Hunter/Jumper/Equitation Sport Vocabulary

As you begin your journey in the Hunter/Jumper disciplines, learning key terminology is an essential step. Below are some terms you'll encounter as you familiarize yourself with the sport.

Explore the USHJA Horsemanship Quiz Challenge Study Guide for more comprehensive information on the sport and horse care, and participate in the USHJA Horsemanship Quiz Challenge to develop your relationship with horses and become a better rider.

- **Affiliate Organization:** Members of USHJA local, state, regional, and national organizations that conduct equestrian events, educational programs, and more. Find a listing here.
- **Amateur:** A competitor 18 years or older who is not a trainer or professional.
- **Canter:** A three-beat gait with a moment of suspension, having left and right leads.
- **Cavaletti:** Small jumps used in horse or rider training, typically ranging from 18 to 24 inches in height.
- **Chef d'Equipe:** A French term for the manager or coach of an equestrian team. Chefs are responsible for overall team management and are often utilized for major international events.
- **Class:** A grouping of horses and/or riders competing against one another according to rules applicable for the competition. Classes may be based on age or experience of the horse or rider, the horse or pony's size, or fence height.
- **Clear Round:** In Jumper classes, a round completed without faults (no refusals, downed rails, or extra time).
- **Combination:** Two or three jumps placed in succession with minimal strides between. If the horse refuses one of the jumps, the entire combination must be jumped again.
- **Conformation:** The shape or structure of a horse, which can impact a horse's athletic ability and durability.
- **Course:** The prescribed order of jumps to be negotiated within a specific class. Courses are posted in advance so riders can learn them and plan their path prior to competing.
- **Course Designer:** The licensed official responsible for designing, building, and setting the course of jumps during the competition.
- **Cross Rail:** A small "X"-shaped jump, often used for schooling and teaching purposes. Competitions often offer classes at this level for beginner riders of all ages.
- **Fault**: A penalty incurred during a Jumper class, such as from a downed rail, refusal, or exceeding the time limit.
- **Fence:** Another term for a jump or obstacle a horse jumps.
- **Gallop:** A four-beat gait with a moment of suspension.
- **Gait:** The sequence of foot movements by which a horse moves. Walk, trot, canter, and gallop are a horse's natural gaits.
- **Hack:** Refers to the act of riding for light exercise.
- **Hand Gallop:** A lengthened, more forward canter with three beats and the same footfall sequence of the canter.
- **Hogsback:** A type of oxer with three parallel rails, with the highest rail in the center.
- **Jog:** The act of trotting a horse, either mounted or in-hand, to confirm soundness. Some classes require the jog as part of presentation and inspection before

competing.

- **Judge:** The licensed official who adjudicates the competition and determines placements.
- **Jump Cup:** Metal or plastic cups that hold the rails of a jump.
- **Jump-Off:** A shortened, more difficult course used to break ties when multiple horses have a clear round in a Jumper competition.
- **Knockdown:** When a horse makes contact with a fence, and subsequently a rail falls (or lowers the height of the fence in any way). This incurs four faults in Jumpers and Equitation, and is considered a serious fault in the Hunters.
- **Liverpool:** A Jumper or Equitation obstacle with a small pool of water beneath an oxer or vertical.
- **Open Water:** A water-filled ditch where faults occur if a horse steps in the water. Seen in advanced Jumper classes.
- **Oxer:** Two verticals set very close together to make a wider single jump. Also called a spread.
- **Place:** Earning a ribbon in a class.
- **Puissance:** French word for "power." The Puissance is a competitive test of a horse's ability to jump large obstacles.
- **Rail:** Poles used to create a jump, often made of wood.
- **Refusal:** When a horse stops abruptly before a fence or runs past the fence the rider intended to jump. Depending upon the class, a competitor is permitted two to three refusals before being eliminated.
- **Round or Trip:** The rider and horse's actual negotiation of the jumping course.
- **Schooling:** The warm-up preparation of a horse and rider immediately before competing.
- **Scratch:** The act of canceling entry into a class. Letting the show office know that you will not be competing in a class you entered is known as scratching the class.
- **Soundness**: Refers to the lack of soreness, pain, or limping in a horse. A horse that is free from these issues is considered "sound."
- **Standard:** The upright structure that holds the rails of a jump.
- **Steward:** A licensed official who oversees the show grounds and competition protocol. The steward's duties include enforcing rules, supervising schooling rings, measuring horses or ponies, ensuring horse welfare, and completing reports to USEF.
- **Tack:** The equipment used on the horse, such as the saddle and bridle.
- **Trainer:** An instructor who works with horses and riders to prepare them for competition.
- **Triple Bar:** A type of oxer with three parallel rails with graduating heights. Also referred to as a ramp.
- **Trot:** A two-beat gait where the legs move in diagonal pairs and there is a moment of suspension.
- **Under Saddle:** A class judged with other horses and riders in the ring at the same time with no jumping. As referred to as "the flat."
- **US Equestrian or USEF:** Formally the United States Equestrian Federation, which serves as the National Governing Body for Equestrian Sport.
- **USHJA:** Formally the United States Hunter Jumper Association, which is the USEF-recognized national affiliate for the Hunter and Jumper disciplines.
- **Vertical:** A single upright jump without width, made up of poles or planks.

