



The Scourge of Overuse of Horses in Showing and How We Can Remedy It

By Armand Leone

Armand argues for limits on the number of classes any one horse can jump to combat the overshadowing issue and promote fair use of horses in his latest article on [The Chronicle of the Horse](#).

I was delighted to hear that the horse welfare-focused town hall meeting hosted by US Equestrian (USEF) in June in Lexington, KY, included “open dialogue on concepts including potential rule and policy changes aimed at improving horse safety and well-being.” I applaud USEF for tackling this multifaceted issue directly and publicly.

Unfortunately, the town hall failed to address one of the most significant root problems of horse abuse: the overuse of horses in jumping-based competition for economic and personal gain.

Currently, USEF and United States Hunter Jumper Association (USHJA) rules do not restrict the number of classes that a horse can compete in per day, week, or month. It is now high time for USEF to enforce meaningful limits on the number of classes in which horses can compete on a daily and monthly basis.



Armand Leone believes set class limits are the best way to discourage overuse of jumping horses in competition. Photo by Kimberly Loushin/[COTH](#)

There is no union for horses, but there are existing examples where fair horse usage rules are already in place, including New York City carriage horses, and at US Dressage (USDF) recognized competitions, governed by USEF rules.

Like other professional sports, there is generally no longer an off-season for horses. National and international competitions are held year-round, unlike in the past. Supply-side economics predicts that the greater the quantity of classes available, the more classes horses will compete in.

However, horses have limited life spans. The length of a horse’s competitive career depends not only on its physical conformation, but even more on the quality of its management throughout its active years. Overuse is a significant cause of injury and curtails many equine athletes’ careers. While some injuries are unavoidable, preventing overuse helps minimize the chance of injury. The show environment is challenging — both physically and mentally — and each competition can also include long journeys for our equine friends.

Clearly, there should be some limit on the number of competitive rounds a horse is allowed to do; it is both ethical and responsible. But how might that work? There are ways that USEF can encourage sensible and reasonable limitations on equine competitive stressors. Developing a rule that accommodates the need to show while capping the number of classes the horse competes in would address the issue.

For example, a general restriction of three shows per month could be implemented, with a maximum of three consecutive days of showing permitted, and — dependent on fence height — a maximum number of jumping classes per horse per day:

- Course above 1.30m — Two classes
- Course 1.20m to 1.30m — Three classes
- Course below 1.20m — Four classes

[Read the Full Article on The Chronicle of the Horse](#)

[Read All Armand Leone’s Opinion Pieces on COTH](#)

Advice: How To Prevent Buyer’s Remorse

By Armand Leone and Jessica E. Choper



Taking simple steps can help ensure a smooth purchase process. Photo by [Jump Media](#)

Purchasing a new horse can be an exciting time. However, there are scenarios when buyer’s remorse can creep in — the horse goes mysteriously lame shortly after arriving at his new home or has a drastic change in personality. These types of situations can quickly ruin a relationship between a buyer and a seller after a sale. You, as the buyer, might feel duped and even consider suing the seller with a claim of non-disclosure and fraud, which could lead to costly legal fees. Below are a few basic guidelines to follow during the purchasing process that can help give you all the answers you need to make an informed decision.

- Schedule a Pre-Purchase Exam
- Arrange a Trial Period
- Be Realistic

By following these guidelines, you can lessen the possibility of disappointment, avoid the cost of litigation after a sale if things don’t work out as planned, and begin to enjoy your new partner. Making an informed decision prior to purchase, with all the necessary information about the horse, is the best way to help achieve these goals.

[Read the Full Story on Sidelines](#)

For advice and counsel related to the equestrian industry, contact Leone Equestrian Law at info@equestriancounsel.com.

Led by Armand Leone, Jr., MD, JD, MBA, Leone Equestrian Law LLC provides legal services and consultation for equestrian professionals ranging from riders and trainers to owners and show managers in the FEI disciplines on a wide variety of issues.

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