

Show Jumping

In a Show Jumping competition, each competitor jumps a course of fences in a given sequence. Penalties are awarded for poles knocked down and for refusals (the horse stops at a jump or runs to the side). A course plan will be pinned up somewhere; usually near the gate into the arena.

Most competitions are in two rounds. The first round is not timed. Those competitors who jump clear (no penalties) in the first round then jump a second round against the clock. The second round fences are usually slightly different to the first round. The winner is the competitor with the fewest penalties.

There will always be a practice area with at least one fence to jump. This is for warming up NOT for giving your horse a schooling session!

You will be allowed to walk round the course before the competition begins. When the course builder has finished the course, you will be told that the course is ready for walking. It is considered bad manners to start walking the course before the course builder has finished. It is also silly, since you may not see the finished course.

Competitions may be run in number order or by declaration. Declaration means that each competitor goes to the steward at the gate and declares that they want to compete. You can choose to go early or late. It works on a "first come - first served" basis. If you want to go first and someone beats you to it, then that's tough!

Whichever mechanism is used, when it is your turn to jump, you should present yourself, mounted, at the gate. You will be told when to go into the arena. Once in the arena, you may walk, trot or canter but you mustn't put your horse at a fence. The judge will signal for you to start by ringing a bell or some other sound. If you start before this signal, you will be disqualified. You start the course by passing between the Start markers. Jump the fences in the order they appear on the course plan.

If you knock down a pole, you should continue round the course. If your horse refuses to jump a fence, you may try to jump it again. Three refusals in a round means elimination; the judge will signal this and you should not jump another fence unless the judge gives you permission.

If your horse runs into a fence, knocking it down, it counts as a refusal. The judge will signal and you should wait for the fence to be rebuilt. When it has been rebuilt, there will be another signal for you to restart.

If you fall off, you will be eliminated except in Horse Trials where you are allowed to fall off once; a second fall then means elimination.

You finish a round by passing between the Finish markers. After that, you should ride quietly out of the arena.