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Tips for Walking a Jumper Course

Jumper courses are often technical and include lines where riders have several options for track and striding. For this reason, understanding how to effectively walk a jumper course to come up with a successful plan for the show ring is essential. BarnManager spoke with U.S. Olympic silver medalist and international grand prix rider Peter Leone to learn his tips for walking a jumper course.

Know the Format

The first step to walking a course is knowing the type of competition. When I walk a course with a student, I always ask them what kind of class it is, and I expect them to know the answer. Knowing the format tells us how we need to walk that course in order to strategize how to win and be competitive. For example, I'm going to have a different plan for a speed class than I would for a class with a jump-off.

Make a Strategy Based on Your Horse

It is important to take into account your horse's strengths and weaknesses during a course walk. When I walk a course with a student, and it's a jump-off or speed class, I'll explain the striding, turns, and angles the winner will do. We then take that information and personalize it to their horse based on its strengths and weaknesses. Strengths to think about could be the horse is brave, quick, slow with a big stride, or careful. On the other hand, we also consider if the horse is spooky, jumps hard to the left, or is very aware of and drawn to the in-gate.

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