

Foxhunting Mounted Lesson

Title: Jumping in a Line with Control

Objective: Riders will gain an understanding of how to be safe when jumping in a group and learn techniques for schooling at home

Level of Students: D3s and up

Length of lesson: 45 min to 1 hour

Special materials or aids: a ring with at least one cross-rail and placing poles, an open area with jump in a fenceline or in open

Introduction:

1. Introduce yourself, have each student introduce her or himself, say whether they have hunted or not
2. Ask them if they have noticed how forward horses jump when following another and what might be some advantages of that? Schooling green horses? What might happen if the person in front of you falls off after the jump?
3. Today we are going to watch for each horse's reaction to horses jumping in front of it, and learn techniques for staying relaxed & in control. These exercises are things you can do at home that will help school your horse in general, and for hunting.

Body of Lesson:

1. Use a cross-rail with placing pole before and after, have riders ride in a large circle that includes the jump. Each rider should trot the cross-rail, halt afterwards, then move off at a trot. Ask them to keep their eyes on the horse in front, wait calmly until the horse in front of them has jumped, count to 3, then trot the jump. Watch to see if there is a horse that really needs to follow or one that needs to lead, make it easier for them at first, then coach each rider on dealing with sluggish or strong horse.
2. If everything goes smoothly, all should be able to continue trotting on the circle and jump. Some horses might have to walk to stay slow enough. Quick horses should halt straight after the jump, then move off on a loose rein at the walk. If horses get anxious before the jump, they can circle, stand with a quiet buddy, creep forward at the walk, or go wider on the circle.
3. Next, change the exercise to jumping on a straight line, so that the horses see more horses in front of them jumping. If the ring is not big enough, a jump in a field or into woods could be used. Again, nervous or quick horses can keep moving slowly, riders should stay tall and scratch their withers.
4. Evaluate each horse with the rider-ask about their position, discuss biting & use of a standing martingale. Discuss horses' herd instinct and how to work with it, not fight it, this can be fun for everyone!

Closing:

1. Summarize the specific issues with the group's horses. Did each notice whose horse did what? It is important in the hunt field to take note of other horses, be courteous to those having problems.
2. Ask them what other exercises they could do at home to work on control. Tell them that about 50% of your training goes out the window when your horse is behind a large group moving fast, so having the right bit and martingale is important!
3. Thank them.