

NEW COURSE TO BE TOUGHER

Entrants in the Great Mountain Race of Victoria will face a course that has been toughened and redesigned.

The course, at Sheeppark Flat near Mansfield, will be lengthened to bring race times back to the eight to 10 minute mark of the original race.

Course redesign is being geared to test riders' skills more tightly, with the introduction of more log jumps and fast turns at the gallop.

Race committee chairman, Neil

Phipps, says the new course will test the traditional skills of a bush muster to the full.

"There are lots of sharp turns through the trees, open galloping straights and a range of log jumps."

"We've knocked out the initial ridge climb in favor of a new course with greatly improved spectator and media visibility," Neil says.

"Ninety per cent of the new course will be visible from one station on the hill.

"And scrapping the ridge climb leaves the horses enough reserve to really test the riding skills of competitors. This will be a much tougher race for the rider and will need a better skill margin."

"This year a magnificent bush horse won't be enough to put you up with the leaders - the onus on the riders is much greater."

He is being assisted in the course redesign by local horsemen.

The race committee is drawing on the expertise and opinion of people such as Col Reynolds (chief steward at the first few races), Graeme Stoney, John Lovick, John Ash, Tony Lovick, Geoff Burrowes, John Coombs and Des Burley.

The 1986 course will be announced only days before the race, so all comers will have an equal chance to win acclaim as Australia's best mountain rider.

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