



The Starting Box

A Guide to Your First Event

By Barbara Ernst

Illustrations by Anne Baker

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The USCTA,
November, 1988.

In memory of Barbara Ernst who gave so much and sadly left us in January, 1997. Godspeed.

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DEDICATION

To the first-time event rider.

Welcome to a sport you are going to love—and one that will have you hooked in no time!



INTRODUCTION

Dear Reader,

Before we begin I'd like to warn you of several things.

1. As I am not infallible, this little manual must not be assumed to be Gospel. I have tried to give you a general idea of what may be, and in the case of the Rule Book what *will* be expected of you. I may not see things exactly as another might. However, I have tried very hard to see the sport through the eyes of a beginner.
2. When I refer you to the ***U.S. Equestrian Federation Rules for Eventing*** (Rule Book) I mean it. You cannot be a true competitor without a real working knowledge of the Rule Book. It is the GOSPEL according to the U.S. Equestrian Federation (USEF or Federation) and the U.S. Eventing Association, (USEA).
3. The check lists included are suggestions provided by knowledgeable eventing people and they are a bit different from show needs. Hopefully you will be selecting and compiling your own list very soon.
4. I have, at one time, written an instruction paper on—are you ready for this—“*How to walk and chew gum at the same time.*” It took a page and a half to give the definitive word picture of just how to unwrap the gum. The point being, any time you set out to write instructions on how to do even the simplest thing you may, in the process, so complicate the matter that the reader gives up.

Truly friend, eventing isn't as difficult as you think it is—and it's a lot of fun!

WHAT IS A HORSE TRIALS?

You probably already know a bit about our sport, but just in case...

A Horse Trials (sometimes called an "event") is a test of horse and rider that consists of three phases:

1. **Dressage**—work on the flat, performing required movements at a specific level of competition.
2. **Cross-Country**—galloping and jumping over varying terrain and solid obstacles, performed at a speed and fence height appropriate to that same level of competition.
3. **Show Jumping**—jumping a course of other than natural obstacles that can be knocked down, within the same stated level of competition.

Penalty points are recorded and later totaled for the three phases, resulting in a combined score for the whole trials. The horse and rider must compete for a combined low score, proving an overall balance in their training.

The same horse and rider combination must compete in all three phases.

IS IT FOR YOU?

If you love riding and want a great way to spend an occasional weekend, have we got a treat for you! When you dedicate yourself and your horse Lead Bottom to eventing, you commit to training and improvement with a nice payoff at every level of excellence. You'll have a great time testing your skills. You'll spend wonderful weekends in the country. There'll be a competition schedule that leaves time for watching and learning and making new friends as you try your hardest to compete well.

There is probably a horse trials within a reasonable distance from your home. If you've never seen an event, you might take a weekend to visit one and see if you like what goes on. You'll find "event" people are fun folks to be around - completely in love with horses and definitely crazy to work so hard for so long in order to compete all weekend with one chance at a ribbon. What more can I say except that eventers are "good sports" who are happy to help a beginner.



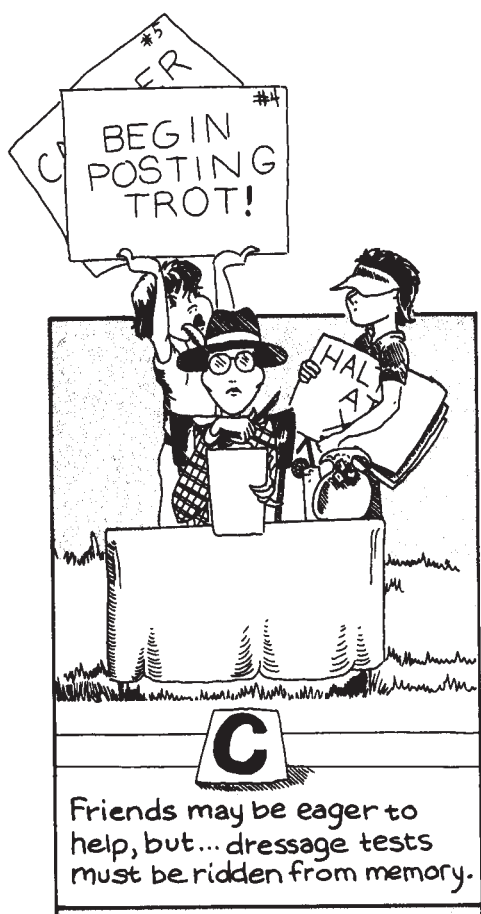
WHAT'S THE NEXT STEP?

Now, if we have your interest, you can begin to imagine yourself riding at that event! So let's pursue the thought. Can you and Lead Bottom manage to perform a simple dressage test? Can you stay on over a few fences and keep control of him and yourself? Can you gallop in the open without getting run away with? Are you able to work the expenses into your budget? Can you provide the needed equipment and clothes, as well as safe and reliable transportation for yourself and Lead Bottom? You think you can manage? Well, you may not be ready, but you're on your way.

You'll want and need more information, so one of the first moves you should make is to join...

The United States Eventing Association

Membership will bring you the *U.S. Equestrian Federation Rules for Eventing*, (see Rule Book on www.useventing.com), which every competitor should have and use. The *Omnibus* schedule lists USEA horse trials and events for the whole country, giving dates, and all pertinent entry information. You will also receive *Eventing USA*, the organization's official magazine, which offers lots of interesting articles on the sport, educational features, results, reports, and profiles not only of the stars of eventing, but also of competitors like yourself. Membership also helps when you enter a USEA-registered event, since all riders at the beginner novice level who are not members must pay an extra non-member fee.



This writer will try not to bring too many personal opinions into this small book, but please indulge me a bit here and there. Here's the first: the USEA is not some huge, impersonal, dictatorial corporation. In fact, it has a membership of only 14,000 or thereabouts; small when you consider that is nationwide. Its primary source of income is the membership we have been discussing here. The office staff is small and overworked but unfailingly courteous and helpful to all. Don't, please don't, put off joining this group of people who love eventing, and who work so hard to promote our sport.

WANT SOME HELP?

Have you got an instructor? If not, you should have, no matter what kind of competing you choose to take up. But since we're talking about eventing, that's the kind of instructor you'll be looking for; hopefully you've got a good one in your area. Talk to other riders. Get on the mailing list of your local eventing club. Participate in clinics whenever they are held in your area. A list of Area Chairs is printed in *Eventing USA* and the *Omnibus*. Feel free to write to your Area Chair for recommendations about an instructor near you. You may also call the USEA office for details.

With the help of your instructor, you should begin to develop your skills with a "beginner novice" event as your goal: working on the "novice" level dressage movements, jumping up to 2' 11" and readying Lead Bottom to gallop across country by practicing at the closes cross-country course you can find that allows schooling. (Expect to pay a small schooling fee for the privilege.)

As you progress, you will begin to select the equipment, tack, and attire you will need as a competitor. Your instructor and local tack store will help you with these items.
(*Scroll down for check list.*)

READY TO GIVE IT A SHOT?

Remember the USEA? The paperback copy of the *Omnibus* (Click on Competitions on the Homepage for web version) which you will receive four times a year with your membership, contains the information on all the USEA events held in each season. Even if you're still months away from being ready, you should begin to make your decision as to which horse trials will mark your maiden voyage. Naturally, you'll want one close to home and, since there are more and more trials each year, there's a good chance you'll find one nearby. Always read the *Omnibus* description of an event and check with other riders to make sure the event is an appropriate starting point for your ability. Also, feel free to call the event's organizer (listed in the *Omnibus*) they'll be happy to talk with you so you will have a better idea of what to expect.

Naturally the date of the event will influence your selection. Give yourself plenty of preparation time until you learn the ropes; if you're working fulltime, consider choosing a Sunday event so you'll have Saturday to get ready. In most areas, organizers try to schedule their trials according to the degree of difficulty, with the hardest courses falling late in the season. The weather, too, has a definite impact on your decision—for instance; snow drifts would tend to slow you down. Keep your first outing in an optimum weather season if possible.

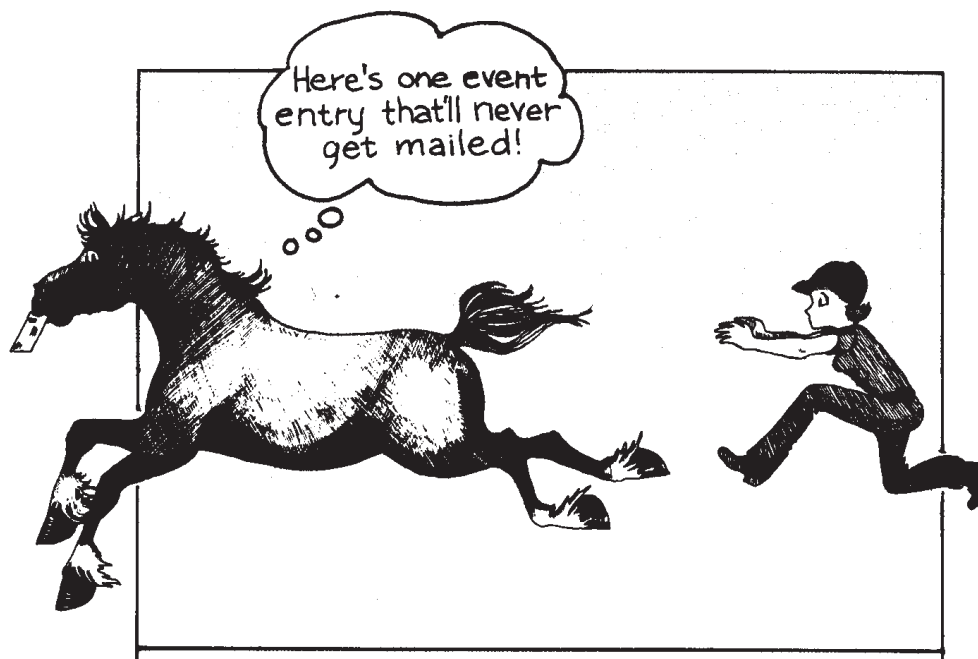
READY TO ENTER?

If you joined the USEA, you have received entry blanks along with the *Omnibus*. (Click on “forms” under the competitions heading on the homepage.) Use this form to enter the trials of your choice. If you still don’t have a form, get a copy from a friend or call the USEA and ask for a prize list and entry form to be mailed to you. For USEA registered competitions you may not use any entry form other than that supplied by the USEA.

A few weeks before the opening Date, you will need to contact your veterinarian in order to draw Lead Bottom’s blood for a Coggins test, as most events require that you have proof that he is negative for Equine Infections Anemia (Swamp Fever). When you send your entry, submit a copy of the Coggins, not the original. The veterinarian can also fill out any health papers that might be required when transporting a horse. If you are leaving the state to compete you will have to check this out. How disappointing it would be to sit at the state checkpoint after getting this far!

By now you’ve decided that Lead Bottom isn’t really an appropriate name for an Olympic gold medal winner and have already changed it to Top Gun. This is the time to think that name through, as the name on the entry should be the same as on the Coggins test you will be sending. As you move up through the ranks of competition the USEA will be keeping your points, and name changes create a paperwork nightmare.

Should your horse need medication at the competition read Chapter 4, Articles GR401- 412 of the Rule Book. If in doubt, call the USEF Drugs and Medication Office at (614) 771-7707.



WHAT'S AN OPENING, DRAWING AND CLOSING DATE?

The dates listed in the prize list and *Omnibus* are the time limits for entering the trials.

- 1. Opening Date** - This always falls on the Tuesday of the week that is six weeks before the trials. Your entry *cannot* be postmarked before that date or it will be returned to you. This way no one gets a head start on over-subscribed trials.
- 2. Drawing Date** - Two weeks after the Opening Date the secretary of the trials opens the entries received to date and, if the event is oversubscribed. The number of entries to fill the event are drawn. The balance - the ones that didn't get in - are put on a waiting list for notification when openings occur.
- 3. Closing Date** - The Tuesday four weeks after the opening date. If the organizer has not received sufficient entries the closing date may be extended. If the competition has reached its full capacity then no entries will be accepted after this date. Entries *must be in-hand on that date*, not just postmarked on the date.

There are good reasons for this complicated entry system: some might take advantage of prior knowledge of a horse trials and get ahead of others. The Drawing Date assures those who have entered promptly that their entry will take precedence over those who put off their commitment. The Closing Date must be firm so that schedules can be made and competitors notified as to their entry in the trials. This system may sound complex but - trust me - you'll soon get the knack of the entry process. The system works well and assures fair treatment for all.

ENTRY FORM

How do I fill out this blankety-blank blank?

Use the USEA entry form specifically for horse trials (and combined tests,) available in the *Omnibus* or online. Carefully scan the form before you begin to fill it out.

1. Please type or print clearly. How would you like him to be listed as Top Gum?
(That could get a bit sticky!)
2. Fill in the name of the "event" and the "date".
3. Accurately and completely fill in each section. The "USEA #" is a very important category. Since you have joined the USEA you will have received your number; not it here. If, despite my good advice, you have not, you should mail your dues to USEA and note pending in the box. If you have not and do not plan to join as yet, you will have to pay the non-member fee (Item 4).

4. "Fees Enclosed"

"Entry" - This is the fee noted in the competition's *Omnibus* listing.

"Stabling" - this too is noted as above.

"Drug Fee" - There is a \$7 drug testing fee for each horse. Drug testing is done randomly and you may only be subjected to testing one or two times in your competition career. It is however required that every competitor pays the fee whether they are tested or not to assist in paying for this very expensive program. This is of course vital to keeping the sport fair.

"Starter fees" - A starter fee must be paid for each horse that starts the competition. The competitor pays this fee to the organizer who forwards it to the USEA. At the beginner novice, novice and training levels this fee is \$8.

"Beginner Novice Non-Member Fee" - The beginner novice non-member fee is \$25. Payment of this fee will also make you a "subscribing member" of the USEA. While you will not be able to compete as a subscribing member and will have to continue to pay non-member fees, you will receive six issues of our bi-monthly award winning magazine *Eventing USA* and will be a voting member of the association.

"U.S. Equestrian Federation Fees" - you need not have a U.S. Equestrian Federation membership or pay the USEF non-member fee at the beginner novice, novice or training levels. The USEA has a "group membership" arrangement with the USEF which covers all riders at the three lower levels.

Look through the prize list to see if there are any extra or special fees such as Grounds fees or camping/hook up fees. Sometimes if you are not stabling your horse at the event the organizer charges a small grounds fee to cover the cost of running electricity, water or wiring for the sound system to the parking area.

"Total" of these lines is the amount you must include with your completed entry form.

5. Continue to complete the form with the requested information, name of horse, Lead Bottom (oops! Sorry, Top Gun) name of rider, address, description of horse and the division you wish to enter, for example BN indicates beginner novice. Each organizer may break the divisions down further into Jr., Sr., so you can add those abbreviations as you wish. Check in the *Omnibus* to see which divisions are being offered.

At the beginner novice level it is not mandatory for the horse to be registered with the USEA. So you may leave the horse registration numbers blank. At the novice and training levels the horse must have a lifetime registration at a cost of \$25.00. Call or email the USEA office for a horse registration form.

Also, as mentioned before, please make sure that you enter Top Gun's name consistently, do not revert to Lead Bottom every other time, and please, no barn names, the USEA staff will not know that at home you call Top Gun Timmy. Having Top Gun's name listed on the Coggins will help organizers when you send in your entries.

If you know the breed of your horse, note it here - if not, just leave the "Breed" section blank. Unless your horse has evented before, the items "Grade" and "Grading Points to Date" do not apply - just note "Unrated." If Top Gun has evented at the preliminary level or above in the past you will need to verify his status from the former owner or trainer and note his qualifications. If he is a graded horse, you've probably found out there's more to him than you thought and you'll have to hurry to catch up.

The rest of the line is self-explanatory.

6. The lines and small boxes are also easy to follow. You will need the little grey boxes only in special cases which you will probably not be dealing with until you know more about the sport.
7. The heavily outlined box, Section 1, is a must. Enter the total of your fees and be absolutely sure you sign your name, whether it is your entry or that of your child who is under 18. *Note:* Young competitors are called “Juniors” all the way through the year of their 18th birthday. See EV104.2 (page 21) in the Rule Book and the *Omnibus* Schedule “Attention Competitors” page.
8. As the Federation (USEF) does not require membership for riders at the Novice or Training levels of competition, you will not normally need to fill out Section II.
9. The same applies to the top half of the back of the form.
10. Read carefully. Enclose all the necessary paperwork and fees listed beside the “Note” section.
11. This last section is helpful to the announcer in that he can tell everyone how many feats of derring-do you’ve done.
12. If you need stabling, fill out a separate Stabling Form completely and note any special stabling needs your horse may require. Don’t forget to include the Stabling Form when you mail your entry.

Whew! That wasn’t so bad now, was it? Completed form(s), check, Coggins, signatures, addresses, sealed, stamped... and now it’s up to the Postal Service (oh, dear).

ONLY SIX WEEKS TO GET READY?

Let’s get busy.

1. Study the Rule Book (all of it), especially the specifications for Novice that are noted throughout.
2. Take some extra lessons for that floating leg and “how do you bridge your reins?”
3. Work on getting Top Gun fit. If your horse is capable of handling a 45-minute workout, 5 days a week, he is probably capable of novice-level fitness. Talk to a knowledgeable instructor about this subject, or contact the USEA for information on conditioning your horse.
4. Work on the separate parts of the test, but don’t put it together too often or too close to the time; Top Gun already knows he’s smarter than you are, so keep the test your little secret. Have you ever heard of an-ti-ci-pation? Horses are masters of it, particularly during a crisis.
5. Begin to make lists and collect the equipment you will need for: a) yourself, b) Top Gun, c) the stable. *See checklists at the end.*

6. It's a good idea to mark or label all of your equipment.
7. Your farrier should be scheduled so that Top Gun will have reliable shoes without being tender from a too-recent trim. Missing or loose shoes are not a problem you want to have to deal with at the last minute.
8. Hopefully, you will be traveling with friends. If not, it is a good idea to ask someone to come along. Moms are great at this but they usually disappear when you're jumping.
9. If you haven't already arranged for transportation, you may have a large problem. *Practice loading Top Gun now.* He may need convincing that this trip is really necessary.
10. Check out the trailer. *See checklist at the end.*
11. There are some things that you should take two of: reins, girths, breeches, aspirin...

It's a brass buckle cinch that you're going to forget something.

But don't just read the Rule Book - STUDY it!

HAS THE BIG DAY ARRIVED?

Pack everything the day before. Now is when those lists really come in handy. Plan to leave earlier than you think you have to; something is bound to come up. In all the excitement, don't forget Top Gun.

ARE WE THERE YET?

At this point you are so excited I'm going to cut the verbiage and go with a simple outline form. It'll be easier to read when your hands are shaking. Not to worry - all will be well!



ARRIVAL AND SETUP

1. Stabling

- Unload horse
- Locate stall
- Water and hay as soon as possible
- Check stall for safety
- Put up buckets (your own)
- Make sure your horse is settled nicely
- Write phone number where you can be reached at night and tape to stall door
- Verify stall door is secure from Houdini horse

2. Packet

- Pick up at secretary's office
- Expect to pick up packet only if all paperwork and fees are taken care of
- Check packet for correct
 - a. Names
 - b. Bridle and pinny number (correspond to program)
 - c. Your times (post on your stall for ready reference)
 - d. Map of cross-country
 - e. Verify you have remembered the right test

3. Check your times

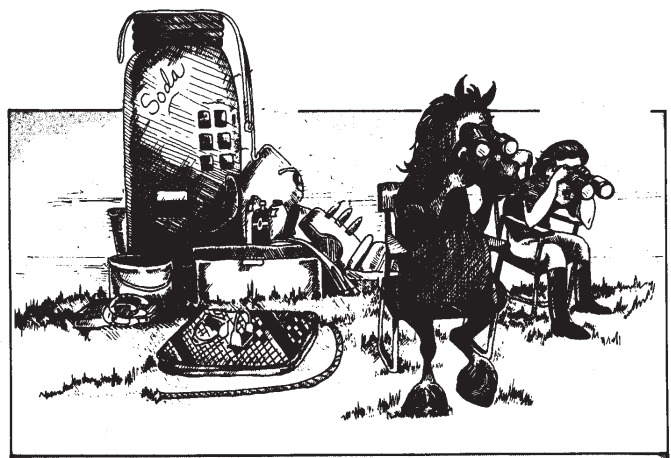
- Double-check the order of the competition's phases - sometimes the show jumping will take place after dressage, before cross-country. (This information is also given in the Omnibus description of the event.)
- Check scoreboards for changes, official clock, etc.

4. Exercise horse - See EV114

- Depends on when cross-country walk is scheduled.
- Use judgment as to how much and what method.

5. Grooming

- Bathe horse before you leave home or, failing that, as soon as possible after you arrive at stabling.



WALKING THE CROSS-COUNTRY COURSE

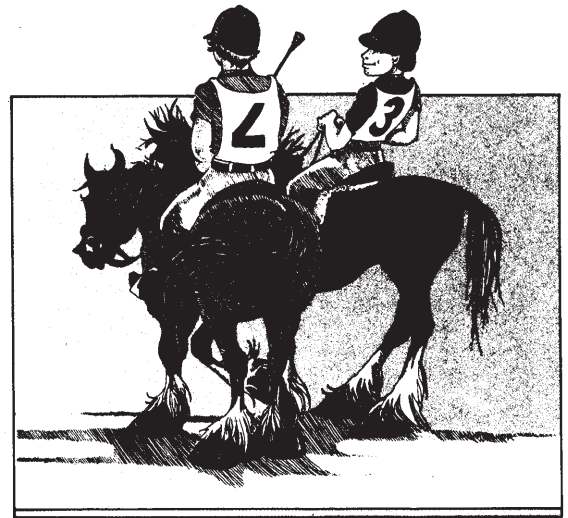
1. Walk with an instructor

- A pro will charge a fee, but this is a small expense compared to the help you'll receive. This writer believes that most riders, and novice ones in particular, need the advice of an expert in order to get around happily.
- If you don't know who to ask for help on a course walk, call the organizer before the event; he or she will probably have several recommendations.

2. Locate the starting box

3. Official walk

- Many events offer an "official walk" when someone who knows the course will lead competitors around the course.
 - a. Walk the course at the specified time, NOT BEFORE.
 - b. Be prompt.
 - c. Don't get ahead of walk leader.
 - d. Don't fall behind.
 - e. Ask questions.
 - f. Listen to leader and other competitors.
 - g. Be observant.
 - h. Get a feel of the flow of the course.



4. Your Own Walk(s)

- If there is no official walk, determine when the course will be open for walking. Note questions you might ask the organizer of the Technical Delegate. Walk on your own several times. Note in particular:
 - a. Flow of the course
 - b. Footing wherever you might be riding
 - c. Approaches to obstacles (trees, turns, etc.)
 - d. The position of the sun at the time of day when you will be on course
 - e. The obstacles (things to avoid as you gallop on)
 - f. Type of obstacles on your course (verticals, oxers, etc.)
 - g. Determine which obstacles may be a problem
 - h. Will you be riding toward, away from, or past the stable area or other areas that might distract your horse? Any excuse will do.
 - i. Locate finish line precisely in relation to last fence.
 - j. Any holes in the footing or low branches that have been overlooked but could be a hazard? Notify officials pronto if you find any!

DRESSAGE

1. Read Rules EV 133 - 136 in the Rule Book

2. Planning ahead

- Decide the day before how much time you will need to allow yourself for the following and work backwards:
 - a. Braiding is not required but it is traditional. Most event riders pull and trim their horses' tails rather than braid them.
 - b. Grooming horse, final brushing and hoof care
 - c. Dressing (you can dress early but stay clean by wearing a cover-up)
 - d. Tacking up the horse
 - e. Warm-up (follow ample time)

3. Other things to keep in mind

- Confine your warm-up to the proper area and be considerate of others at work
- Make sure you have:
 - a. Your number
 - b. A copy of the test to refresh your memory
 - c. Your whip for the warm-up but DON'T carry it into the ring!
 - d. Equipment that is legal, as it will be checked.
- Additional Thoughts:
 - a. Test may not be read - you have to have it memorized beforehand
 - b. Be prompt but don't rush
 - c. You can begin work around the ring as soon as the rider before you is leaving the ring
 - d. After the bell or whistle sounds, enter the ring promptly but do not rush; you have 60 seconds.
 - e. The judge will penalize you for any use of voice (including clucking!) during the test
 - f. Be as accurate as possible. The other things you're striving for are based altogether on the effectiveness of your training, but an inaccurate test will undermine your good work.

Congratulations! You survived "The Big D!"

PREPARE FOR CROSS-COUNTRY

1. Read Rule EV137 - EV139 in Rule Book.

2. Plan ahead - your plan depends on whether cross-country is run before or after show jumping or same day as dressage.

3. Chores

- Take down braids (would you want to jump with those things in your hair?).
- Feed horse at least two hours before start.
- Make sure he's had plenty of water available, that he is drinking and nibbling his hay (in other words, make sure your horse feels well).
- Walk cross-country as needed but at least twice (don't underestimate need for this, as there is no such thing as knowing the course too well).
- Check equipment and attire well in advance of the start of cross-country phase, making sure you have all you will need.
- Give yourself ample time for dressing, grooming, and tacking up.
- Leave plenty of time for warm-up on the flat and over the practice fences.

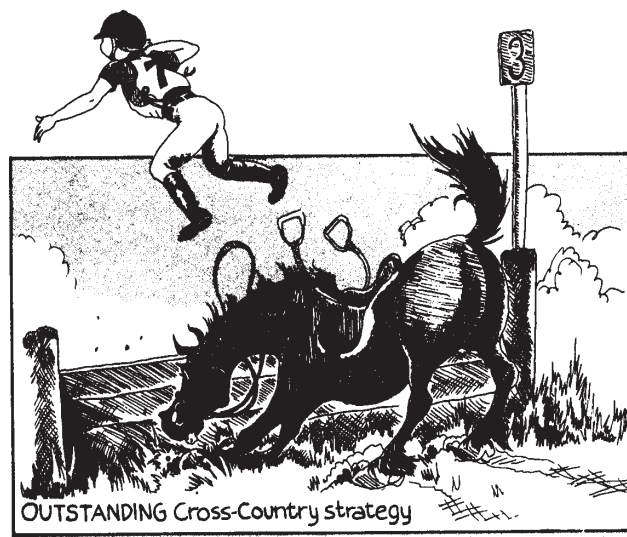
WARM-UP AND ON COURSE AT LAST

1. Warm-up and starting box - Jump practice jumps as flagged - remember always:

When jumping - "Red flag is on your right and white on your left."

- Identify yourself to the starter after the horse before you leaves the box; there are usually two or three minutes allowed between horses.
- The starter will give you ample warning.
- Don't leave the starting box until the "go" is given.
- Don't rush out of the box; get organized and on your way at a nice canter - in other words...
- Settle yourself and your horse into a nice 350 mpm (meters per minute) pace.
- If you're using a watch, remember to start it five seconds before you start.

(Writer's opinion - Beginning Novice riders should not bother with a watch, as it distracts you from the main object - getting around clean at the proper speed. I've seen riders late out of the box because they couldn't get the watch started, riders who forget it until it's too late to matter, and others who expect the watch to set the pace. Learn how 350 meters per minute (mpm) feels first - then the watch will be a helpful tool.)



2. On course

- Pray you know the Rule Book.
- Make sure Top Gun's prepared for that first fence.
- Don't talk to anyone on your way.
- If you know you've been eliminated or if you're having a very bad go you should leave the course at the walk. There's no point in pushing yourself or your horse into an unhappy experience. There will be another and better day.
- If you're in the way of a following horse at an obstacle, get out of the way and let him pass.
- Canter over the last obstacle and on through the finish line.
- Now's the time to stop your watch, which you'll probably forget to do.

3. The Eagle has landed

- Dismount and praise Top Gun for the job you both started and finished - make him feel good about it even if it wasn't everything you'd hoped for.
- At most trials, now is the time to turn in your pinny—it is important that the organizer not lose any of them—so don't forget to return it (you may lose your deposit or be charged for it).
- Before returning him to his stall, make sure you walk Triple Threat Top Gun until he's cool and his pulse and respiration have returned to normal.
- Give him a nice drink and a flake of hay in his stall, then leave him alone. He's probably had it with you for a while.
- After you've taken care of your horse, you can check the scoreboard for your cross-country score.
- Read Rule EV 141 - 142 for Scoring.

SHOW JUMPING

1. Read Rule EV 143 - 149

2. Planning ahead

- Depends again on the order of the phases.
- Make sure your horse is still drinking and nibbling and is sound and well.
- Ready your tack and attire well in advance of the start of show jumping.
- Determine the order of go so that you can be ready on time without getting ready too early. At this point your horse may still need some space.

3. Walking show jumping course

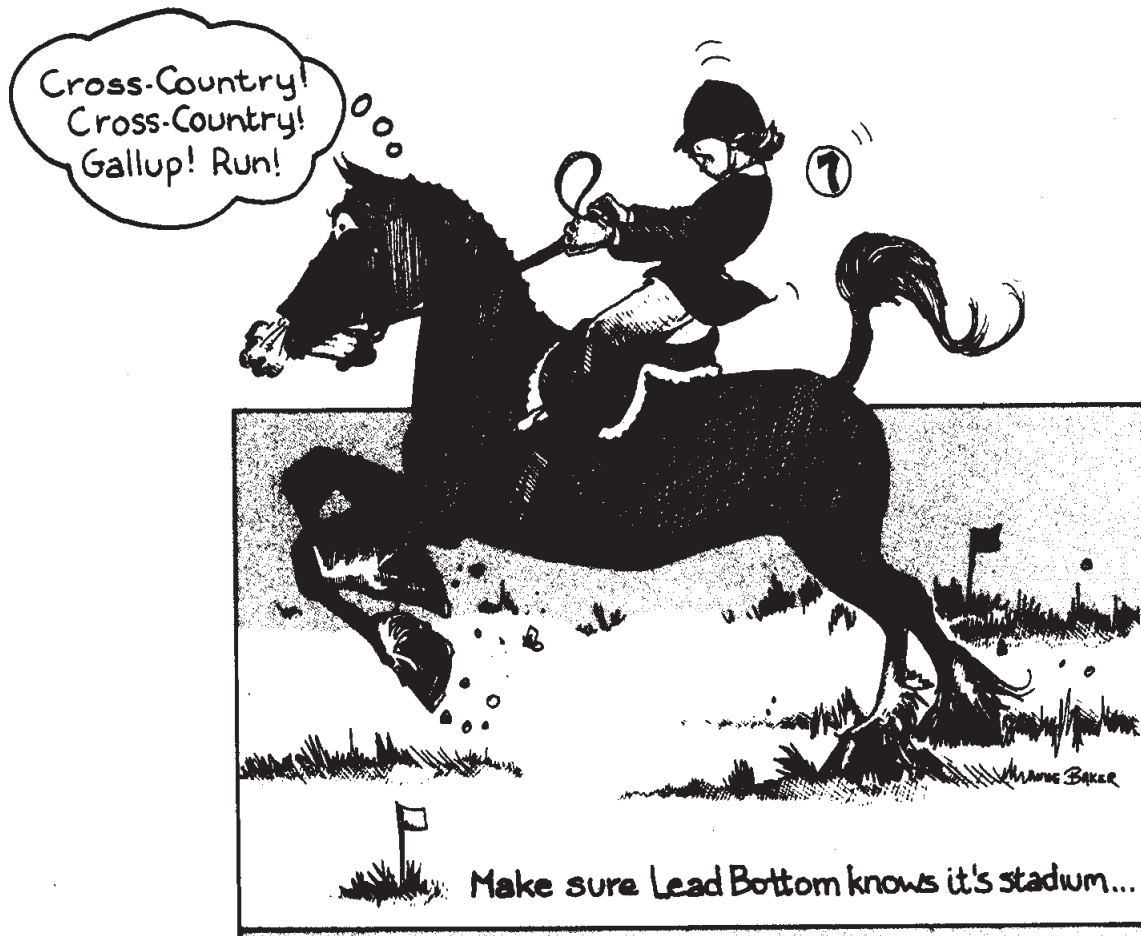
- Be available when the course is open for walking for your division (walk with a knowledgeable person, if possible).
- Of course, you must know the plan of the course, but note in particular the location of the start and finish flags.
- Note the boundary lines if the course is an open field.

4. Warm-up and Your Round

- Do give yourself plenty of time for warm-up.
- Check the number of the rider before you.
- Make sure you're visible to steward or starter as your turn approaches.
- Enter promptly when your number is called.
- Stop where everyone else has been stopping.
- Salute the judge.
- Wait for the whistle or bell.
- Make sure you pass between the starting flags after the whistle.
- Don't race through the course - 300 mpm is not fast.
- Make sure you go between the finish flags.

5. Holy Fireworks, We're Finished

- Dismount and loosen the girth and make Top Gun comfortable.
- In most instances, your show jumping score will be announced immediately (if this phase goes last, your final score will be announced as well).
- If you disagree with your penalties, follow the same procedure listed below.



INQUIRIES AND PROTESTS

1. You guessed it - READ THE RULE BOOK - GR1216.

In this instance, I'll insist that you read the rule before bringing your inquiry to the official. You should know the rules and it is possible, even likely, that you may have inadvertently broken one somewhere. In the hope that your good sportsmanship will guide you, I will say this: If you have ever been charged in error, you SHOULD press your inquiry; however, it should be well thought-out and brought to the Ground Jury with courtesy and respect for the officials, organizers, and volunteers. Remember - everyone wants you to have fair treatment in this and every aspect of the competition.

2. After you've read the rule -

- Only you or your trainer can lodge the protest.
- It must be done within the time allowed.

OFFICIALS

They really are nice people who don't want to intimidate you with impressive titles. They are there to help.

1. Ground Jury

- Judges dressage and show jumping.
- Approves courses, etc. after the T.D. has verified legal aspects.
- Serves as the ultimate decision maker.

2. Technical Delegate

- Is the USEA/USEF representative at the event.
- Approves technical aspects of the entire event: safety, facilities, proper provisions for the competition, etc.
- Serves as a mediator or ombudsman between officials, organizers and competitors to assure all concerned receive fair, courteous and prompt attention within the rules of the USEF and the USEA.

ORGANIZER

1. The individual, family or organization that has undertaken the responsibility of staging the horse trials. (Aren't you glad you don't have to read the rule book?)

2. Remember -

- They don't have to do this.
- They don't do it for the money more than once, because stealing would be easier and the punishment would probably be less taxing.

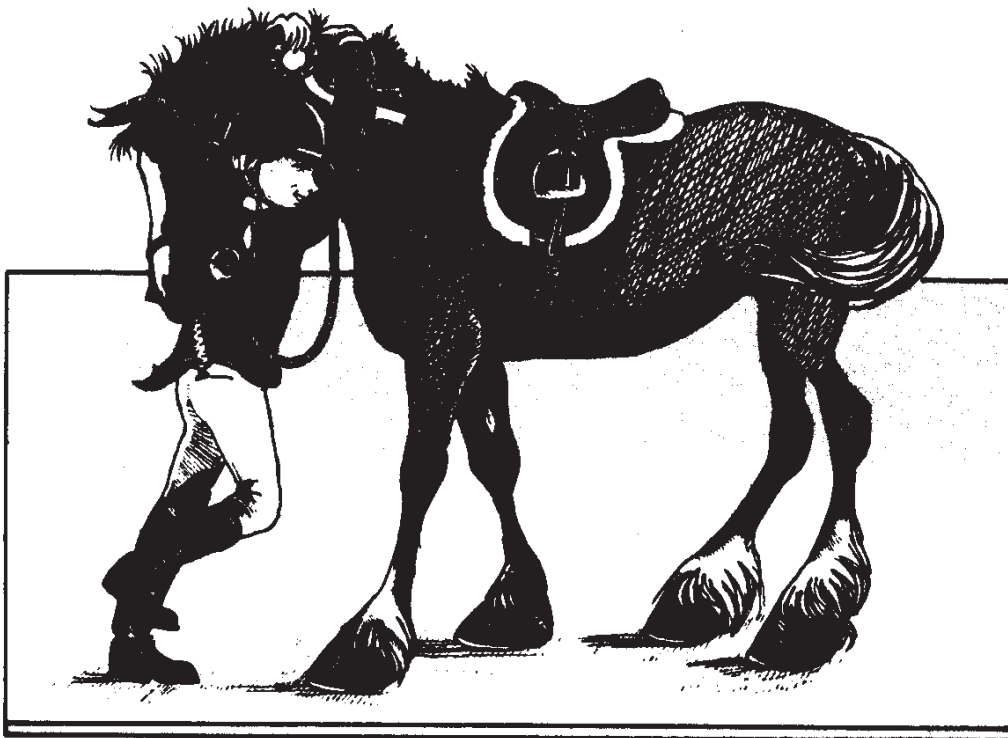
- If this is their first time to put on a trials, they are probably much more nervous than you are.
- If they've been doing it for years, they're insane.
- They may not do it again if it brings them too much grief.
- They will probably do it again if all their volunteers do their jobs, the officials are efficient, not officious, and the competitors are blissfully unaware of anything except the good time they've had because of the efforts on the part of the many volunteers it takes to conduct a horse trials.

DEPARTING THE SCENE OF YOUR SUCCESS

1. Take your time. Try not to leave in such a hurry that you:

- Don't properly care for your horse.
- Forget something which the organizer will have to find and return.
- Leave town without gas for the trip.
- Leave without returning your pinny and bridle number.
- Leave without returning something you've borrowed.
- Forget to pick up your dressage test.
- Leave the stall for someone else to clean (you have been a guest there).
- Leave without thanking the organizer(s) if they can interrupt their breakdown.

One more personal observation: It would be quite helpful to the sport if every competitor would volunteer whenever it's possible to work at a horse trials. This serves as a sort of "thank you" to those who make the sport possible.



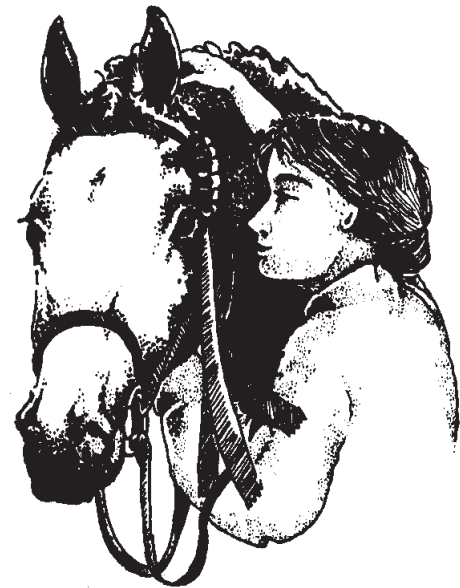
WHEN YOU GET HOME

1. Assess the following:

- Doesn't eventing have possibilities?
- Don't the possibilities outweigh the problems?
- Isn't there a great potential for productive, competitive success?

2. Ask yourself these additional questions

- Did I have a good time?
- Did I learn a lot about the sport?
- Did I make some new friends?
- Did I find those weak areas in my horse and myself that need improvement?
- Was it worth reading the Rule Book?
- Where can I go next month?
- What am I going to do next time?
- What am I NOT going to do next time?
- Where did my good old buddy Lead Bottom go? I brought home an EVENT HORSE named TOP GUN!
- NOW... Where am I going to hang the ribbons?



CHECK LISTS

There is no way to list all that might be needed, and certainly not everything listed here is a necessity. These lists are intended to stimulate your thinking so you won't forget the obvious or overlook the obscure.

Our thanks to Lee Jorgensen for the lists on the basic needs of the event rider and to Nick Nickles for the trailer check list.

• HORSE

Shoes - Caulks, studs

Shipping boots or bandages

Tail bandage or guard

Poll guard and knee pads (for poor shippers)

Halter and lead shank

Saddle - Dressage, forward seat

Bridle - Necessary bits, reins (braided, rubber, canvas for C.C.)

Breastplate, if needed

Martingale, if needed

Overgirth, for C.C.

Lungeing equipment

Extra tack (in case of breakage) - reins, stirrup leathers, girth, halter, lead shank

Saddle pads (dressage and jumping)

One of the following (depending on weather): Horse blanket, cooler, anti-sweat rug, sheet, fly sheet

Leg protectors, as needed

Brushing boots

Overreach boots

Bandages

Cotton wraps

Masking tape

Adhesive tape

• STABLE EQUIPMENT

Water buckets (2)

Feed tub

Screw-eyes and snaps for hanging

Extra bucket

Tools: Leather punch, wire cutters, hammer, nails, screwdriver, 24" chain, padlock with two keys

Stall-keeping equipment: Fork, shovel, rake, broom, muck bucket

Folding chairs

Feed

Hay

Hay Net

Incidental nutrition (salt, carrots, vitamins)

First Aid Kit: Sterile gauze squares, sheet cotton, betadine or hydrogen peroxide, wound powder, Furacin ointment, thermometer, scissors, vet wrap, elastoplast (drug store), ice pack, eye wash (such as Clear Eyes), electrolytes (add to drinking water if heat is a problem. Condition horse to drinking before event), liniments, body brace, leg wash.

Grooming Kit: Brushes you prefer, curry comb, hoof pick, rub rags, large sponge, sweat scraper, bucket, fly spray or wipe, braiding equipment, stool for braiding

Tack cleaning kit: Rags, sponges, saddle soap, silver polish

• RIDER EQUIPMENT

Work clothes

Rain gear

Rubber boots

Lots of socks

Miscellaneous: Safety pins, rubber bands, bobby pins, sewing kit, extra buttons, hairnets, clothes brush, all kinds of goodies

Shoe cleaning kit

Bootjack

Boot pulls

Small first aid kit

Notebook/pencils

Rulebook

Map/directions to horse trials

Omnibus schedule

• EVENT ATTIRE

Dressage: Light breeches, formal jacket (black or dark blue preferred), shirt, stock tie, stock pin, black boots, spurs, gloves, hat, hairnet (if hair is long), dressage whip (for warm-up ONLY)

Cross-country: Sport shirt (polo, turtleneck, etc.), approved jumping helmet with safety harness, medical armband completed with updated information, gloves, boots, spurs, breeches (color of your choice), whip, stopwatch (if you insist), body protector. (See if you can borrow a body protector from a friend until you are sure—and we're sure you will be sure—that you want to pursue this new career.)

• TRAILER

Axles and springs

Check and grease: Bearings, grease fittings

All tires and spare

Jack and lug wrench

Lights: Carry spare bulbs and fuses

Hitch: Locking mechanism, safety chain, make sure ball size fits vehicle

Stalls: Fix weak or broken boards, skid mats, fitted properly, condition of butt bars, well-secured divider, windows - open and close easily

Feed bins: Tie-downs in good condition, no rusted or sharp edges

Storage compartments: Watertight

All doors: Latch securely, hinges greased (not broken or bent)

Roof and vents: Vents working properly, does not leak

Ramp: Mats secure, hinges and latches greased

Every trip: Stalls clean and safe, tires and spare for pressure, lights, hay in feed bin, bucket handy for water

As you are about to leave: Hitch secured, safety chain hooked up, butt bars secured, doors all well-latched, horse tied securely, trailer properly vented

And of course, your pulling vehicle should be thoroughly checked out and fueled.

• AT THE EVENT

Before Dressage:

Allow plenty of time; neatly groomed & braided horse; neatly and correctly attired rider; bridle number; copy of dressage test; watch w/accurate time; correct time for your test; helper (to hold coat & towel for boots); whip (warm-up only).

Before Cross-country:

Allow plenty of time; unbraided horse; properly tacked and double checked; rider comfortably dressed; jumping helmet (securely fastened); updated medical armband; pinny; C.C. map (your security blanket); whip w/rubber band to attach to finger; water (horse and rider if heat is a problem); helper (for all sorts of things); correct starting time; watch w/accurate time (stop watch).

Before Show Jumping:

Allow plenty of time; nicely turned-out horse; formally attired rider; jumping helmet (securely fastened); updated medical armband; bridle number; whip; helper (God bless him/her).

FOR ALL PHASES: A WINNING SMILE!