



A Brief Guide to Horse Shows



Contents

- What are horse Shows?
- Hunter & Jumper Shows
- Types of Shows & Show Circuits
 - Divisions and Classes
 - Signing up for Shows
 - Costs of Showing
- Horse Show Riding Attire
- Rider Responsibilities
 - The Show Routine
 - Show Prep
- A Typical Show Day



What Are Horse Shows?

Horse shows are competitions where riders and their mounts compete against each other in a variety of classes that showcase their skills. Participating in horse shows provide riders with the opportunity to gain experience, build on their skills, connect with others in the riding community, and to show off all of their hard work in the ring. Different riding disciplines have different show structures. Shadowlane riders participate in hunter/jumper shows. These shows consist of different divisions where riders and horses of similar levels compete in judged classes. Like many sports, horse shows have different levels and different circuits or leagues to compete in. What show a rider attends depend on their skill level, experience level, jump height, and their horse's experience and abilities.

Hunter/Jumper Shows

Hunter/jumper shows refer to two English riding disciplines. Hunter riders compete in classes where they and their horse are judged on their technique and presentation. Hunter riders participate in jumping classes and flat classes. Jumper riders compete in jumping classes that are based on speed and the ability to successfully clear jumps. Hunter and jumpers may have their own separate shows, but most shows offer both hunter and jumper classes. This guide will focus primarily on the hunter show styles, as that is where most of our riders begin.

Types of Shows & Show Circuits

Schooling Shows

Schooling shows are the most casual type of show and are great for riders just venturing into the show ring. Schooling shows have divisions available for riders of all ages and experience levels, with some divisions tailored directly to riders brand new to showing. Shadowlane attends local schooling shows that are scheduled throughout the year. The summer series of schooling shows are run by the London Horsemanship Club (LHC). LHC shows are local shows and often have fun divisions for younger and inexperienced riders. LHC also hold a banquet at the end of the year to celebrate everyone who competed in the series. The winter show series is run by Highland Green Stables and is a great way to keep your riding skills from getting rusty through the winter. Most schooling shows are located within a 5 to 30 minute drive from Shadowlane. The attire required for riders competing in schooling shows is quite relaxed; most riders will simply be able to wear the clothes they ride in during their lessons.

Prelude Show Circuit

Prelude shows are a series of local shows that run from spring to early fall. These shows tend to be a little more competitive and a little less casual than schooling shows, but still have divisions that cater to younger and inexperienced riders. Some prelude shows in the circuit are

held very close to Shadowlane, while others can be about an hour away. Riders at these shows often wear more traditional show clothes but more casual riding gear is also seen. Prelude shows are a great way to get a glimpse into the more competitive show series while still enjoying a more relaxed environment.

Trillium Show Circuit

The Trillium show circuit is a provincial competitive show series. Trillium shows are held from spring to early fall, and the shows attended by Shadowlane are hosted by barns across Southwestern Ontario. At the end of the season the top riders from each zone in the province compete at a week-long championship. While Trillium does have some divisions for younger riders, they are geared towards riders with experience in the show ring. The divisions offered at these shows are specific to the Trillium circuit.



What is a division?

A division consists of several classes that the riders compete in. Divisions are designated by the level/experience of the riders, the size of the horse/pony, and/or by fence height. Divisions typically contain three jumping classes and a few flat classes. A rider who enters a division is able to ride in any and all class offered in that division. Each class is judged independently of the others, but at the end of the division the top two riders (those who have gained the most points across all classes in the division) are awarded special prizes; champion and reserve champion. What divisions are offered differ depending on the show type and the show circuit.

Common Divisions

Walk-Trot and Walk-Trot-Canter Divisions

These divisions are intended for inexperienced riders; specifically, those that are only comfortable flatting in a show setting. Some divisions and classes only require riders to walk and trot, while others require walk, trot, and canter. Riders in these divisions should be comfortable riding around others, as the classes will involve many riders going in the ring simultaneously. This division is great for riders who are still learning the ropes or are not yet comfortable jumping and want to experience the fun of showing!

Beginner/Cross Rail Division

The beginner division is intended for inexperienced riders and/or riders new to showing. Riders who have shown at higher levels are not allowed to compete in this division. The beginner division typically has walk/trot flat classes and walk/trot/canter flat classes. There is also the cross rails class, where the riders jump over a simple course of cross rail fences.

Novice & Intermediate Divisions

The novice and intermediate divisions are mid-level divisions, for riders with some experience who are comfortable jumping a full course. Riders who have competed at higher competitive levels are not allowed to compete in these divisions. Novice divisions usually jump 2'0 courses or lower. Intermediate divisions typically offer the choice of 2'0 fences or 2'3 fences. Some shows offer separate novice and intermediate divisions, while others have one or the other.

Open Division

The open division is a division that is open to all riders, including those who have previously shown at higher levels. The open division is typically for more experienced riders and is sometimes used by advanced and professional riders to school inexperienced horses. Most open divisions offer several different fence heights, usually ranging from 2'3 to 3'0. The open divisions may be split into separate divisions based on the chosen heights.

Class Types

Flat Classes

Flat classes are the classes in the division that do not involve jumping. All riders from the division go into the show ring together and must go around the ring according to the instructions given by the judge. This portion is much like riding in a group lesson with the coach telling the riders when to walk, trot, canter, etc. There are two types of flat classes that may be offered at a show; the "under saddle" (or "hack") class, and the "equitation on the flat". The under saddle flat class is judged primarily on how the horse looks and riders will only be asked to walk, trot, canter, halt, or reverse turn. The equitation on the flat is judged primarily on how well the rider looks when riding, and the judge may ask riders for the standard gaits as well as more complex things like the sitting trot.

Over Fences Classes

The over fences classes are the jumping classes. The riders are given a course to memorize and then enter the ring individually to do their trip. For each division, the jumping classes vary by fence height and complexity. Most over fences classes have a warm-up trip as well. The warm-up allows the rider to go in the ring and practice the course with their coach before they go in for their judged trips. As in the flat classes, there are two types of jumping classes; the "hunter over fences" and the "equitation over fences". The hunter over fences class is judged primarily on the horse's movements and how well they complete the course. The equitation over fences is different, with more emphasis on how the rider looks when riding. The equitation course is often a little trickier and less straight forward than the normal hunter over fences classes.



Attending A Horse Show

Picking a show to attend

When signing up for a show, make sure that the show is an appropriate level for the rider. Highland Green, Prelude, and LHC shows are great first shows. Ask your coach if you are unsure which shows would fit best. Also keep in mind the location of the show. Most schooling shows are close to Shadowlane but some can be a bit of a drive. While shows that are farther away are no less fun, they are more of a time commitment than shows that are nearby.

What shows are available and when are they?

The list of upcoming shows is posted in the tackroom on the corkboard. For each show there is also a sign-up list for people who intend to go to that show, along with the horse they would like to take to that show. Signing up makes sure that Carla is aware of what show you wish to go to and ensures that everyone knows which horses are available to take. There is also a list of all the shows Shadowlane is planning on attending this year on the Shadowlane website.

Choosing a horse to take

Riders who do not have a horse of their own may have the use of a lesson horse for the show day. Ensure that it is a horse that the rider is comfortable on and has a good amount of experience riding. Your coach can tell you which horse would be a good fit. A horse may be shared between two riders (ideally with the riders competing in different divisions). If you do share a horse with another rider some of the costs, the work for getting the horse ready to show, taking care of it at the show, and caring for it afterwards will be split between the two riders.



Costs of Horse Showing

Going to a horse show involves certain costs. The costs set by Shadowlane (coaching, horse use, and trailering) will be billed to you by Carla. The registration and sign up fees for the show are paid to the show barn/circuit while at the show. You may also need to purchase some riding clothes or equipment for certain shows.

- Coaching at the show - \$40
- Use of a lesson horse - \$30
- Trailering – ranges from \$35-\$95 depending on location of show
- Registration for classes/division – price set by show – approximately \$35-\$55
- Braiding (optional for most shows) - \$35

*All prices are subject to HST



Horse Show Attire

Different types of shows may have different requirements for what the rider wears. More casual shows allow for more casual attire. Traditional show attire is a requirement for higher level shows. Check with your coach to see what type of riding attire is appropriate for each show.

Traditional Show Attire

This type of attire is mandatory for higher level shows but would not be at all out of place at more casual shows. The outfit consists of tall boots or paddock boots and halfchaps (or paddock boots and knee straps for younger riders), tan breeches, belt, show shirt, show jacket, gloves, and a helmet.

Helmet & Hair
>Black helmet
>Hairnet that matches rider's hair



Show Shirt
>Collared, long sleeve
>Light coloured (white, pink, and blue are common)



Show Jacket
>Black or Navy
>Ensure it fits well when in riding positions



Belt
>Any style or colour
>Large buckles can be uncomfortable when riding



Breeches
>Tan/beige



Gloves
>Black



Boots
>Tall (field) boots for older/high level riders
>Paddock boots and halfchaps are appropriate for some riders/shows



Boots & Knee Straps
>For young riders
>Paddock boots and knee straps that match in colour (black or brown)



Casual Show Attire

The more casual clothes typically include what the rider would usually wear in lessons; a sweater or shirt, riding pants/breeches, riding boots, halfchaps, gloves, and a helmet. Schooling shows take place all year round - winter shows can be very cold, while summer shows can be very hot - so ensure to choose clothes that fit the weather.



Other Optional Show Attire



Horse Show Attire Checklist

- Helmet
 - Black
 - If riding with hair tucked up under the helmet (typical for older/experienced riders at shows) make sure the helmet fits with all your hair in it
- Hairnet
 - Must match the colour of the rider's hair
- Bows (optional)
 - Young riders may wear their hair in a neat braid to show and some like to decorate their braids with bows; this is fun but optional
- Gloves
 - Black riding gloves
- Show Shirt
 - Long sleeved with a collar
 - Come in light colours (white, pink, and blue are common)
- Show Jacket
 - Black or Navy (can be pinstriped or solid)
 - Ensure the sleeves will not be too short when in a riding position (i.e. with bent and extended elbows)
 - Check that the bottom of the jacket will not be too long or too short when sitting
- Riding Pants/Breeches
 - Tan
- Belt (optional depending on show and rider age)
 - Can be any colour, type, or style (as long as they fit the breeches' belt loops)
 - Avoid large buckles, they can be uncomfortable when riding
- Boots – 3 Options
 - Option 1: Short Riding Boots and Halfchaps
 - Black or brown (boots and halfchaps must match in colour)
 - Option 2: Short Riding Boot and Knee Straps
 - Knee straps are thin pieces of leather that are a substitute for halfchaps for young riders (12 years and under)
 - Black or brown (knee straps must match boot colour)
 - Option 3: Tall (Field) Boots
 - Black or brown boots that reach the knees
 - Typically more expensive
 - Required for older riders that are at the Trillium level or above



Responsibilities of the Rider

Horse shows are tons of fun and can be very rewarding, but it also requires lots of work and is often a full day commitment. When attending the show, the rider is responsible for all the care of their horse (unless sharing the horse, where the responsibilities are split). It is important to remember that riding is a team sport, and your equine teammate needs you as much as you need them. The rider must get their horse show ready, get them on the trailer to go to the show, ensure the horse has food and water and is comfortable throughout the show day, care for them after competing, and get the horse home. With this in mind it is always helpful for riders to have someone with them on show day to give them a hand. All of this can certainly seem overwhelming at first but the coaches and your fellow riders are always happy to help out and the more you show the more comfortable the routine becomes.

What Riders are Responsible for Bringing to the Show

★ Stared items will be at Shadowlane, they just need to be brought to the show

- Show outfit
 - See show clothes checklist
- A check or cash
 - Required to register the rider at the show and to pay the show fees
- Any needed riding aids*
 - These include things like spurs and whips, as some horses may need them
 - These may be shared by other riders (unless you have some of your own), just be sure what you need for your horse gets packed for the show
- Tack*
 - Ensure that the horse's tack is packed in the trailer for the show
 - This includes the bridle, saddle, girth, show saddle pad, and additional support pads (riser and wither pads) if needed
- Horse's head gear*
 - Show halter and lead – these will need to be on the horse to go to the show
 - In the summer time also bring the horses flymask for when they are not being ridden
- Cooler & Blankets (In Cold Weather)*
 - The horse will need a cooler to wear when they are not being ridden – the horse will likely wear the cooler to the show (instead of being the cooler being packed)
 - If it is very cold or the horse will be on the trailer for long periods of time be sure to bring their blanket to keep them warm
- Food & Water
 - Be sure to bring lots to drink and something to eat; you may be at the show awhile
 - Most shows also have food stands where you can buy food and beverages
- Non-show clothes
 - Before and after showing you will likely want different clothes to change into, both for comfort and to keep the show clothes clean

- In the summer show clothes can be hot, you will want something cooler to change into after showing
- In the winter make sure to bring lots of warm layers



The Show Routine

Preparing for the Show – The Day Before

The day before a horse show all the riders must get everything ready for the show. Riders will come out to the barn in the afternoon/evening to prepare. This can take a while, especially for those new to the routine, so plan for about two hours at the barn. Below is the general checklist of the tasks that those showing must complete. Feel free to ask for help if you are unsure about any part of the show prep!

Show Prep Checklist

- Bath horse (temperature permitting)
 - Wet and shampoo horse's body and tail (pay special attention to white spots!)
 - Wet the mane but do not use shampoo on it
 - Thoroughly rinse (any soap left on can make the horse itchy and uncomfortable)
 - If chilly, the horse must have a cooler on while drying
 - Make sure the tail is thoroughly washed and has conditioner (e.g. showsheen) in it before brushing it - brushing a dirty or tangled tail will cause the brush to rip out hair - always start from the bottom of the tail and go up, being careful not to tug on it
 - After their bath put the horse in their assigned stall with hay and water or out in the field once dry
- Clean tack
 - This includes the bridle, saddle, girth, show halter, and show lead
 - The horse will wear some of its usual tack along with some assigned show tack - be sure to check what tack your horse will wear
 - The show tack may need to be tried on the horse to ensure it fits properly
- Get trailer ready
 - Spread shavings in the horse's assigned trailer spot (which spot belongs to which horse will either be written on a board or told to all riders)
 - Fill the haynet for that trailer spot
 - Pack tack on the trailer (unless going to the show with tack on)
 - Pack 2 extra bales of hay (small bales found in the big barn)*
 - Fill water jugs and pack them in the trailer*
 - Pack 2 buckets for horses to drink from*
 - Pack a broom and pitchfork*

- Ensure that a tall stool is packed (riders will need it for mounting) *
- Make sure ring box is packed*
- Check that nothing will be in the way of trailer spots or could fall into the spots while the trailer is moving - We don't want our horses getting caught up in something!*

★ Stared items are group tasks – try to split the work evenly amongst everyone participating

The Show Day

On the day of the show riders should be at the barn about an hour before the trailer is scheduled to leave (the time will be posted or sent to participating riders). The riders will need to get their horses ready to get on the trailer and pack anything the rider may need from the barn. Once at the show the rider will need to be registered and will have to prepare for their classes. The rider will warm up their horse in the warm up ring with their coach, and then will go into the ring to compete when their turn comes. Once everyone has finished showing, the horses will get ready to go back on the trailer and will head back to Shadowlane. The horse will need to be taken care of afterwards and everything used at the show will need to be cleaned and put away. The amount of time spent at the show depends on the number of riders attending, the size of the divisions, and how quickly the show is running. As there is lots to do, showing is often a full day commitment.

At Shadowlane – Before Going to the Show

- Brush & clean horse
 - Horses may have gotten a little dirty since the day before - make sure they are clean and beautiful!
 - Some may have gotten stains overnight and may need a spot wash in the wash stall
- Switch the horse's normal halter for their leather show halter and make sure the leather lead rope is out and ready to use
- Make sure any and all needed tack and equipment is packed
- Cooler (and blanket if needed) on the horse or packed on trailer *For chilly weather only*
- Load the horses on the trailer
 - Loading the horses starts ten minutes before the trailer is scheduled to leave
 - Only load when there is an experienced person supervising

At the Show

- All riders must register at the registration booth
 - Forms will need to be filled out to register the rider for their desired classes/division (check with Carla if you are unsure what to sign up for)
 - Child participants will need a guardian/supervising adult to sign their forms
 - Payment for the show fees will be given at this time
 - Rider will be given a number that they must wear whenever they are mounted

- Riders should check in at their ring and see how long until they are supposed to compete
 - Tell your coach, they will let the rider know when to get ready
- Warming Up
 - When it is approaching time for the rider to show, the rider will need to warm up their horse
 - Both the rider and horse should be fully dressed and ready to ride when the time to warm up comes
 - At this time get on your horse and head to the warm up ring with your coach
- Going in the show ring
 - When it is their turn the rider will head into the show ring to compete in their classes with their coach supervising (never go in the ring without your coach present!)
- Pinning
 - Pinning is when the winners of each class are announced
 - The top riders of each class will be placed from first to sixth (sometimes with a seventh place as “reserve”)
 - Riders may be asked to jog their horses into the ring, running next to them with no tack on their back, in order to get their ribbons - this ensures that each horse is sound (i.e. not limping) and that each rider gets their correct ribbon
 - The judge will place riders according to how well they preformed their given objective, how nice the horse looked/behaved, how nice the rider looked, and how well the horse-rider combo followed riding rules (like correct diagonals)
 - Judging is subjective and even a great ride may not place depending on the other riders in the class and on the judges point of view, so no one should feel bad for not placing as long as they gave it their best shot!
- When finished showing
 - Riders will untack and groom their horses and then get them settled (either on the trailer or being held by their rider somewhere comfortable)
 - Make sure to offer your horse water and make sure they have plenty of food
 - Load up any equipment or tack that you no longer need
 - Return the rider’s number to the registration booth
- When everyone is done showing
 - All horses and equipment will be loaded and everyone will head back to Shadowlane

At Shadowlane – After the Show

- Unload horses & care for horses
 - Horses will come off the trailer and be taken care of - this may include putting liniment on their legs
 - Be sure to ask your coach what care your horse requires
- Turn out horses in their field or put in their stall
 - Ensure that the horse has all of their own gear on (halter, flymaks, blankets, etc.)

- Unload and clean the trailer
 - All tack and equipment should be taken off the trailer and put away
 - Each trailer spot needs to be mucked out and the clean shavings swept to the sides
 - Any loose hay should be put in the haynets
- Put away show tack
 - The tack may need to be cleaned first if it got dirty while at the show