



PennState Extension



January 2024 - 2025

Jumps and Courses for Over Fences Classes

Pennsylvania 4-H Horse Shows

Guidelines for Fences and Course Design

Show management should keep safety as the highest priority in selection of jumps and course design for over fences classes. Experienced professionals should be consulted as needed for assistance and guidance when planning jumps and courses, as well as when setting fences and conducting over fences class at 4-H shows. Courses should be designed that are appropriate for the skill level of participants, yet provide a safe and fair evaluation of riders' and horses' abilities.

Refer to the current *Pennsylvania 4-H Horse Show Rule Book* for other details and requirements for fences and courses. Show management should also refer to *Pennsylvania 4-H Horse Show Management Guidelines* for safety and other considerations when planning 4-H horse shows.

The following types of fences are not permitted due to safety concerns:

Coops (hinged at top and not secured at bottom)

Triple bars

Hogbacks

Targets

Any spread over 4'

When an oxer or spread jump is included on the course, the back rail must be supported by an FEI approved safety mechanism ("safety cups"). Oxers are not permitted in Low Working Hunter or Low Equitation Over Fences classes.

Current known suppliers of FEI approved safety cups include:

Jumps by Fuzzy

Bill (Fuzzy) Mayo

5550 Nashville Hwy

Chapel Hill, TN 37034

1-615-310-8531

jumpsbyfuzzy@att.net

Bill Yeager

60046 Duhollow Road

Warrenton, VA 20187

301-252-4085

Exhibitors and show management should refer to the current *Pennsylvania 4-H Horse Show Rule Book* for additional information on specific requirements and scoring details for over fences classes.

Designing the Course

- Level of the show and riders must be considered. Courses should be designed that are suitable to the level of the riders and the type of show (schooling show, county roundup, district show, etc.) In a schooling or lower level show use lines with related distances (the measured distance between two jumps on a line). An example would be a 4 stride line measured at 60'. These are easier for novice level riders to negotiate. In higher level shows, courses should have more challenging elements such as single jumps, etc.
- Size and shape of the ring is an important factor. Length and width determine the distance the lines may be set. Leave enough room at the ends of the ring for the horse to change leads and remain balanced.
- Rounded corners affect course design. Give thought to a single jump on at least one side of the ring. Rounded corners make it difficult to set a horse up for a lead change. Providing added space by using a single fence on one side of the ring can be beneficial to your competitors.
- Inventory the jumps available and determine which jumps will be used for Equitation Over Fences, Low Equitation Over Fences, Working Hunter, and Low Working Hunter. Draw a basic diagram of the courses.
- The posted course may be modified if needed to ensure safety as warranted by weather and/or ring conditions on the day of the show.
- **Must have at least 6 jumps and must include at least one lead change** (change of direction).
- All fences must have a rail as the uppermost element.
- All fences must have a ground line.
- Jumps should be well filled, not airy. Encourages the horse to jump round. Verticals may include walls, flower boxes, brush, etc. Oxers may include fill as well, but it should remain tight to the face of the jump so width doesn't exceed height.
- The width of a jump must never exceed the height.
- Oxers must be ascending, may not be square. The back rail must be at least 3" higher than the front rail.
- *The Equitation and Low Equitation courses may include a built-in test, or a couple of built in tests. These might be a halt or trot jump on course, or a different acceptable built in test.*
- Unused jump cups and pins should be pulled off the standards and placed where they won't injure a horse or rider.
- Once a class has started the elements of a jump must remain the same. If there are horses and ponies in the same class, be sure the fence heights can be set for both.
- **If any of the fences are jumped more than one time in a course, be sure the jump crew is aware that they may have to reset a jump while a horse is on course. In this situation someone should remain near that jump throughout the class.**
- When attending shows, if the courses are set well, and ride well, copy them down for possible use at your shows.

Course Diagram

After the courses have been determined, a diagram should be prepared including the following;

- Heading indicating class name and class number.
- Indicate verticals with one line and oxers with two lines.
- The distance between the fences should be indicated if the lines are 90 feet or less.
- Each jump should be numbered and include an arrow indicating the direction the jump should be taken.
- Note where the in gate and out gate are located. Include the judges stand if known.
- A copy of the courses must be posted at least 1 hour before the class. Posting the course at the in gate is the norm. Copies go to the judge and jump crew as well.
- The posted course may be modified if needed to ensure safety as warranted by weather and/or ring conditions on the day of the show.

Setting the Course

- Prior to setting the course, place a rail where each jump will be set. This will help to ensure that the course will ride as it looks on the diagram.
- Visualize each of the courses to determine that the fences are in the appropriate locations. Determine that any turns can be ridden in a reasonable and safe manner
- Check for sufficient space coming out of corners.
- Once the course is set, measure the height of the fences and adjust accordingly.
- Check that the fences are set in the right direction.
- Be sure all jumps have a ground line.

Measuring the Lines

- Use a 100' tape
- Measure both the inside and outside distances from standard to standard for any jumps in a line with a related distance.
- Measure from the first jump in the line to the front element of any oxer.
- For larger rings (approximately 100' x 220') set the lines based on a 12' stride. Leave 6' for take-off and 6' for landing. Thus a 4 stride line would measure 60'. A 5 stride line is 72'.
- For smaller arenas the lines may be shortened. Lines may be shortened about a foot to a foot and a half.
- Take into consideration any variable (i.e. indoor ring-sloped ring, footing-mud, etc.) Determine whether to shorten lines based on ring conditions

Decorating the Course

- Straw bales and brush gives a nice “full” look to your jumps, and is an easy way to decorate. Walls and flower boxes help to fill as well.
- Decorating the jumps “finishes” your jump course.
- Borrow shrubs and plants for your decorations from local nursery.
- Use seasonal ideas-corn stalks and pumpkins in the fall, etc.
- Fake flowers appropriate to the season.
- Course “decorator” puts a finishing touch on the course that is nearly as important as the design itself.
- Keeping the ring dragged and watered keeps the dust down and the footing even.
- Taking the course down requires muscle as well. Have help lined up for these jobs.

It is time consuming to design and set a good, workable, and attractive hunter or equitation course. Scheduling the jumping classes as the first classes of the day, or in a second ring, helps to provide the time necessary to do the job well. Obtain sufficient help well ahead of show time. This may seem like a big effort for small shows. The result of your efforts will help exhibitors to prepare for advancement to upper level shows with similar fences and courses.

Hunter Courses

Fences found in the hunter ring should simulate natural obstacles found in the hunt field. The course should encourage a fluid, even hunting pace that allows the horses to be judged on their style and way of going. Jumps should have good ground lines and enough fill to encourage the horses to jump round and in good form, the standard for a hunter.

To get the horses started it is suggested that the first jump be headed back toward the in gate. A time saving factor is to end the course near the out gate.

Hunter courses:

- Always start with a vertical.
- Consists of outside lines, diagonal lines, and single jumps.
- May have anywhere from 6-10 jumps.

Equitation Courses

When designing the equitation course, consider the level of the show and the riders to determine the appropriate degree of difficulty. Equitation courses are more technical and should allow riders to demonstrate their position, horsemanship ability and control of the horse. Equitation courses can test a riders' ability to:

- Ride a long distance to a single fence
- Negotiate rollbacks
- Ride bending Lines
- Lengthen or shorten their stride within a line
- Ride courses more efficiently
- Negotiate a trot fence
- Negotiate a fence at the end of the ring
- Jump a narrow jump (6')
- Counter canter, etc

Courses may include any of the following:

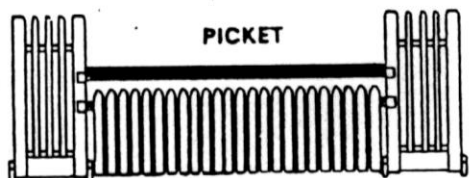
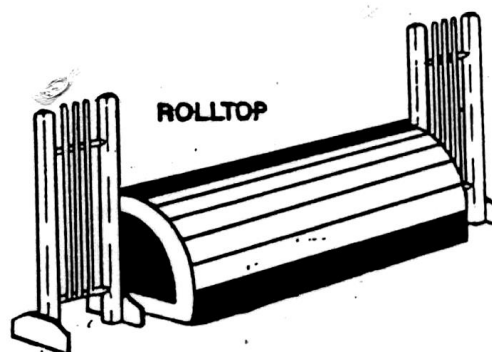
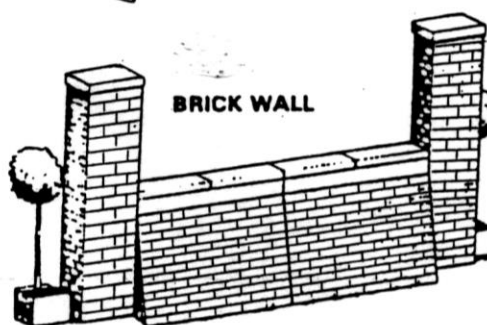
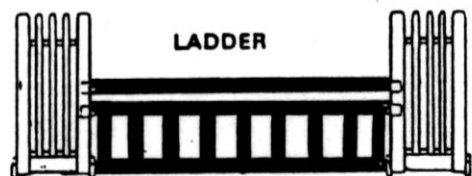
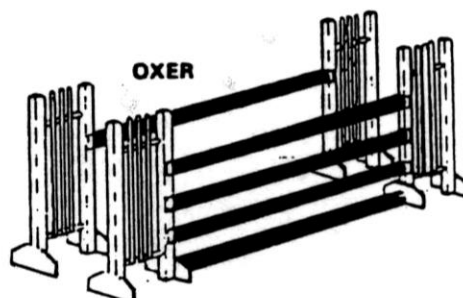
- Inside or roll back turns
- Bending line
- Narrow jump(6')
- A fence at the end of the ring
- A long run single
- A trot jump

FENCE HEIGHTS			
	Working Hunter & Equitation over Fences	Low Working Hunter & Low Equitation over Fences NO OXERS	Hunter Hack
Horses	About 2'9"	About 2'6"	2'6"
Large Ponies (over 13.2 hands)	About 2'6"	About 2'3"	2'3"
Medium Ponies (over 12.2-not over 13.2)	About 2'3"	About 2"	2'
Small Ponies (not over 12.2)	About 2'	About 2'	2'

Sample Jumps* for Working Hunter & Hunt Seat Equitation Over Fences

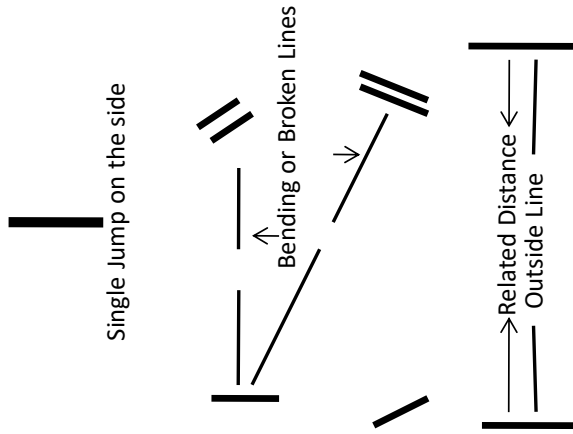
All fences should have rails as the top element

**Oxers are not allowed in Low Working Hunter or Low Equitation Over Fences classes.*

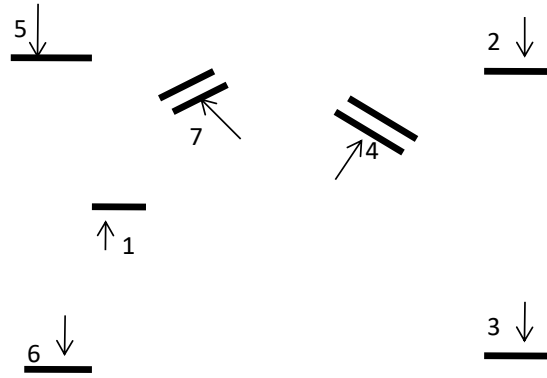


Courses and Terminology

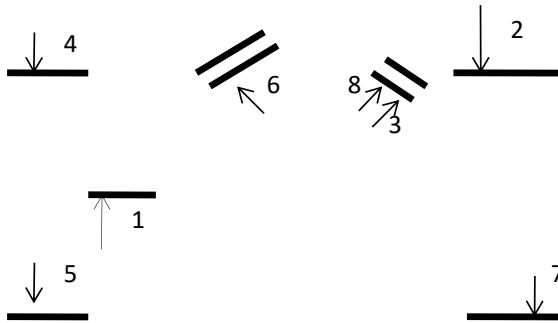
Terminology



Working Hunter Course

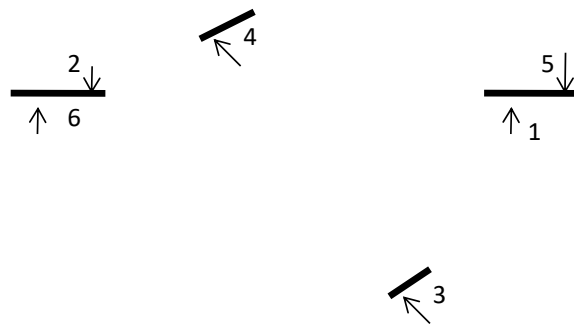


Equitation Course



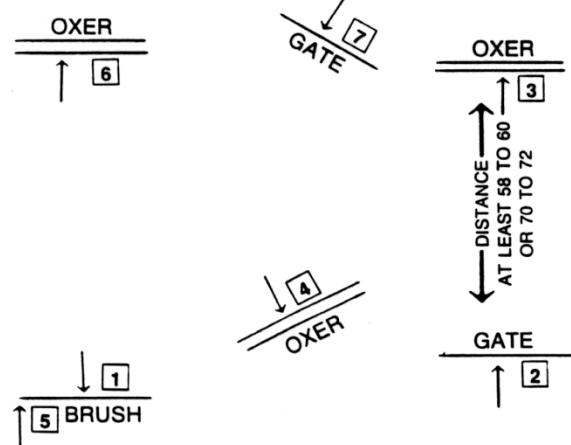
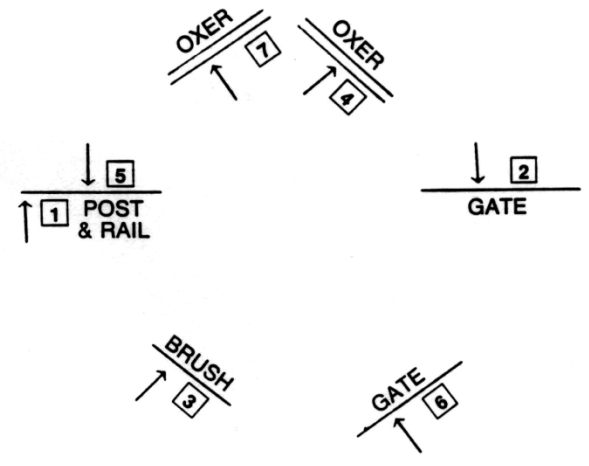
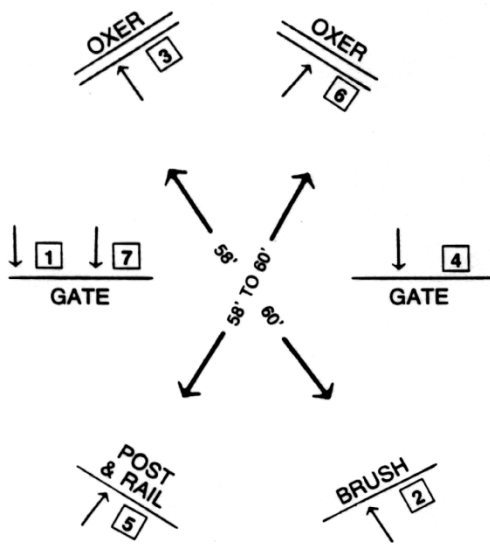
Hunter Course

Not a desirable course;
Only use if limited jumps

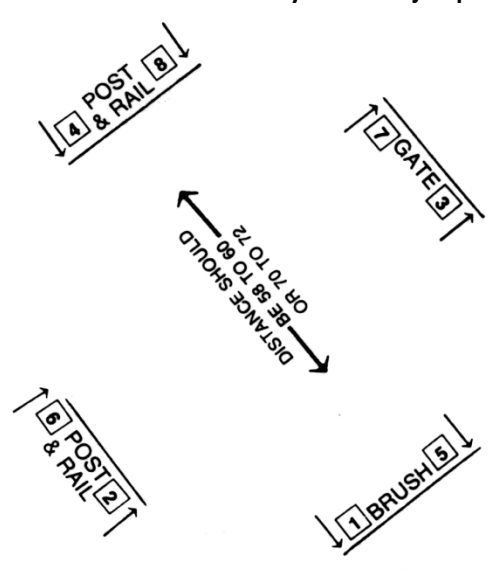


Working Hunter Sample Courses

**Oxers are not allowed in Low Working Hunter or Low Equitation Over Fences classes.*



**Not a desirable course;
Use only if limited jumps**



Miniature Horse Jumping

Course and Jumps

1. Course diagrams must show, with arrows, the direction each obstacle must be taken, and markers or a line must indicate the start and finish of the course.
2. Any In & Out must be marked as elements A and B. i.e. 4A, 4B.
3. The distance between the two jumps in an In & Out should be 10-12 feet. An In & Out should *never* be the first jump in the course.
4. All jumps used in this class must be collapsible.
5. There will be a *minimum* of four jumps and a *maximum* of six jumps. Jumps may be jumped more than once, but there are to be a maximum of 8 jumping efforts in the course.
6. The jumps can range in height from twelve to twenty-four inches (in the jump-off this will change to a minimum of twelve to a maximum of thirty inches).
7. Jumps will be made of 1-1 1/2" schedule 40 PVC piping or other suitable lightweight material with jump cups, not to include pegs, nails, bolts, etc. except to hold the cups in place.
8. All jumps must be a minimum of five (5) feet wide, with a minimum of twenty (20) feet between jumps, with the exception of an in and out.
9. Uprights are to be a maximum of forty (40) inches in height.
10. Any decorations or jump wings must not protrude more than twenty-four (24) inches from the uprights.
11. All jumps must have a ground line.

Notes



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