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2017 COMPETITION RESOURCE KIT

Using Media Promotion to Your Best Advantage



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PROMOTING COMPETITIONS THROUGH LOCAL MEDIA

There are two types of media to focus on when promoting a competition: local media and horse publications known as “trade” or “niche” publications. Local media is defined as any media outlet in the vicinity of a competition. In general, these outlets should be no longer than an hour’s distance from the competition. With the advent of social media, many local media outlets operate with a short staff and a small budget so they do not have the resources to travel long distances. Local media outlets include: daily and community newspapers, radio stations, and television stations.

“Trade” or “niche” publications include magazines or websites that focus on equestrian competitions or specific breeds or disciplines. These outlets can be located in the state of the competition or across the nation. In most cases, these outlets will not travel to the competition, unless an office resides in the competition state. However, most the time, they are advocates and will promote the competition in any way they can.

Specifically, before reaching out to local media, decide the most important aspects of the competition to highlight. Keep in mind exciting anecdotes that will attract the media and spectators to the competition.

For example:

- Does the event offer free admission and/or family activities?
- Is there a hometown athlete competing?
- What makes this show so special? Why should people attend?
- Do any of the competitors have an interesting back story?
 - Did they overcome an incredible obstacle?
 - Do they have an unique background?

Once these angles are decided upon, complete the following steps:

Step One:

Locate names and contact information from media outlets to distribute press related information. Often times, contact information can be located in the “About Us” or “Contact Us” sections of their websites. If media outlets only provide a phone number, simply call to ask which reporter is best to contact regarding the event. Make sure to get the reporter’s email address and phone number. Generally, contacts include:

- Newspapers: sports editor and newsroom
- Television stations: newsroom or sports reporter
- Radio stations: news director
- Local “trade” or “niche” publications: editor

Please note: Gathering contact information saves time in the long run as these reporters can be contacted regarding subsequent events. If you are having difficulty gathering contact information, contact USEF for assistance.

Step Two:

Create a media advisory:

A media advisory is an announcement to the media to alert them an event is approaching. This gets the competition on their calendar and gives them enough time to determine if they may have a reporter available to cover the event.

Items to include in the advisory (see “Media Advisory Example” for guidance):

- Competition or organization logo
- Date sent to the media
- Contact information in case of questions
- Title introducing the event
- Optional: subtitle highlighting compelling information about the event
- One to two paragraphs explaining the competition and why it warrants coverage
- Summary of event details: who, what, when, and where
- Individuals – show organizers or athletes - available for interviews
- When video (b-roll) and pictures are allowed
- Competition or organization background

Distribute to print outlets two weeks prior to the competition. Send the information to television stations one week before the event.

Step Three:

Follow up with media outlets to make sure they received the media advisory. If not, resend and double check the email address is correct. If they received it, inquire as to whether they will send a reporter to the event. Ask them what their interest is so you can better assist them when they arrive. For example:

- Do they want to speak with anyone in particular such as a show organizer or competitor?
- Do they want to record video (b-roll) or take pictures?

Typically, a radio station will promote the event. However, ask them if they will interview a competitor or show organizer as a means to better promote the event.

Remember to be professional and courteous. Do your best to accommodate the media's needs. You will develop a good reputation, and they will be more likely to cover future events.

Step Four:

Once a media outlet gets what they need at the event ask them when the story will be available. Usually, stories appear on their websites. Once available, promote on your website and social media accounts (see “Social Media Best Practices” for guidance).

Step Five:

Create a press release:

A press release is an article summarizing what happened at the competition. You are welcome to write one each day of the competition or elect to write one at the end of the competition. It is advised to keep the length of press releases to one page. Daily press releases are more effective with the “trade” or “niche” media outlets. Local media is less likely to post daily releases because they cater to a broader audience and demand is not as high as “trade” or “niche” media outlets. If media outlets are unable to send a reporter to cover the event, they are more likely to post the press release because the work of writing about the event has been completed for them.

Show organizers should include the following items in the press release (see “Press Release Example” for guidance):

- Competition or organization logo
- Date sent to the media
- Contact information of individual who can answer questions
- Title summarizing the most important fact of the competition
- Introduction paragraph summarizing the most important news of the day or entire competition
- Subsequent paragraphs explaining additional details including quotes from competitors
- Photos of the competition
- Competition or organization background

Press releases should be distributed to media outlets as soon as possible following the completion of competition at the end of the day or the entire event. Press releases should highlight the winner(s) of the class(es) or phases. For show organizers who wish to distribute daily releases and have a large amount of classes, highlight the leaders from the featured or most competitive classes. If space permits, list those in second and third place also. For shows wanting to concentrate on a specific class, organizers can tailor the release to focus on the winner as well as those in second and third place. Space permitting, a list of the remaining class winners can be included at the end. The same rules apply for press releases drafted upon the completion of a show.

When sending press releases, include at least two pictures via a shared link such as dropbox. Sending pictures via an attachment through email causes the email to go to spam in most cases. Show organizers concentrating on a specific class may elect to send pictures of those in first and second place for a daily release and/or a comprehensive event release. If show organizers do not want to highlight a specific class, choose great photos of a couple class winners.



**MEDIA ADVISORY
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
February 8, 2017

Contact:

Jane Doe, Director of Media Relations
Arabian Horse Association of Arizona
jane.doe@scottsdaleshow.com

Over \$1 Million in Earnings Set to Be Awarded at Scottsdale Arabian Horse Show

Scottsdale, Ariz. - Since 1955 the Annual Scottsdale Arabian Horse Show has set the pace in the Arabian horse world and was first class show from the beginning. Running from February 16-26, at the Westworld in Scottsdale, Ariz., nearly 2,400 Arabian horses with their top owners, trainers and breeders gather from around the world to compete in over 75 distinct classes for top honors and up to \$1 million in prize money. Those who win at Scottsdale earn a great reputation in the Arabian breeding business. Featured classes include:

Thursday, February 16:

7:00 p.m. - Scottsdale Arabian Classic Senior Stallion Championship in the Markel Insurance Equidome Arena

Friday, February 24:

6:00 p.m - Half-Arabian/Anglo Arabian Country & English Pleasure Championship Walk/Trot in the Markel Insurance Equidome Arena

Saturday, February 25:

4:00 p.m. – Saddle Seat Equitation Championship in the Wendell Arena

Credentials: Credentials are required for media. Please notify Jane Doe if you plan to attend.

Filming and Photography: Filming and photography are welcome throughout the competition. B-roll previewing the competition and family activities can be shot on Wednesday, February 15, beginning at 1:00 p.m.

Interviews: Interviews are available with show organizers throughout the competition. Interviews with competitors are dependent on their availability.

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For more information, visit <http://www.scottsdaleshow.com>



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 31, 2016

Contact:

Jane Doe
Kentucky Horse Shows, LLC
859-233-0492
jane.doe@kyhorsepark.com

Emma Kurtz Dominates Junior Hunter Divisions at Kentucky Summer Horse Show

Lexington, Ky. - Emma Kurtz dominated the Stonelea Ring on Saturday at the Kentucky Summer Horse Show with wins on Dominik in the Small Junior Hunter division, as well as a clean sweep in the Large Junior Hunter 15 & Under division on Frederick.

"My rounds on Frederick went really well today," Kurtz said. "He was amazing considering it was so late in the day due to the weather delay. He is very flashy with his white socks and blaze, and he has a great rhythm to his canter."

Kurtz has had the ride on David Gochman's chestnut gelding for over a year, and the pair are no strangers to winning blue ribbons and championship titles. In Saturday's Large Junior Hunter 15 & Under division, Kurtz and Frederick won both over fences classes and the under saddle class.

"Frederick is a quiet horse. He is so fun to ride and I love him," she continued. "He may be a bit looky at times, but he is usually on it and he was great today."

Kurtz of Hudson, Ohio, also impressed the judges on David Gochman's gelding Dominik. This was the third show the duo has competed together and though they are a relatively new pair they were Grand Champions at Brandywine. On Saturday, they earned the blue ribbon in both over fences classes during the Small Junior Hunter division.

"Dominik was feeling great today," Kurtz explained. "He was a bit frisky which was kind of good because he is usually too quiet, so the rides today were nice. He is very simple and sweet."

She plans on riding him in next week's Kentucky Summer Classic and then Sophie and Mimi Gochman will pick up the ride.

"I love Kentucky," Kurtz explained. "I love to be back here! The show is always run so nicely. The

jumps are beautiful and it's just a really nice show to come to."

Brett Burlington of Miami, Florida leads the way in the Large Junior Hunter 16-17 division on Popish Farms LLC's Due West. The pair won an over fences class as well as placed second in the under saddle class.

"I thought my rounds went really well today," Burlington said. "He is very easy and straightforward. I float the reins and everything usually works out well. Basically the less I involve myself the easier it is. If I ride everything smooth and not change much, the distances come up nicely. The more adjustments I try to make, the distances can get a bit iffy."

Burlington competed the 12-year-old gelding during the winter season at WEF and they were champions in Traverse City earlier in the summer.

"He is owned by a client at Sweet Oaks Farm and she is very nice to let me show him," she explained. "I have been riding him on and off for a couple of years now. For the rest of the season we will work on having more consistent rounds and try my best."

All junior hunter divisions will wrap up on Sunday morning at the Kentucky Summer Horse Show.

On Saturday morning, championships were awarded in the Amateur-Owner Hunter divisions. Jane Gaston won the Visse Wedell Grand Hunter Championship, as well as the Amateur- Owner Hunter Championship aboard Because. The KWPN gelding had also earned the Green Hunter Championship with Kelley Farmer earlier in the week.

Lisa Butzer earned the tricolored ribbon for the Amateur-Owner 3'3 18-35 division on Pure Imagination, while Didi Mackenzie and MTM Do Right was crowned champion in the Amateur-Owner Hunter 3'3 Over 35 division.

On Sunday, the \$5,000 Hallway Feeds USHJA National Hunter Derby will take place and it will be the third class in the \$40,000 Hallway Feeds USHJA National Hunter Derby series. The \$15,000 Hallway Feeds Leading Rider Bonus will award a \$10,000 cash prize to the professional rider accumulating the most points in the five classes that make up the 2016 Hallway Feeds series. The series-leading amateur and junior riders accumulating the most points will each receive a \$2,500 cash prize. Riders will receive points only on their highest placed horse in each of the classes. The awards will be presented at the conclusion of the Hallway Feeds class at the Bluegrass Festival Horse Show on August 21.

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For more information, visit <http://www.kentuckyhorseshow.com>

SOCIAL MEDIA BEST PRACTICES

A Few Statistics:



Facebook has over 1.79 billion active users, and 1.18 billion daily users (4 million+ people list “horses” as an interest)



Twitter has over 317 million active users, and 100 million daily users, and 500 million tweets per day



Instagram has over 600 million active users, and 100 million daily users (#horse has over 15 million photos)

Why should you have social media for your show?

Social media is incredibly important to reach riders, trainers, families, sponsors, and vendors with pertinent information about your show. If the show you are managing doesn't have a website, a Facebook page is a good place to start to put all the information in one place. It also allows you to post live videos, videos, photos, links to forms, deadlines, results, and much more!

Due to the evolving social media landscape, some of the following information is subject to change. For platform-specific questions please see Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram help pages or reach out to Andrea Evans, Director of Social & Video Content at US Equestrian at aevans@usef.org.

Facebook

Account Set-up:

Facebook has great resources on how to set-up an official page [here](#). Leave out years and sponsors in your account names as those will change. Fill out as much relevant information on the account as possible. We suggest making your profile picture the show logo and making the cover image a photo of a horse competing that you have the rights to use. If you want to get fancy, add the dates of the show on the cover photo. The Washington International Horse Show has a nice Facebook cover photo and profile photo examples:



Make your page known:

In order for your page to be useful, people have to “like” it to get your posts served in their newsfeed. We suggest you like and follow relevant industry and athlete pages in order to get people to know about your page and hopefully “like” it. To see the Pages Feed (news feed of the pages you have liked as your Page) go to your Page and click “See Pages Feed” on the right side of your Page. Consistently interact (like, comment, favorite, share) with their posts as the page you manage (and not your personal account). To ensure you are liking and commenting as your business Page, look at the bar below the post you would like to interact with and ensure the profile image is that of the Page you would like to like, comment, or share as.



Include your social media accounts in email correspondence, show information, on the show website, and at the show in as many places as possible to encourage interaction and exposure.

Posting:

- **Overview:** Facebook's algorithm (the mathematical equation that determines what posts show up in newsfeeds, when, and how often) favors live videos first, then videos, slideshows, carousels, photos, links to articles, and lastly just text posts. Although the algorithm is constantly being tweaked, we are fairly certain that will continue to be the case throughout 2017, with video leading the way. We suggest uploading a photo(s) or video with a horse in it with each post for best results!
- **Facebook live video:** Live video is a feature that was released in 2016 and is now available for all unverified Pages from your mobile phone. It is very likely that it will show up in the newsfeed of people who like your Page due to Facebook's algorithm favoring live video. Simply go to your business Page on the Facebook app on your phone, click "publish", click "Live Video", describe to your followers what they are seeing in the description, and start recording. It is important to hold your phone vertically and not horizontally while recording. After the live video is over, it instantly goes on-demand for others to watch later.
- **Video:** Videos do very well on Facebook and are very engaging. For competition managers, we suggest filming a winning ride (holding the phone vertically, not horizontally, while recording) and posting it to your page. There are many video editing apps that allow you to string together videos, like iMovie, that are very simple to use. Some video ideas are to give a tour of the show grounds or stabling area, utilize features on your phone like time lapse or slow motion, interview athletes, secretaries, and more.
- **Slideshows, carousels, photos and links:** If a video doesn't work for your post, we recommend posting three to 10 photos as a slideshow by clicking "Photo/Video" then "Create Slideshow." This is a way to create a "video" (that is favored by Facebook's algorithm) without actually making a video. The first photo orientation and dimensions determines how the rest are cropped so the order can be changed to accommodate different photo sizes. **Carousels** are a way to feature multiple things that users can scroll through (see below for example of Shop USEF gear). Only have one or two **photos**? Upload them with your post but be sure to credit or tag the photographer in the body of your post. Adding links in the body of the post will create a preview with an image, title text, and body text. You can delete the URL of the link in the body of the post as the preview will still appear. You can also edit the image, title text, and body text of the preview as you see fit.

Carousel example



Link example



- **Post length:** Keep posts short, sweet, and with a call-to-action (“Register now,” “View results”)
- **Links:** Shorten links as needed using bit.ly or another URL shortener.
Too long: <http://www.usefnetwork.com/featured/2016GMHTS/>
Shortened: bit.ly/GMHMS16
- **Post Frequency:** Post consistently, but don’t over-post. We suggest posting no more than five times in a day. To keep your page relevant after the show is over, continue to post photos and videos from the previous years.
- **Post Scheduling:** Let’s say you have your show application ready to post, but you also have a new sponsor for your horse show you would like to announce. These should be in two separate posts, at two separate times. You can take advantage of Facebook’s scheduling feature. After you write the post and upload the photo or video, instead of clicking “Publish,” click the white arrow next to publish and click “Schedule.” You can choose what day or time you would like the post to be published on your page.
- **Tagging:** If you are talking about a specific photographer, vendor, or sponsor that has a business page set up, be sure to “like” their pages and tag them in your posts. When you would like to tag an account, start with “@” then write the name of the page and a drop down menu will come up where you can select the specific page you would like to tag. In this post below, The Hampton Classic Horse Show tagged Shawn McMillen Photography and Hermes because they show up as blue (clickable links to their pages).
- **Sharing:** Share other equestrian-related Page content to yours both from your desktop or phone. If you want to share a post to your Page while on your phone, use the Facebook App. Click “Share” on the post you would like to share to your Page and select “Write Post.” The post will come up ready to post on your personal timeline. To share it to your business Page timeline, select the destination located at the very top of the screen (below the time on an iPhone).





Twitter

Account set-up

On your desktop computer go to www.twitter.com and click “sign up.” Add the full name of your horse show as “full name,” (i.e.: The Hampton Classic or The National Horse Show) and choose a username that reflects the name of your show, (i.e.: @HamptonClassic or @TheNationalHS). Include relevant information in your bio and link to your website or Facebook page. We suggest using the same images you did on Facebook as your profile photo and profile header. You can also download the Twitter app for your smartphone or tablet. This is example is from the Rolex Kentucky Three-Day Event Twitter page:

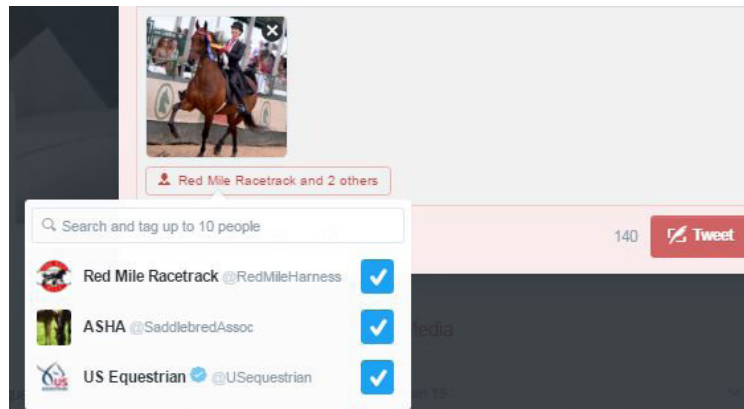


Make your page known:

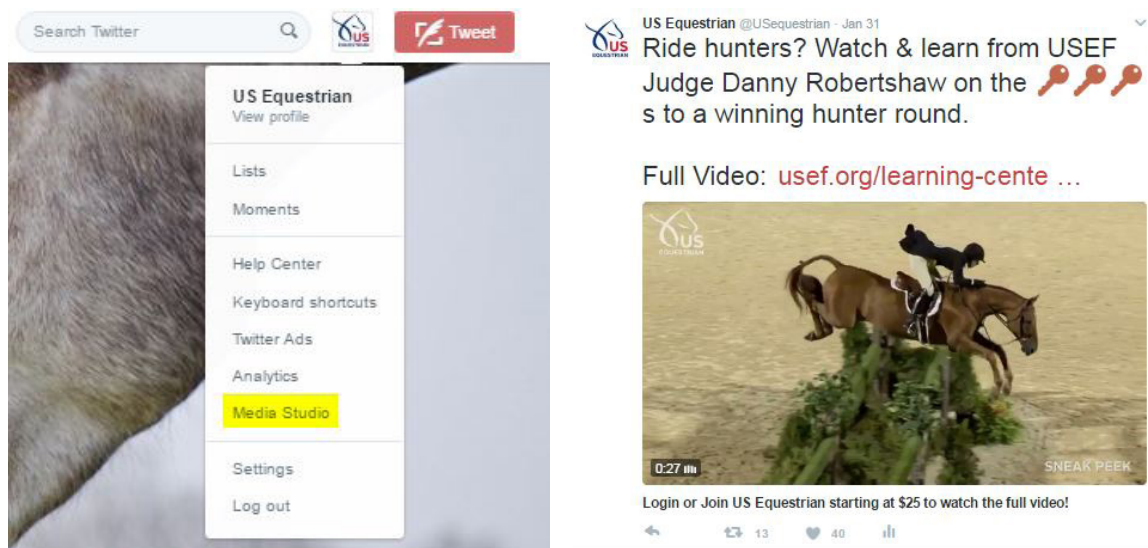
Follow relevant industry accounts like US Equestrian (@USEquestrian and @USEFNetwork), athletes, sponsors, and vendors. Use industry hashtags like #USEquestrian, #JointheJoy, #DiscovertheJoy, #TwoHearts, and trending hashtags (seen on the right-hand side of Twitter on desktop). To “favorite” a tweet, click the heart  under the tweet you wish to favorite or “like.” To re-tweet, click this button  under the tweet you would like to show up on your timeline. Include your Twitter account in email correspondence, show information, on the show website (or Facebook account), and at the show.

Tweeting:

- **Parameters:** Twitter allows you to write 140 characters in your tweet. In 2016, an update was released to not include a URL or media (photo or video) as part of the 140 character count. We suggest always uploading photos or videos natively with your tweets as they are more engaging and more likely to be retweeted by other users.
- **Photos:** Try to upload a photo with a horse in it with your tweet if you are unable to upload a video. Drag and drop the photo you wish to use with the tweet. After dragging and dropping a photo into the tweet, click “Who is in this photo?” to the right of the photo. Use this area to tag up to 10 relevant people in the photo. Please tag @USEquestrian, the relevant affiliate (American Saddlebred Association @SaddlebredAssoc in this instance), the location or venue of the show (@RedMileHarness in this instance), the photographer, athlete, and sponsors.



- **Video:** When uploading a video from a desktop, click on your icon and click on “Media Studio” (highlighted below). Within the media studio, click “upload media” and select the video you would like to upload. Once it is finished uploading, click the blue square button below. A new window will populate, and you can select a “cover image” for the video, and also include a call-to-action linking back to your website or Facebook page for more. The description of the video will show up below the video (example below). If you are on mobile, use the Twitter app and record a video vertically to post directly to Twitter, or upload an existing video from your phone to tweet.



- **Best Practices:** If you are going to start a tweet with a tag (@LGravesDressage), you must put a “.” before the tag so or else it will only show up in timelines of people who follow BOTH you and the person you tagged (see example below). If you cannot fit a tag in the tweet tag the photo attached to the tweet with up to 10 people.



- Show your sponsors some love like Hampton Classic did with Land Rover in this tweet.





Instagram

Account set-up

On your smartphone or tablet, go to the iOS App Store or the Google Play store and download the Instagram app. Enter your email or log-in with Facebook. Create a user-name that is easily recognizable as your horse show name. Some real examples include: Devon Horse Show @Devon1896, Hampton Classic @HamptonClassic, The National Horse Show @NationalHorseShow, HITS Horse Shows @HITSHorseShows, etc. Include the dates of the show in the bio and a link to the website or Facebook page of the show.

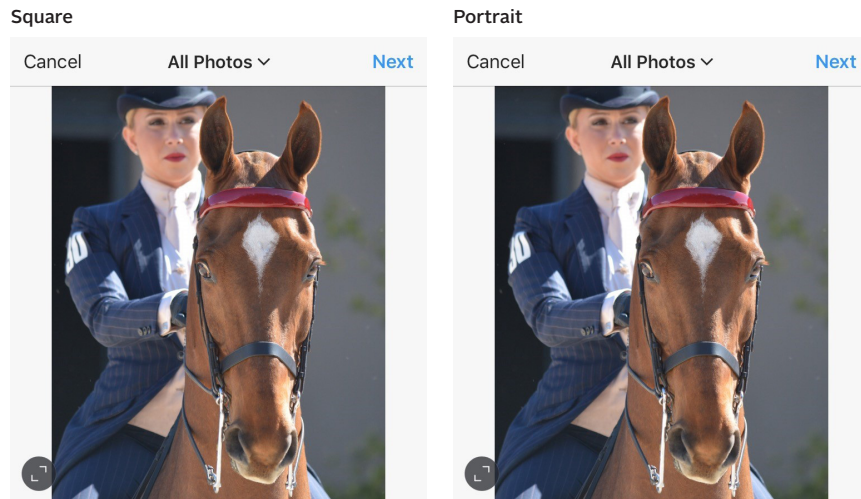


Make your page known:

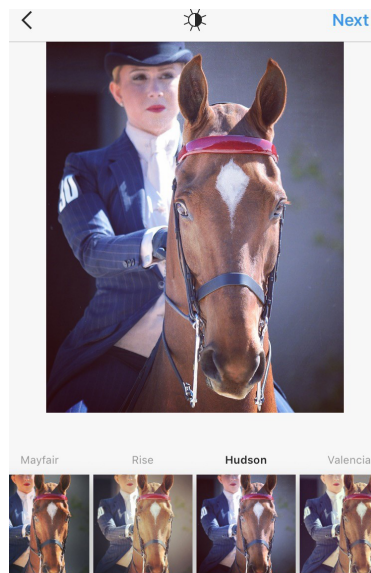
Like and follow relevant industry and athlete accounts like @USEquestrian and @USEFNetwork and use hashtags like #USEquestrian, #JointheJoy, #DiscovertheJoy, #TwoHearts, and discipline and equestrian-specific hashtags like #horse, #dressage, or #arabian. Consistently interact (like, comment, repost – using an app like Repost App) with other equestrian-related posts as well. You can do this by searching through hashtags that are similar to the discipline or breed of your show, and liking and commenting on those photos and videos. Include your Instagram account along with your Facebook and Twitter accounts in email correspondence, show information, on the show website (or Facebook account), and at the show.

Posting:

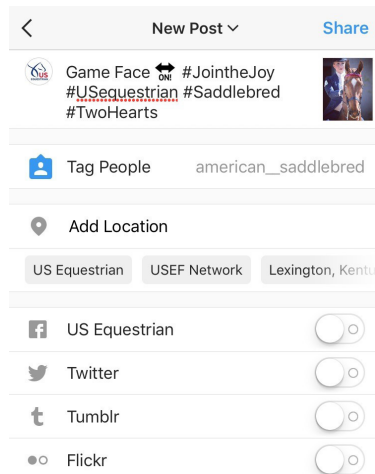
You can post photos or 15 second videos on Instagram. The photos can be landscape, portrait, or square. Portrait photos do best because they take up more of the screen when scrolling through the feed. After you have a photo selected, in order to make it portrait or landscape, you must click the grey circle at the bottom left of the photo with the white arrows (<>). Click Next.



- **Filters:** Choose a filter if you wish to enhance the color of the photo. (“Filtered photos are 21 percent more likely to be viewed and 45 percent more likely to be commented on.” – a 2015 study out of Yahoo Labs)



- **Caption:** Create a caption. Only the first 88 characters show up in the newsfeed before having to click “more” so put what matters first. Post hashtags at the end of your caption.



- **Hashtags:** Create a hashtag for your show to encourage users to post photos, videos and interact. For example, the hashtag for Hampton Classic is #HamptonClassic. Also, try to use broad, widely-used hashtags that will encourage users to find your account like #horse, #horses, #equestrian, and the discipline or breed associated with your show like #saddlebred, #arabian, or #showjumping. Industry hashtags are #USEquestrian, #JointheJoy, #DiscovertheJoy, #TwoHearts.
- **Posting:** Try to post consistently and with a common theme (horses)!
- **Links:** The only place users can click outside of Instagram is on the link in your profile which can be changed at any time! In the body of the post, you can direct users to “click the link in our bio.”
- **Add Location:** Add the location of your posts as the horse show or venue facility. This allows users at the horse show to find your account more easily, and interact with others at the horse show.

US Equestrian hashtags: #USEquestrian, #JointheJoy, #DiscovertheJoy

FEI hashtag: #TwoHearts

Popular hashtags for different days of the week:

Monday: #MotivationMonday

Tuesday: #TriviaTuesday, #TransformationTuesday, #TravelTuesday

Wednesday: #WisdomWednesday, #HumpDay

Thursday: #ThrowbackThursday, #TBT

Friday: #FlashbackFriday, #FBF, #FridayFeeling, #FollowFriday (link to accounts that you want your users to follow)

Sunday: #SundayFunday, #SelfieSunday (great to do a horse selfie)

Have social media questions? We're here to help! Please reach out to Andrea Evans at aevans@usef.org with any questions or concerns.

SPREAD THE NEWS THROUGH US EQUESTRIAN

US Equestrian wants to hear about the latest competition news and welcome press releases about events. Please direct press releases, accompanied by a photo(s), to US Equestrian's communications department at news@usef.org. US Equestrian will make every effort to post information on the USEF Network and include in the US Equestrian newsletter, Equestrian Weekly, with space permitting.

In addition to the press release, please include organization and event social media account names associated with the competition. Remember to tag US Equestrian (@USEquestrian) or add #USEquestrian when posting competition content on social media. This makes it easy for US Equestrian to track and share content. The more pictures or videos incorporated into social media posts, the more engagement we will see throughout the equestrian community and beyond.