



SHOW JUMPING

How It Works

Show jumping is easy to understand. The challenge is simple and straightforward; jump a course of approximately 15 obstacles up to five feet in height and six feet in width with no penalties. Penalties or faults are incurred if a horse knocks down, refuses to jump or falls at an obstacle or jump. Each course has a “time allowed.” In addition to jumping faults, penalties can also accumulate if riders fail to complete the course at a certain speed or “within the time allowed.” Riders and horses must negotiate the course at the correct angle, height, and speed to clear the fences without incurring faults. Riders must also be mindful of the ever-ticking clock. The rider who races too fast may grow careless and knock down a fence; an overly cautious rider may incur time faults. The starting order of lineup is determined by a draw before the event so that each rider has an equal chance of attaining a favorable position. Riders near the end of the starting order have the advantage of seeing how the first riders complete the course.

Walking the Course

Riders preview the course by walking it on foot prior to the beginning of the competition. This is the only chance the rider has to study the course “up close and personal.”

Each rider knows the length of his horse’s stride, and walks the course accordingly, pacing off the distance between fences and determining how best to adjust the horse’s strides. Riders also take note of the different types of fences offered, their relationship to one another, the footing and any other potential problem areas. They also try to find where a tighter line can save vital time when jumping against the clock.

Scoring

All jumper classes are subject to the same scoring systems. Horse and rider must take the course in a designated sequence. All obstacles are numbered. Each rider’s goal is to cover the course with no faults within the allotted time period. Style is not considered and doesn’t affect the scoring in jumper competition.

The first time a refusal occurs, the penalty is four faults; the second refusal constitutes elimination. A penalty of four faults is incurred each time a fence is knocked down and the penalty for the horse touching the water at a water jump is also four faults.

Penalties can also be incurred for exceeding the time allowed to complete the course. The winner is the horse and rider combination with the fewest jumping and time penalties.

Frequently, several horses complete the course without penalty and advance to a jump-off over a shortened course. In the jump-off, the same scoring rules apply, except that in the case of equal faults, the horse with the fastest time will be declared the winner.

Regulations Governing Show Jumping

International show jumping competitions are governed by the Federation Equestre Internationale, which sets forth rules and regulations.