



Jumper Course Design

2011



Course Designers Have a Responsibility Toward:

- The Horses
- The Riders
- The Show
- The Spectators
- The **\$**ponsors
- The Sport, as a whole.





Course Designers Must Always Consider:

- Safety, first and last.
- Producing fair and fun sport.
- Promoting horsemanship by always rewarding good training and riding.
- Presenting the sport in a beautiful and natural way.
- Directing the future of the sport.



A Course Is Only As Good As It Is Suitable!

Every course must suit:

- The level of the event.
- The purpose of that particular class.
- Where it fits in the horses' and riders' schedule for the day, the week, & the year.
- The size of the arena.
- The weather conditions and the footing.
- The day's time schedule.



Children, Adult Amateurs & Ponies

- These riders might have little experience but often their horses are 'over-qualified'.
- Some riders, though not all, are planning to move up and are looking for preparation.
- Always avoid rewarding 'reckless speed,' especially in jump-offs.
- Never use 2-stride combinations when speed counts.
- Always avoid long runs to jumps, especially at the end of the course or the jump-off.
Emphasize turns!

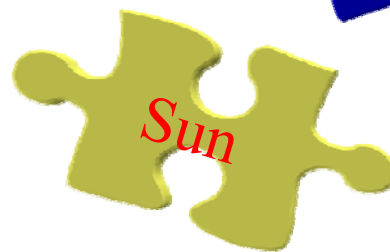


Experienced Horses

- Consider what will be the final/most important class of the show and build toward it. Always avoid starting too strong
- Challenge, but don't overwhelm.
- Consider how many total efforts are being asked in II 2(b) classes.
- Keep your combination (s) from being the main source of difficulty in the course.



What is a course?





Jumping Courses Are Tests Of:

- 1) The **TRAINING LEVEL** of the horse and the rider.
- 2) *The **COMMUNICATION** and **CO-OPERATION** between the horse and rider.*
- 3) The horse's degree of **BOLDNESS, CAREFULNESS, and CONCENTRATION.**
- 4) *The **JUDGMENT** and **CONCENTRATION** of the rider.*
- 5) The horse's **STRIDE** adjustability and **BALANCE.**
- 6) And, lastly, **SCOPE.**



Elements of a Course

- The "track."
- Types and locations of jumps. Especially the position of combinations and 'related lines'.
- Jump construction (Solid, airy, cups, top poles).
- Distances used between jumps.
- Height and width of the jumps.
- Cups and top poles used.
- Speed and measurement for the time allowed.
- Footing, light, the in-gate, and many other little, yet important, factors.



Parameters of a Good Course

- A flowing track, suitable to the type of competition.
- Balance between spreads and uprights.
- Balance between left and right turns.
- Variety in the types of combinations used.
- Changes on the lead of approach to combinations.
- Little or no repetition of types of related lines (short/long, 3/4/5/6 strides, spread to upright, upright to spread).
- Differences in fence construction.
- Difficulty compatible with the level of competitors.



Difficulty Factors

Obvious:

- The height of the jumps
- The width of the jumps
- The distances between the jumps
- The Time Allowed



Difficulty Factors

Less Obvious:

- The track
- The type of combinations and lines
- The approaches
- Any distractions
- The construction of the jumps



Difficulty Factors

Subtle:

- The fence material.
- The colors and the background.
- The decorations.
- The length and number of efforts.
- The balance and flow of the course.



Combinations

- Use variety.
- Don't compound the questions.
- Save distance problems for special circumstances.
- Watch the number of spreads.
- Be careful with the approaches.





Jump-Offs

Considerations:

- How many jumps?
- Balance of left and right turns
- Inside turns
- Combinations
- 'Handy' vs 'Galloping'
- Changing the jump dimensions/direction
- Verticals and Oxers
- Turns with Oxers
- Triple Bar
- Swedish Oxers



What Makes a Great Result?

- Every competitor has a chance to finish the course.
- No bad crashes.
- Every competitor up to the standard and without an error can produce a clear round.
- Weaknesses in training or riding mistakes produce the faults, not traps in the course.
- Faults are '*educational*' and not '*punishing*.'
- Many competitors have only one fault, and the faults occur all around the course.



And a good Jump Off ?

- Viewable and exciting for the audience.
- Use of the entire field.
- Balance of left and right turns.
- Turns before and after jumps.
- Places to gallop and make up time.
- "Inside/outside" options.
- Luck of the draw.



Statistics *good way to learn*

Evaluating your Jumper Course:

- Watch every horse go.
- Keep track of fences that come down.
- Look for 'balanced' results.
- Note *unexpected* trouble spots.



The Course Designer's Job

The Nitty-Gritty



Essential Tools of the Trade:

THEN:

- Measuring tapes and wheel.
- Map wheel and calculator.
- Blank course plan sheets, pens, pencils, highlighter, white-out.
- Rule book (s) and Prize List.
- Appropriate clothing - with rain gear always!
- Plans for at least the first day's classes.
- Lots of energy, enthusiasm, and knowledge.

NOW:

- All of the above plus a computer, printer and extra ink.



Getting to Work

- Make a detailed inventory of the material you have to work with.
- Finalize your first days plans and make copies for the crew.
- Explain your system of working to your assistants.
- Build the course.
- Confirm when everyone will arrive the next day.



Drawing Course Plans

Whether by *hand* or computer, the **KEY**
is working to scale!



The Design Process *Simplified*

- Prepare a **SCALED DRAWING** of the arena.
- Find a track (s), then add jump-off (s), types of fences, distances, heights, spreads and fill.
- Measure.
- Make clean copies for the judges and to post.
- Hints: Work in pencil, ink in steps as they are finalized. Use colors to put several tracks on a single paper. Become an expert with the copy machine.



Useful Tips:

- Work to scale!
- Use **colors** to differentiate between the different courses on one piece of paper.
- Use circles, squares, underlines, etc. for copies.
- For fences to be added later, use dotted lines.
- Use large circled numbers for the first course of the day.
- Stay consistent for the sake of your helpers!



What needs to be on a Course Plan:

- Class name and number.
- Start & Finish.
- Fences numbered and with arrows to show direction, compulsory turning points, etc.
- Table, Speed, Length of Course, Time Allowed, Time Limit, Jump-Off information.
- Indicate: Option Jumps, Closed Combinations.
- Helpful items: day, date, in/out gates, show name, class type/height.



Working with a computer program:

- You ***MUST*** start with an accurate diagram of the ring and its' features.
- Everything; from fence placement and turning points to inside/outside options and the calculation of the Time Allowed; depends on your diagram being correct and to scale!
- Without an accurate diagram of the ring, all you have is a pretty picture.



Building a Course

From an empty ring to ready for the first horse.



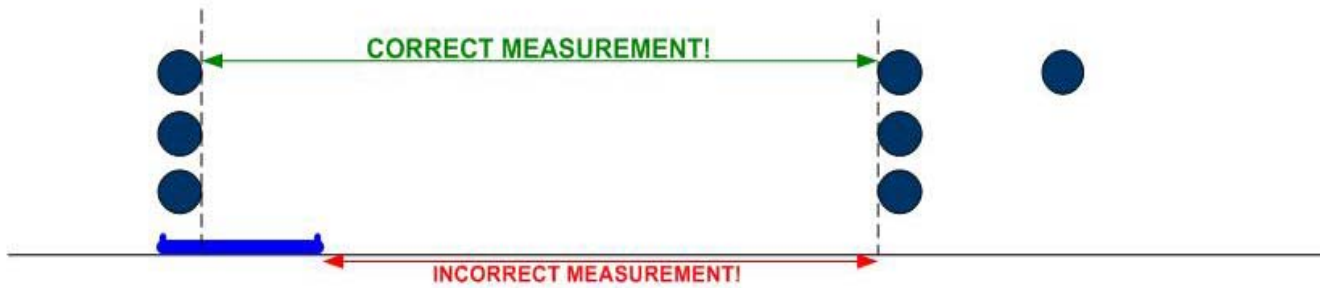
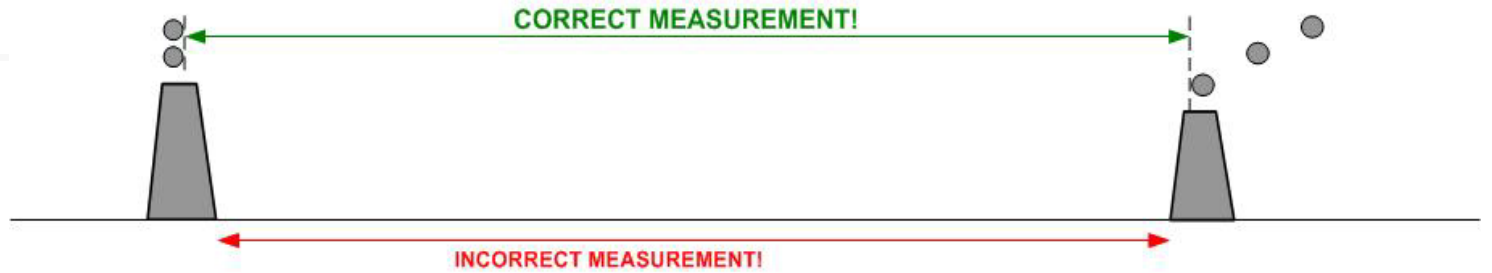
"Lay Out" the Rails

- Make a list of the rails needed: one for each element of every jump to be built.
- Position each rail on the ground; walking the distances to get things close.
- Look at the track as a whole.
- Now's the time to make any needed changes to the course!



“Frame” the Jumps

- Measure distances and spreads as you go.
- Put the wings on the ends of the laid out poles.
- Put up the top poles (at the correct height) on each jump.
- Keep the wings straight.
- Cross measure the lines and combinations so they are straight.





“Fill” & Decorate

- Add the correct walls, gates, ladders and fill for each fence.
- Determine spacing of elements.
- Add flower boxes, take-offs, etc.
- Add plants or shrubs to sides of jumps.
- Add start and finish markers, flags and numbers to jumper and equitation courses.





“Finish” the Course

- Walk the whole course (including the jump-off) to see all the details.
- Check for proper cups, and extra material.
- Check for tight poles.
- Use the straightest and lightest poles on top of each jump, and re-check the heights, spreads and distances.
- Measure jumper (and some equitation) courses to calculate the time allowed.
- Cross off (or remove flags) from unused jumps.



“Start and Finish”

Things to Keep in Mind:

- How the timer eyes work.
- Moving them between classes.
- Moving them for the jump-off.
- Width of Start and Finish lines.
- How far away from the jumps.
- Straight or angled?
- Positioning the flags.



“Wheeling” the Course

- You must follow the natural line of the track, i.e., the line that links one jump to another.
- There is only one track for each course.
- You can adjust the time, not the track.
- Pay attention to the speed of the class.
- Be careful of overly tight turns.
- Don't be too generous with jump-off times.
- Always watch the first riders in the class.
- Decide with the Judge if the T.A. is good.



DISTANCES

And their practical application.



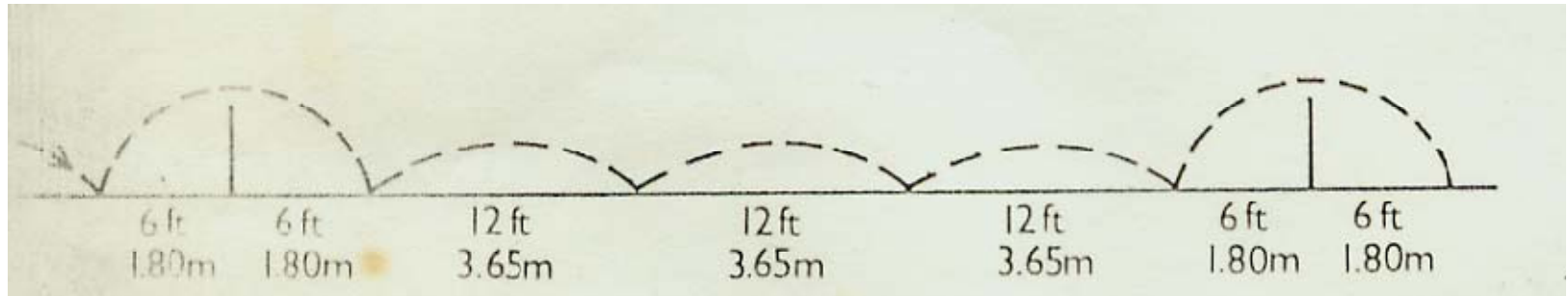
What “Distance Questions” test:

- The rider's eye & judgment.
- Horse's response to the aids.
- Harmony between rider and horse.
- The horse's scope.

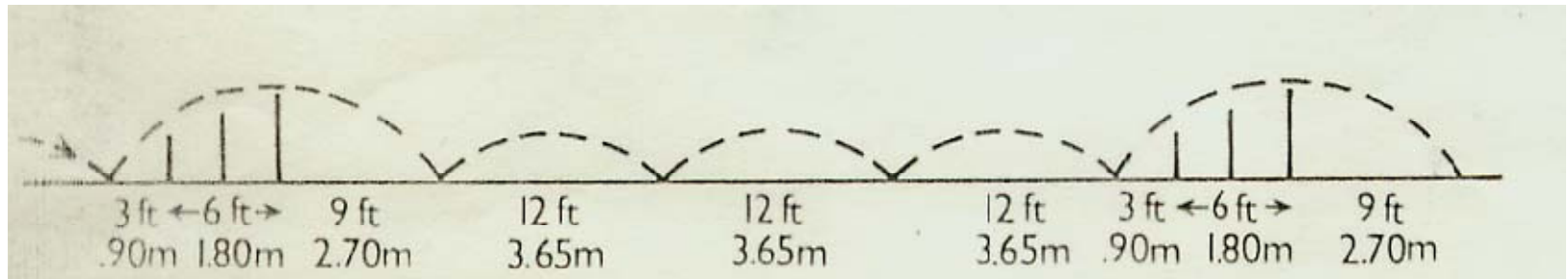




Distances Between Similar Fences



Upright to Upright



Spread to Spread



However:

- If you apply this principal to fences that are less than 3 strides apart, you will come up with a distance that is too short. Why?
- The horse and rider, on seeing fences very close together ahead, increase their forward movement (impulsion) so as to have enough energy to jump the second and third parts of the combination.
- Therefore, you must increase the distance.



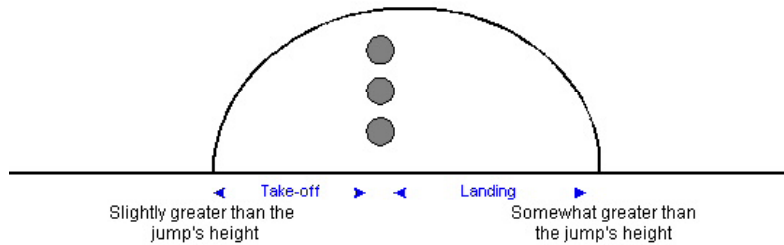
Fences That Are Not Alike

- The distance from spread to upright should be longer than standard, and the distance from upright to spread shorter. Why?
- Take-off distance for verticals is further back than for oxers, which is further back than for triple bars. Water jumps have the shortest take-off distance of all.
- Landing distance for verticals is longer than for oxers and triple bars. Water jumps have a very short landing distance.

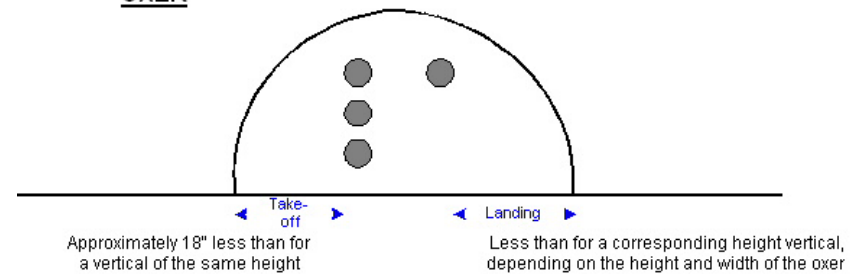


Jumping Arcs

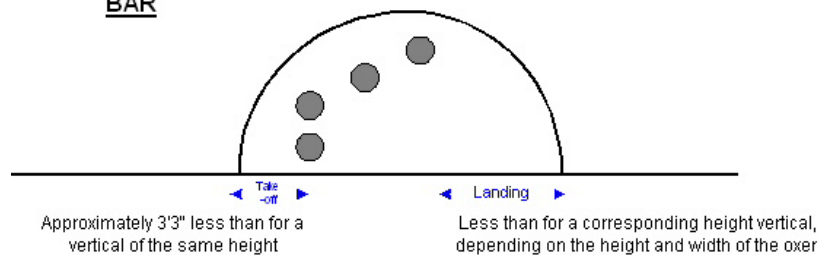
VERTICAL



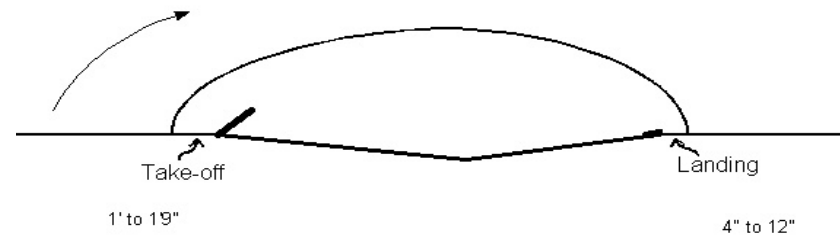
OXER



TRIPLE BAR

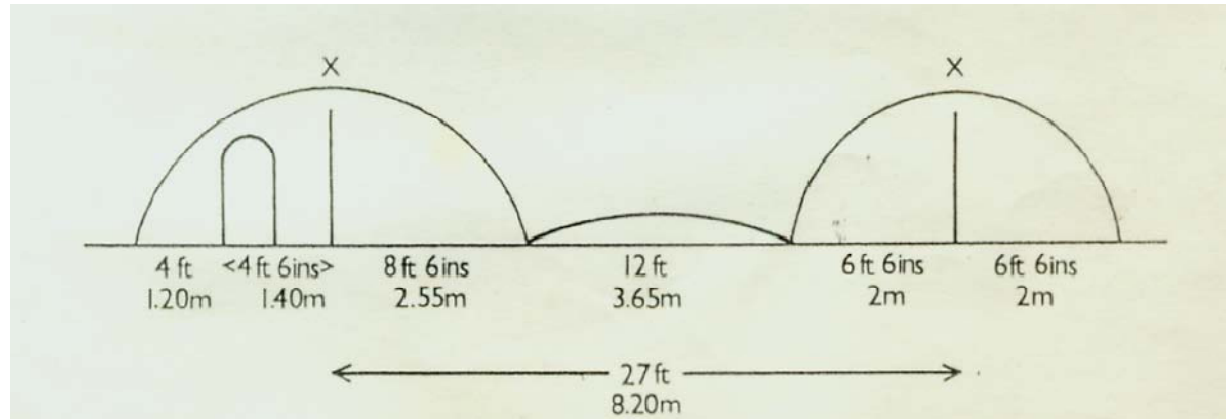


WATER JUMP

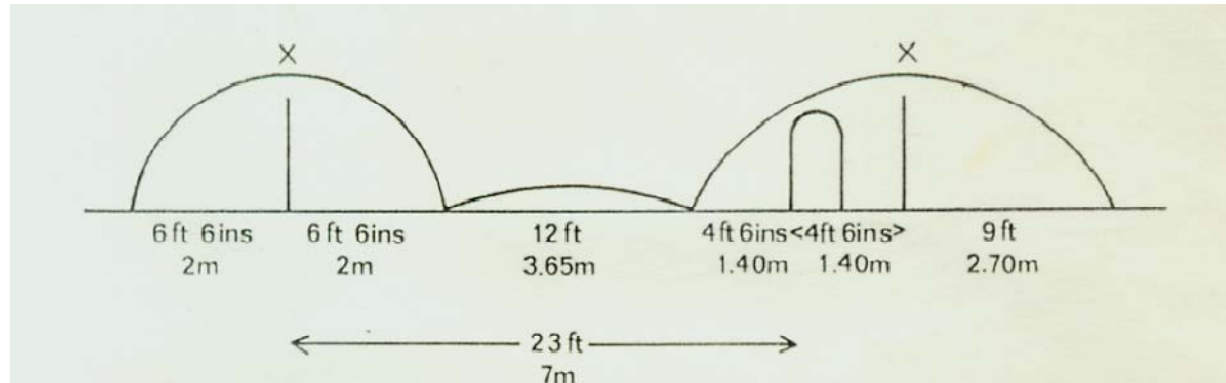




Examples:



Spread to Upright



Upright to Spread



Remember...

Distances are influenced by:

Type of fence

- Oxer
- Vertical
- Triple Bar
- Water

Slope

- Uphill
- Downhill

Footing

- Sand or Grass
- Soft or Hard
- Slippery or "Cupping"

Direction

- Toward In-Gate
- Away from In-Gate
- *And, what comes before..*



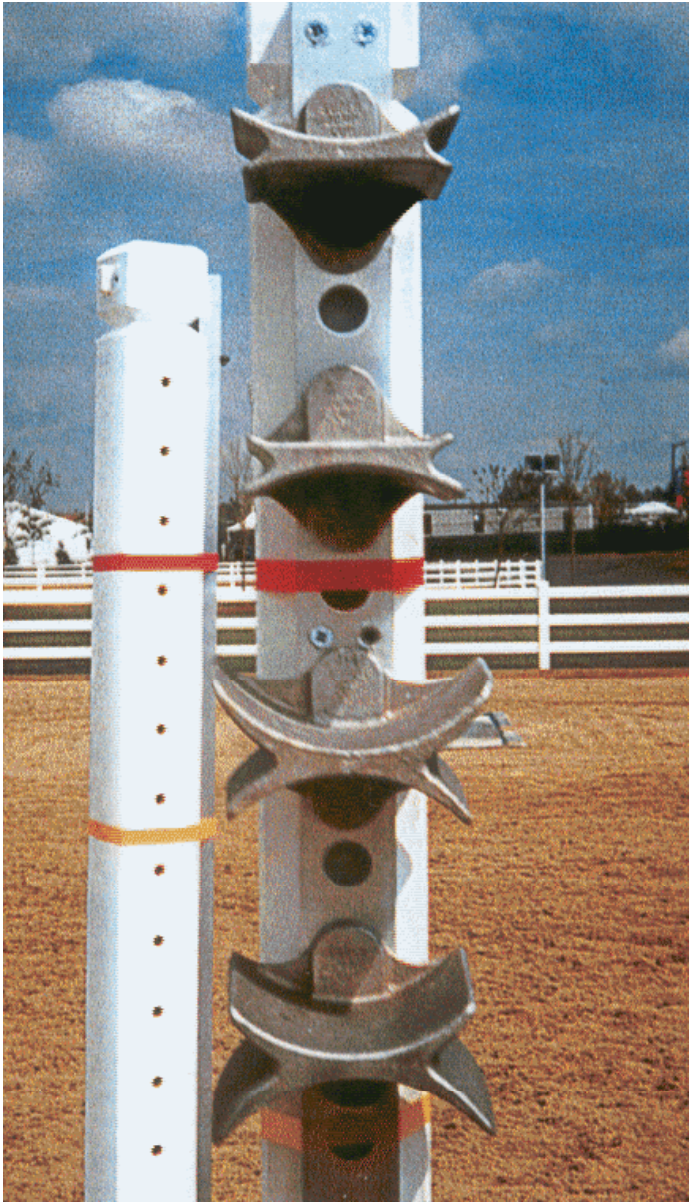
Miscellaneous



Safety Cups

- Are required at ALL shows (effective Dec. 1, 2004.)
- ONLY for back poles of spreads (including middle of triple bars.)
- FEI approved cups are essential because they come with official certification to release consistently at 140 Kg (308 lbs.)
- A list of FEI approved cups is available via the USEF or FEI website.

Different types of cups





Safety Issues

- Extra heavy equipment
- Jammed poles
- Extra poles and cups
- Too deep cups
- Natural obstacles (banks, grobs, dry ditches, etc.)
- Water obstacles



THE WATER JUMP

- MINIMUM 4.9 m (16') WIDE FRONT
- NOT TOO DEEP (see JP126 for details)
- COVERED WITH RUBBER MAT
- TAKE OFF BOX NO HIGHER THAN 76 cm (2'6")
- WHITE LATH OR PLASTICINE ON LANDING SIDE
- CAN BE USED WITH RAIL UP TO 1 m (3'3") HIGH
- SHOULD BE PRESENT FOR A GRAND PRIX

