



Educational opportunities are as important as saddle time on the road to show jumping dreams.

by Amelia Enzminger

Horses have always been a part of my life, whether mucking a stall or feeling the rush of the show ring, this sport has shown me the importance of holding onto the childlike excitement that struck me the first time I climbed into the saddle. As a first generation show jumper starting around the age of 10, my riding journey didn't begin with trainer parents or posting the trot before

I could walk. From a young age, I remember doing house chores and spending my free time trying to convince my parents to let me take lessons.

Little did I know how much my life would change when a friend from school invited me to summer camp at a local stables. From that point forward, riding was all I could think about. To

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this day, my fascination with the beauty and complexity of the horse has never waivered, inspiring me everyday to pursue a career in the equine world. As the industry becomes more competitive and cutting-edge right before my eyes, the future excites me with thoughts of developments we could make over the next few years. Spending hours researching riding and sport horse management, plus attending clinics whenever I can, I'm constantly driven to work hard by my hunger for knowledge and passion for the sport of show jumping.



For as long as I can remember, the horse industry in the United States has been based solely on what happens within the one to two minutes we have in the big ring. While any good rider understands that the true magic happens in the saddle, many don't take into consideration the importance of furthering equine knowledge on the ground. As a emerging show jumping athlete, I've learned that becoming a true horseman requires time, effort, and focus on and off of the horse.

By taking advantage of clinics and learning opportunities provided by USEF and USHJA, I've learned about topics ranging from equine physical therapy to the importance of positive mentality in a competitive atmosphere. Last year, I was provided with the incredible opportunity to be a member of the first ever Gold Star Clinic-West. By the end of the week, I had a new understanding of the kind of learning I could engage in every day by simply asking questions and paying attention to the kind of work we do on our sport horses.

Upon arriving in Las Vegas for the 1.30/1.35M Jumper National Championships in November, I was ecstatic to see posted signs for free educational sessions on a variety of captivating topics and immediately jumped at the chance. Though at times it was intimidating to be the only junior rider in a room full of business owners and industry professionals, my curiosity pushed me to learn as much as I could about the growing field of study in equine sports medicine and the evolution of farrier work in show horses. This multitude of beneficial information opened my eyes to the growing need for these kinds of clinics outside of the horse show environment so that riders of all backgrounds can have the opportunity to better themselves through education.

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As participants in this sport, we're under a common misconception that the road to the highest level of show jumping can only be paved by the time spent in the saddle. What we need to focus on, however, is how to use hard work and the desire for knowledge to push ourselves to make the best of every opportunity. Through free clinics, I've been able to elevate my knowledge of riding without needing to put a single foot in the stirrup. While eagerly moving towards the next chapter of my show jumping journey, I will continue to be driven by an unmatched determination as I strive in the direction of my dreams.