to form an equestrian team. This sparked her ambition to start a team.

"They'll be like 'I want to find a college with an equestrian team' or 'LSU has one,' 'Tulane has one,'" Delcambre said. "Then I thought: 'I wonder how hard is it to start one at UL?'"

After receiving the OK to use the facility, its horses and equipment from her boss at Cambridge Stables, she began the year-long process of forming the team, with Cobb's help.

"She (Cobb) did all of the student engagement stuff they wouldn't let me do since I'm not a student," Delcambre explained. "We had to use teamwork to get it started."

Cobb explained the process for starting a student organization club is different from the process to start a sports club, and working with Rec Sports over the past year has been difficult.

"We've been having a really hard time getting through to people and people answering us," Cobb said.

She said the biggest issue seemed to be the constant departmental position changes and replacements, causing constant redirection and making meetings almost impossible. She said it seemed as if whenever the next step came, and a meeting was scheduled, that person's position would be replaced with someone else, thus postponing scheduled meetings.

"It was like it was always a new person," Cobb said. "Up until the last few months, we really haven't been able to do much."

In the meantime, she said she advertised the club through interest meetings and flyers, and answered questions from interested students through email or on the phone.

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Though the process was a long one, both Delcambre and Cobb said they are looking forward to the experience and using the team as an outlet to share their love for horses and riding.

"A lot of people kind of underestimate horseback riding in general, or don’t consider it an actual sport, but in all actuality, it’s one of the five toughest sports in the world," Cobb said. "So I’m looking forward to getting people more aware of what we do, how we do it, and to just get people more interested."

Delcambre said she hopes to stay involved with the team and its future success.

"I love teaching horseback riding," she said. "It’s my thing. It’s what I’m good at. It’s what I was born to do, I think. I just want the team to expand. I know not that many people may know about it this year but if we do well and advertise about it, and get everything out there, more people may be interested.

“And hey, maybe one day we’ll be as big as LSU’s team," she added."