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Setting up a School Equestrian Team

Before you can enter any Inter-Schools Equestrian Competition you need to put together a team. Most are team events, where a team of three or four riders compete, with the best three scores counting. There is usually an individual competition as well, and each team member is automatically entered for that as well, without having to pay another entry fee. If you can get a teacher to help it makes things much easier- they can arrange rooms to meet in, and many competitions need a signature from either your Head Teacher or similar to state that they know you are riding for the School. The teacher may also collect entry fees and send off the entry form through the school.

But how do you find out if there are enough riders in your school to make up a team?

- **Do you know others** in your school who ride? Can you speak to them and get a meeting together? They can speak to others that they know. Decide a venue and a time.
- **Put a poster** together and get it displayed around the school. Try the PE dept, as they will have received information about the Schools Equestrian Competition, and may let you use a notice board in that area.
- **Once you have some people together**, someone needs to collect together information about ability –
 1. who can do what, and to what level, such as what Show jumping height they can do,
 2. if they own their own pony,
 3. whether they have transport to a competition, and who can share transport
- **It is usually a good idea**, if you don't know each other, to try and get together and ride. This helps you see how well you get on as a team. Sometimes you can meet at a riding club, or at a riding school. Once you are sure you have got a team of the same abilities, then you can decide what class to enter at your chosen competition. Put together a table (*an example is given at the end of this document*) and appoint a team captain and a Manager (often either a parent or a teacher).
- **A team captain** needs to be someone who doesn't panic, who remembers to think about the other riders in the team, and support and encourage them at the competition.

Got a team together? Excellent. Sorted transport? You are now on target! Now get your entry forms and check:

1. **Closing dates for entries.** Don't assume anyone will accept late entries. They won't!
2. **Get the entry fees from your team members.** Make sure the cheques are made out to the name given on the schedule. Some schools will accept cheques made out to them, then they will give you a cheque to cover all the entries, **but be warned** – it sometimes takes days to get that cheque!
3. **Make sure you send the entry in plenty of time.** If in doubt, ask for registered post – it costs more but you then have proof. Guaranteed next day delivery costs about £4.60!
4. **Most schedules will give you a contact number to ring nearer the date of the competition** – they will give you the times when your team will be competing, or there may be a website address. Make sure you let everyone know, and work out what time you need to leave. Remember walking the course takes time – and for show jumping, you can't do it after the class starts.

Setting up a School Equestrian Team

COMPETITION: LRSEC SHOW JUMPING

Oct 25th Vale View Melton Mowbray

CLASS: 1A -

JUNIOR

transport OK?

| | TEAM: | time | Pony/Horse | details |
|--|--------------------------|--------------|-------------------|---|
| | <i>Harry Potter</i> | <i>11.25</i> | <i>Broomstick</i> | <i>Harry is riding for the first time for the school. He is very fast but a bit accident prone!</i> |
| | <i>Christopher Robin</i> | <i>11.30</i> | <i>Alice</i> | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

CLASS: 2A - INTERMEDIATE

| | TEAM: | time | Pony/Horse | details |
|--|-------|------|------------|---------|
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The role of the team manager

On the day:

If it is a **show jumping competition**, the Team Manager if you have one, or the Team Captain, will need to declare the team to the organiser/secretary. Then:

1. Make sure the team walk the course beforehand.
2. Know *when* they are riding.
3. Are in the collecting ring in plenty of time
4. Have their equipment checked if necessary
5. Arrange an arena party with the parents /supporters – some competitions expect you to rebuild any fences you knock down.

Be generous to your competitors. Applaud good rounds and be nice to everyone.

If it is a **Cross-country** event, again, the Team Manager or Captain must declare the team to the organiser/secretary

1. Most events provide **number bibs** (the schedule will tell you if you need to provide your own) but there will be a deposit required before they let you have them. It is easiest to get a cheque written for the amount of the deposit, then if you hand them all in, you get the cheque back and can tear it up. Put the money or cheque in an envelope with the team details on and have it ready when you go to the secretary – I guarantee they will be pleased to see you!
2. Make sure you **plan your route around the course**, and do it well before the start of the class. It is dangerous to try and walk around whilst a class is in progress. Please don't do it.
3. Be careful about what may be considered '**assistance**' Even shouting encouraging comments may be considered as 'helping the rider' at some events, so be careful what you say and how loud you say it. Remember, each fence has its own fence judge who will be listening as well as watching.
4. **As each of your team finishes**, check that you know what fences they rode (whether they jumped bonus or joker fences etc) – it helps in case of queries at the end.

Then there will be a long wait while results are collated. If you have kept score you will have a good idea of where your team stands. If you think it worth the wait, someone will need to collect prizes at the end!

Whatever event you are at, it is considered good manners to thank the organisers or a representative at the end.

Safety, Clothing and Equipment

All event organisers will be worried about your safety whilst at the event. Most of them will specify minimum requirements for hats, medical armbands and personal insurance.

For **Cross-country** competitions body protectors will be compulsory and they may again specify minimum requirements.

As a general rule:

Hats: should display the CE mark or BSI Kitemark, or the SAI Global Symbol but any of these on its own will not be sufficient. Make sure the number is either:

PASO15,

EN1384 with BSI kitemark

AS/NZS3838

Snell E2001

MAKE SURE CHINSTRAPS ARE FASTENED AT ALL TIMES

Wear suitable riding clothes for the type of competition, and if unsure, use the Pony Club as the standard:

For **show jumping** – Hacking or showing Jacket with shirt and tie, jodhpur or long boots. Individual organisers may have rules about spurs.

For **Cross Country** – **body protectors** conforming to BETA regulations will be compulsory, along with a **medical armband**. School colours (school rugby shirts will do) and long boots or half-chaps.

Personal insurance for you and your horse is possibly the best advice possible. Some organisers may require it and will ask you to sign that you have it on the entry form. **For good value third party insurance, membership of the BHS is the best bet – and it comes with lots of useful information and a magazine!**

What to expect on the day. . .

It is very likely that you will have been competing as an individual for some time. However, being part of a team, and representing your school means that you have a reputation to maintain! Some simple rules that will make life easier for everyone!

Most show-jumping competitions are 'two-phase' where each rider jumps the course, then, if clear, or sometimes even if they have faults, they will jump a shortened, timed round and the score will be cumulative. The best three scores of the team will count, the worst score being discarded.

1. If you are the team manager, get to the secretary's tent/caravan and tell them who you are and the class / classes entered. Collect numbers for your team/s.
2. If you are a team member, make sure the team manager knows you have arrived. He/she may have collected numbers from the secretary when the team was declared.
3. Get to know where everything is – and where to find your team members if needed.
4. Walk the course together – two (or four) heads are better than one and you can discuss ways of tackling the problems of the course etc.
5. Be in the collecting ring in plenty of time, and stay together. Ring stewards have been known to disqualify teams who don't arrive on time, or out of sequence. Remember to be polite at all times – you are representing your school!

If you have school colours/ saddlecloths etc, make sure they are clean and you all have them. You need to present yourselves as a team even if you never meet at any other time.

6. Applaud good rounds by any school – it makes such a difference to the atmosphere if you all support each other.
7. Don't shout at your team members once they are in the ring. They are on their own! – and if they make mistakes, don't shout at them when they leave the ring either. They will feel bad enough anyway!
8. Keep score of your team. You will then know if you need to stay for the prize-giving at the end.

If you are successful, don't forget to thank the organisers.

Make sure you clear up any mess you have made either where you have been standing/sitting, or around the horsebox.