

Horse Show Management Checklist

Putting on a horse show can be fun and rewarding but it requires preparation, organization and commitment. Six to twelve months ahead of the show you should hold a meeting to discuss the plans. You must have a Show Manager and a Show Secretary plus as many other willing hands you can get to help share the load. At the first meeting decide on the dates of the show, preferred venues, preferred judges and what type of show you want – just for fun or sanctioned, only Western Dressage or including other classes. What kind of classes will be included, will there be championships, what divisions will be set (eg. Junior, Adult, etc)? Will warm-up slots be available the evening before show starts? Designate who will be responsible for which areas. With this starting point you are off on your show journey! Have regular meetings to make sure plans are on track and if any committee members need assistance.

Show Manager (also often Show Committee Chair):

- ☐ Pick the dates
- ☐ Contact the venue for availability, book dates, pay deposit and get signed contract
- ☐ Contact the judge for availability, book dates, settle fee and make up contract to sign. Judge's contract usually includes any travel fee (\$/km) for driving to and from the show and a provided lunch. If judge is coming from out of town need to arrange billeting or a hotel, transportation from airport if flying as well as to and from the show as needed, travel fee (\$/km) if driving their own car, and meals.
- ☐ Obtain show insurance and book show medic if required, otherwise arrange for medically trained volunteers to be listed for contact in the show office (doctors, nurses, certified first aiders)
- ☐ Develop an emergency plan with phone number and directions for nearest emergency room, emergency vet, ambulance. It is good to have all this info posted in the show office for easy access. Useful to have extra copies of hospital location and directions from show office if anyone needs it
- ☐ Determine what memberships will be required..eg. provincial horse organization (recommended so you know that competitors are insured), your own local club, WSDAC, etc.
- ☐ Determine if and what proof of vaccinations may be required

- ☐ Make show prize list – must contain dates of the show, location of show, judge's name, entry fees, office fees, classes and divisions, helmet or attire regulations, any proof of vaccinations, entry deadline, ribbons to what place, championships if offered and how they will be determined, age divisions, leash laws for dogs at the show, bedding prices if offered, etc. Include name of show secretary, email contact for questions. There are a lot of good examples of prize lists out there, check how some of your favourite shows are setting theirs up.
- ☐ Send completed prize list to WSDAC to arrange for sanctioning if desired, send e-transfer for show application fee
- ☐ Make entry forms including rider name & contact info, horse name, division, classes entered, how to pay (e-transfer address?), show secretary name and contact info, membership numbers if required, proof of vaccinations
- ☐ Make up show waiver to be sent in with entry. Your insurance provider may have one they like to use or, again, check with your local shows to see usual format.
- ☐ Will you have a steward or will the judge be the final word on rules? Need to arrange for 3 show committee members to be onsite at the show at all times incase of a complaint or rule infraction.
- ☐ E-transfer levy fees to WSDAC
- ☐ At the end of the show, make up the financial report with the help of the various committees. Might be good to assign this job to a 'treasurer' who can keep a running account as money comes in and goes out.
- ☐ Chair a final 'debriefing' meeting after the show to discuss what worked, what needs improvement if you put on another show and show financials.

Show Secretary:

- ☐ receives all entry forms and entry fees. Ensures everything is correct and waiver is signed Verifies any memberships required.
- ☐ Assigns competitor numbers
- ☐ Puts entries into their appropriate classes
- ☐ Prepares class sheets for show office, judge and in gate
- ☐ Prints out tests and enters all the required information (rider name, horse name & number, show name, date, judge name, etc)
- ☐ Prepares Order of Go for each day of show, copies for show office, in gate, show barns

- ☐ Puts prepared tests in Order of Go for the judge. Adds a folder of blank tests in case any becomes ruined and has to be rewritten in the judge's booth
- ☐ Prepares package of equipment for judge's booth – pens, including red pen, bell or whistle, if sitting in a truck a support for scribe's lap to write on test form, water, etc. Computer and printer are a bonus!
- ☐ Have a list of cell phone numbers for committee members, vet on call, farrier on call if you have them
- ☐ Prepare bin of equipment for show office – pens, paper, extra tests, calculators, staplers, WSDAC rules printed out if site doesn't have wifi, clipboards for scribe, gate people, office staff
- ☐ Get competitor numbers and pins or string for attaching. Give to the rider when they check in at the show office when they arrive at the show grounds
- ☐ Will you have a P.A. system, walkie-talkies or just rely on runners?
- ☐ Good idea to have some petty cash...judge's lunch, refunds, etc
- ☐ Record all scores as they come in, place classes for ribbons and determine championships
- ☐ Organize scored tests with their ribbons for pick up at the show office
- ☐ make sure everything runs smoothly in the office...many hands make light work
- ☐ collect riders numbers at the end of their show

Venue Manager:

- ☐ Familiarize yourself with the chosen venue. Ideally go to watch a show there and see how they are handling things. It will give you lots of ideas. Where do trailers park? May want someone to direct traffic to correct place?
- ☐ Make up any signage that will be posted – eg. Manure disposal, biosecurity measures, stabling diagram, etc
- ☐ Will there be bedding for sale? If so, arrange with a supplier for delivery, set prices which need to be included in entry form, arrange volunteer to oversee competitors picking up their paid for amount
- ☐ Assign stalls to competitors and make up a stabling diagram to post in the barn and give to the show office
- ☐ Do a pre-show walk through with a representative of the facility. It is good to take pictures of any issues that might cause later discussion
- ☐ Are there bathrooms or do there need to be arrangements made for renting porta-potties?

- ☐ Determine what equipment is needed to build dressage competition ring...what size ring will be used?
- ☐ Arrange with venue for harrowing of ring before each show day and at lunch break. If there are going to be warm ups the evening before show, rings will need to be harrowed before that as well.
- ☐ Is there a judge's booth? If not, then arrange for a big truck to be parked at C for the judge and scribe to use.
- ☐ Arrange crews for ring set up and take down. Get proper measuring equipment and make sure someone is well versed in laying out dressage rings ahead of time.
- ☐ Set up ring well in advance of when it is needed, it always takes longer than expected.
- ☐ At end of show take down ring and do another walk through with a representative of the facility. Again take photos of any issues of discussion.

Volunteer Coordinator:

- ☐ Book scribes early, they may need a training session before the show. Ideally the judges usually prefer the same scribe all day but if that can't work book one in the morning and another after lunch break. Judge should not have more than two scribes in one day.
- ☐ Decide how to run the volunteer sign up – online? Want to get them in place before the bulk of the entries come in if you can, things are much easier if you know your volunteer situation well ahead of the show
- ☐ Runners – go to judge's booth to pick up scored tests and take them back to the show office, take info from show office (scratches, etc) to the judge's booth. Must wait quietly outside of judge's booth while they are working and just exchange paperwork between tests.
- ☐ Gate person (whipper-in) – must be comfortable around horses. Keeps track of competitors (check numbers), lets them know when they are up and makes sure they go in to the ring at the correct time and in the correct order. Will need fork and bucket to clean up after any horse that soils the ring before the next horse is rung in
- ☐ Tabulators – work in the show office calculating the final scores and % as finished tests come in from the judge. Often good to have two working at a time so they can check each others calculations
- ☐ Make sure all your volunteers have the equipment and know-how to do their job
- ☐ Provide water and frequent support for volunteers, they may need you to step in for a moment for a bathroom break

- ☐ Get input from your volunteers after the show, their comments will be very helpful if there is another show down the road

Ribbons & Prizes/Sponsorship:

- ☐ Determine an estimate of how many ribbons will be required. If Championships are offered determine number of CH ribbons and budget for CH prizes. Start early to check around for the best prices, buy local or online.
- ☐ Contact local tack shops to see if they would be willing to donate any prizes.
- ☐ Local businesses may want to sponsor ribbons, raffle prizes or a championship prize. If you want to keep your show fees low to attract entries then the show will need to be supplemented by some kind of sponsorship to make a profit
- ☐ May want to sell raffle tickets or have a 50/50 draw...will need to get the appropriate licenses for this and print out or buy tickets
- ☐ Arrange for judge, sponsor or club president to give out championships at the end of the show. Have photos taken to be posted online

Social Media/Marketing:

- ☐ Set up a convenient way to stay in contact with potential competitors – Facebook page, Instagram, a website. Monitor site for questions and comments
- ☐ Advertise the show early and often. Riders only have so much money for showing so want them to know early on that they want to save a sport for your show! Local tack and feed shops may let you put up a poster.
- ☐ Post your show ad on various local Facebook equestrian pages to reach a wider audience
- ☐ Sent prize list and entry forms to local barns that may have potential entrants
- ☐ Post prize list and entry forms online
- ☐ May want to book an 'official' show photographer to provide photos for your social media...and sell them to interested competitors

- ☐ Might want to post a bio about the judge, photos of the venue, talk about classes...whatever will gain interest and views
- ☐ If the show is part of your club might want to sell some club apparel at the show – hats, hoodies, etc – as a fundraiser
- ☐ Post the show class results and celebrate the champions!