



How can we work together?

Riders are not looking for a free ride when it comes to meeting academic obligations. Instead, they hope to work with teachers and school administrators to develop a schedule that enables them to complete assignments on time. In addition, having flexibility in scheduling tests will allow riders to maintain a rigorous competitive schedule, while also meeting all course requirements. Open communication between riders, parents and school staff will help ensure everyone's needs are met.

Riding facts

- Riders can now earn varsity letters through the United States Equestrian Federation
- Riding has been declared an Emerging Sport for Women by the NCAA.
- Riding is one of the only Olympic sports where men and women compete on an even playing field.

Riding isn't just a sport, it's a profession. And there are many ways in which to make a living in this sport. There are 40,000 members of the United States Hunter Jumper Association (USHJA), 5,000 of whom are designated as professionals. (professionals include riders, coaches and sales agents, for example)

“Working with horses has provided a gateway to a complete life for me. Riding is a wonderful activity that exposes us to nature — to living, breathing, noble creatures. I'll be forever grateful for the life horses have given me.”

**— Joe Fargis of Virginia,
Olympic Gold Medalist in Show Jumping**

Photo by Andrew True



Photo by Sarah Hege

**CREATING A FUTURE THAT HONORS OUR PAST
BY BUILDING TOMORROW'S HORSEMEN TODAY**



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AN
**EDUCATOR'S AND PARENT'S
GUIDE TO RIDING
DURING HIGH SCHOOL**

- Dedication
- Fitness
- Time Management
- Scholarships

Photo by Carrie Vaught



Why do we ride? Who are we?

We are student athletes. We are young men and women pursuing a zone, regional or national competitive goal.

What can we achieve?

We are part of the competitive ladder that leads to:

- National, Regional and Local scholarships
- Intercollegiate Horse Show Association scholarships
- National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division 1 scholarships
- North American Junior And Young Riders Championships
- The U.S. Equestrian Federation Developing Riders Tour
- The Nations Cup League
- The Olympic Games

There are also many careers centered around horses. Many young riders who compete nationally go on to become professional horsemen and horsewomen.

“Growing up in the horse show world and realizing I wanted to represent my country in International competitions, such as the Olympic Games and the World Championships, made pursuing a career as a professional rider and trainer an easy choice.”

— Alison Robitaille of Virginia, International Show Jumping competitor



Photo by Amanda Bassett

What do we learn along the way?

Riding develops a broad skill set. Riding teaches:

COMPASSION

Riding teaches compassion more than any other sport. Creating a partnership with a horse requires attention to his well being, attitude and particular likes and dislikes. A winning partnership starts with the horse's health and happiness at the forefront.

RESPONSIBILITY

Having responsibility for another living being is a challenging and rewarding task. Since another athlete is part of the relationship, riders must always consider the other half of their team. Keeping the horse fit, managing his health, maintaining his soundness and understanding his needs are important aspects of becoming a good horseperson.

TEAM WORK

Not only do riders have to keep themselves mentally and physically in top shape, but they also have to create partnerships with their mounts. This relationship can take years to develop. Just like people can have “off” days, so can horses. A rider's job is to bring out the best in her horse, so they can produce an excellent performance.

INDEPENDENCE

Although there are opportunities to compete on a team—like gymnastics, ice skating or golf—each rider is responsible for her own success. Once she enters the competition arena, she must execute a plan and put her practice and relationship with the horse to the test. She must assess problems quickly and make instant decisions. Success or defeat is in her hands.

TIME MANAGEMENT

Most horse shows are multi-day events. Riders have to manage their schedules to be ready for their classes, with their horses warmed up and prepared. Competitor meetings, course walks and sponsor events make for a busy schedule. Add schoolwork into the mix, and riders have to be excellent time managers and multitaskers.

DEDICATION AND PERSEVERANCE

Developing a bond with a horse takes time, and sometimes things don't go as planned. Riding teaches perseverance. No matter the outcome, learning and problem solving are paramount. Sometimes a horse suffers an injury, the footing in the arena at a particular venue

isn't satisfactory or the rider or her mount is over-faced. It's important to be able to maintain perspective and regroup when necessary.

SPORTSMANSHIP INCLUDES WINNING AND LOSING

Competing in horse shows teaches riders how to win and lose. In most classes, there's only one winner. Each time a horse and rider steps into the arena, they are being judged against their competitors. Riders have to be physically and mentally ready to compete. Each competition is a learning experience: how well the rider is prepared for the event will be reflected in the final results. Good sportsmanship is necessary, and many competitions offer sportsmanship awards.

PHYSICAL FITNESS

Riding promotes good health because a competitive rider must maintain a high level of fitness. Riders must be strong, flexible and in balance to control a 1,500-pound animal and produce a quality performance. According to available studies, riding burns upwards of 400 calories per hour, about as much as playing basketball or tennis.

[Sources: www.eddieoneverything.com and www.livestrong.com]

“Riding is such an amazing way to way to learn how to deal with an animal—to learn compassion, responsibility and horsemanship. There are so many directions riding can take you. We run a therapeutic riding program at the same barn where our lesson program is and our top show horses live. Riding teaches life lessons about communication with an equine friend. There are many different paths that you can take in the horse world that are rewarding and important.”

— Susie Schoellkopf, Director SBS Farms, Inc., New York

How do we work with our schools?

Balancing school and a strong competition schedule is a learned skill. Communication between students, teachers and counselors plays a key role. Riders use their time-management skills to complete their work in a timely fashion.

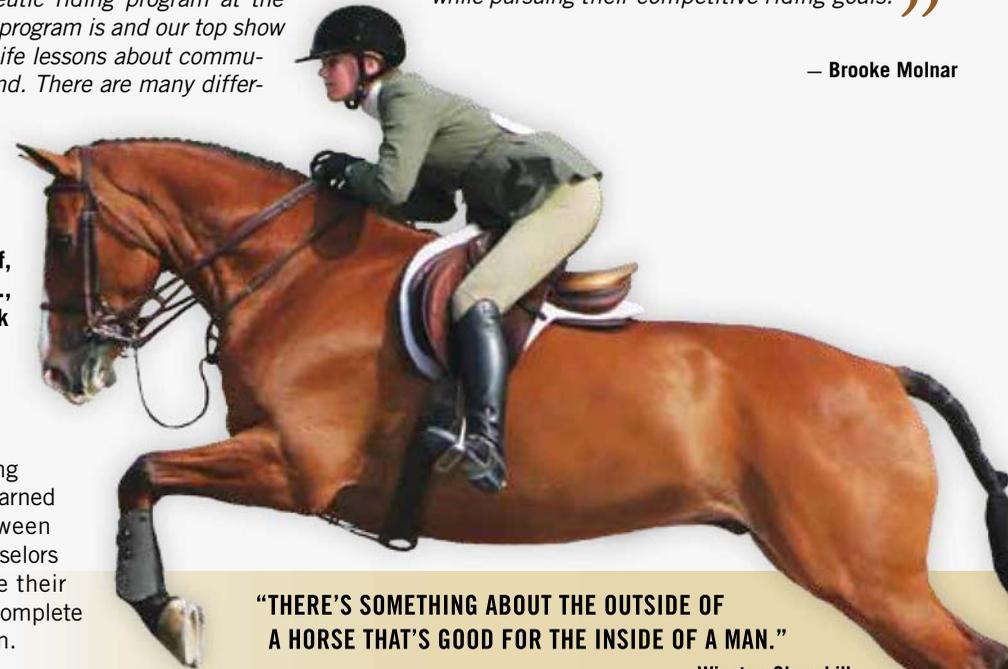
“Success outside of the classroom often translates into success inside the classroom. If a rider can set goals, track progress, memorize jump courses, pack equipment, understand rules and specifications of different types of classes and manage their time so that they can arrive to the show arena prepared and ready to compete, they can parlay those skills into successful academic performance.”

— Brooke Molnar, Teacher, Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School, Maryland

Planning and advance notice is of utmost importance. Riders work with their coaches and parents to set goals for each season. This preparation lays the roadmap for the year—which competitions to attend and the time necessary to work toward each goal. At that point, it is important to bring school staff into the loop to ensure they understand the rider's schedule. Both parties can then work together to ensure the student is able to make progress, attain goals and meet the school's requirements.

“In this day of lightning-fast communications—whether it's instant communication with teachers or immediate access to current grades—there's no reason why students, parents and teachers can't work together to make sure student athletes are staying on top of their schoolwork, while pursuing their competitive riding goals.”

— Brooke Molnar



“THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THE OUTSIDE OF A HORSE THAT'S GOOD FOR THE INSIDE OF A MAN.”

— Winston Churchill

Photo by Amanda Bassett