



## USEA EVENTING COACHES PROGRAM - WHAT TO EXPECT AT AN ECP ASSESSMENT

The purpose of an ECP Assessment is for the Assessors to evaluate your knowledge and skills as an Eventing Coach and Instructor. You will demonstrate your ability to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in the rider and horse, and to choose and effectively teach exercises and aids to make improvements. You should be thoroughly familiar with the standards, skills, and exercises for each level as set out in the *USEA Eventing Handbook by the Levels*, and be able to utilize them in your teaching.

In each phase, you will have 45 to 50 minutes to teach your lesson. Introduce yourself, perform a safety check, and ask questions to gather pertinent information from the rider in order to teach a safe and effective lesson. Evaluate the horse and rider as you watch them warm up with minimal instruction (as long as they are safe), and then formulate a plan for improvement. Explain clearly to the rider what changes you want to make. Teach appropriate movements and exercises to improve performance. Teach the lesson at a suitable level of sophistication, hopefully making a positive difference in the horse and rider. Conclude by summarizing the lesson and outlining a plan for the pair going forward. You must be responsible for safety throughout all lessons.

In the Dressage lesson, give the student clear descriptions of the exercises or movements you are asking for, including their purposes and the correct aids. Choose a progression of exercises that will specifically improve the performance of your horse and rider.

In the Show Jumping lesson, it may be helpful to watch your student jump a few fences in the initial warmup, so that a starting point is established. Use this evaluation to plan what exercises will be the most beneficial. Your lesson should encompass cantering fences, lines and/or course work (unless unsafe or totally inappropriate for your horse/rider), as this is vital to preparing for competition. Demonstrate your knowledge of creating or identifying a good jumping canter, of using fence heights appropriate for the horse/rider pair, and of using distances effectively to help accomplish specific goals.

For the Cross-country lesson, instruct the rider on the different cross-country positions for galloping, balancing, and jumping. Demonstrate knowledge of an appropriate progression of fences for your horse/rider pair. Clearly explain how various obstacles should be ridden, including variations in rider position, pace and type of canter or gallop needed for different fences. Teach up to the appropriate level, but show the ability to anticipate potential problems and avoid or minimize risk. Safety must be the top priority.

Every effort will be made to provide demo horse/rider combinations that are up to the highest level you are testing for. If you do happen to get a horse/rider that are not able to perform at that level on the day, you should teach them at the highest level of sophistication they are capable of, and then explain (in order to demonstrate your teaching skills to the Assessors) how you would go forward to bring them up to the level, or how you would teach similar concepts to a more experienced pair.

### **A few practical notes and tips:**

Dress neatly and professionally, as you would if you were teaching a clinic. Riding clothes are always appropriate. Khakis or nice jeans and a polo shirt are fine, with suitable footwear. Avoid clothing such as shorts, tank tops distressed jeans, or otherwise distracting garments.

When teaching your dressage lesson in the morning, keep in mind that the Assessors probably have not had enough coffee yet, and they just want to be able to sit in one place and watch and listen to your lesson. Please make sure they can hear you! Speak up, stay close, and bring your rider over near the Assessors for discussions. For the SJ and XC lessons the Assessors will follow you as needed, but still make sure your conversations with the riders are within their earshot. You may be telling the rider some great stuff over there, but you only get credit for what the Assessors can hear!

For the SJ lesson, you can generally start arranging the fences as soon as the previous Instructor finishes their lesson, and while the Assessors are scoring it. You can utilize the other candidate instructors or innocent bystanders to help move fences and serve as jump crew before and during your lesson. Be sure your measurements of distances are correct; it is a good idea to bring a tape measure.

For the XC lesson, be sure to find an opportunity to familiarize yourself ahead of time with the XC area, and to inspect the fences that you will be using. It is near impossible to teach a good XC lesson if you don't know the fences.

Good luck!

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