



# What is Eventing?

Eventing could be termed an "equestrian triathlon." It involves working with a horse both on the flat and over fences. The three phases are: dressage, endurance (or cross-country), and show jumping. Over the centuries it has developed from the test of the ideal military charger. Eventing has now evolved into an exciting sport attracting interest from all levels of sports enthusiasts, from weekend hobby riders to professional international stars.

With its variation in levels and difficulty and wide range of competitions available all across the country, Eventing is a sport which provides competitive and recreational opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds. Today, the sport is most known for its cross-country phase where horse and rider gallop over an outside course of solid obstacles which the horse has never seen before. At the uppermost level of competition, Olympic or World Championship, the cross-country phase is the phase that appeals most to spectators and riders alike. It is the ultimate challenge to prepare a horse for this rigorous test. Unlike other sports, where only the human will and body are pitted against the clock, in eventing, two minds and bodies have to work as one. As an additional attraction, eventing is the only high-risk Olympic sport that permits men and women to compete as equals. There are no separate divisions and some of the top riders in the world today are women from many nations.

The sport, however, is not limited to the international levels. It draws from a wide range of riders both in age and geography. We can boast of 75 year old riders competing in preliminary three-day events to youngsters of 10 and 11 at the entry level. J. Michael Plumb, a "middle-aged" rider, who continues to compete at the highest levels of the sport, has represented the United States at eight Olympic Games (including the 1980 Alternate Olympics). In fact, since the more experienced riders are frequently training young horses at the lower levels, our young (and older) riders often have the challenge of competing against an Olympian—they sometimes even beat them!

The members of the USEA are a fiercely loyal and dedicated group of people, true horsemen. We are proud of their training and hard work, for at every level, including the entry level, our competitions provide a challenging test of discipline, ability and sportsmanship.

Jim Moore says it best!

## Introduction to Eventing

Eventing, Combined Training, or Horse Trials is the fastest growing equestrian sport in America today. Historically, it originated with the usefulness of the military mount; and later Three-day Eventing was incorporated into the Olympic Games in the 1950's.

Today, Combined Training exists in two forms, the Three-day Event and the Horse Trial. Each tests the horse's training, talent, and versatility in three distinctly different areas: Dressage, Cross-country Jumping, and Show Jumping. In a Three-day Event, each skill is tested on a separate day; more importantly, the Cross-country test on the second day incorporates an endurance factor which markedly increases the difficulty on the entire competition. Horse Trials modify the severity of the cross-country endurance test and schedule the three phases in one or two days. Typically Horse Trials are used throughout the regular Event season, and the Three-day Event is the Championship at the end. (i.e. World Championship, Pan-American, or Olympic Games!).

**DRESSAGE:** The object of Dressage is the harmonious development of the physique and ability of the horse. The horse is asked to perform a series of predetermined movements in a manner that is quiet, accurate, and graceful very similar to the sport of Figure Skating. As a result, it makes the horse calm, supple, loose, and flexible, but also confident, attentive, and keen, thus achieving perfect understanding with its rider. The judging of the Dressage test is the only subjective evaluation that is a part of Eventing. Rather than judging one horse against another, the judges are evaluating the horse's movements in relation to ideal standard. Getting a calm and well-balanced test from a fit horse can be a real achievement in itself.

**CROSS-COUNTRY JUMPING:** This phase is the most exciting proving the speed, endurance, and jumping ability of the true Cross-country horse when he is well-trained and brought to the peak of condition. It involves jumping a variety of natural and man-made obstacles while riding against the clock. Riders are penalized for refusals and/or falls in relation to the obstacle being negotiated, as well as for going too slow. The Cross-country phase is a marathon for the horse and rider, a test of courage, stamina, and complete courage in one another. It is the most important part of the entire Event and so carries the most weight in accumulation of penalty marks.



All phases  
Same Horse

Below:  
"Sir Trevor"



Jog-out Inspection



Dressage



X-country



Steeplechase

**SHOW JUMPING:** The object here is to prove that after a severe test of endurance in the Cross-country ride, the horse has retained energy, suppleness, and obedience necessary to continue on to a more exacting degree of difficulty. In this phase the course may appear to be fairly simple, but the track of the course is irregular and winding with changes of direction to create a test of handiness and obedience on a not so fresh horse. Refusals and falls are penalized along with knocking down of an obstacle.



Stadium

The national levels of competition start from Beginner Novice, Novice, Training, Preliminary, Intermediate, and go through Advanced; and they range in height from 2 foot 6 inches at the speed of 300 meters per minute to 3 feet 11 inches at the speed of 570 meters per minute. The international levels start at Preliminary CIC\* & CCI\*, Intermediate CIC\*\* & CCI\*\*, Advanced CIC\*\*\* & CCI\*\*\*, and go through Advanced CCI\*\*\*\* which is equivalent to the Olympic or World Championship Level. "CIC" & "CCI" are French abbreviations for the "International Complete Test". The CIC is an International Horse Trial, and the CCI is an International Three-Day Event. At the highest level, the maximum height of Cross-country jumping obstacles is 3 feet 11 inches and a maximum width at the base is 9 feet 2 inches traveling at the speed of 600 meters per minute (About 25 miles per hour).



True Partners!

The Event - "The complete test of horse and rider" - has come to its end. Those who have completed all three phases can be proud of their accomplishment. Awards are presented to the top riders & horses at each level as well as top international teams, but the true rewards lie in the competition itself. It allows the riders to discover what they and their mounts are capable of doing and where there is need for improvement. For more information about the sport of Three-Day Eventing you can contact the [United States Eventing Association](http://www.useventing.org)



## "Eventing ~ 3 phases...2 hearts...1 passion"



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