

Practice Course

Peter Holmes

Holly Grayton

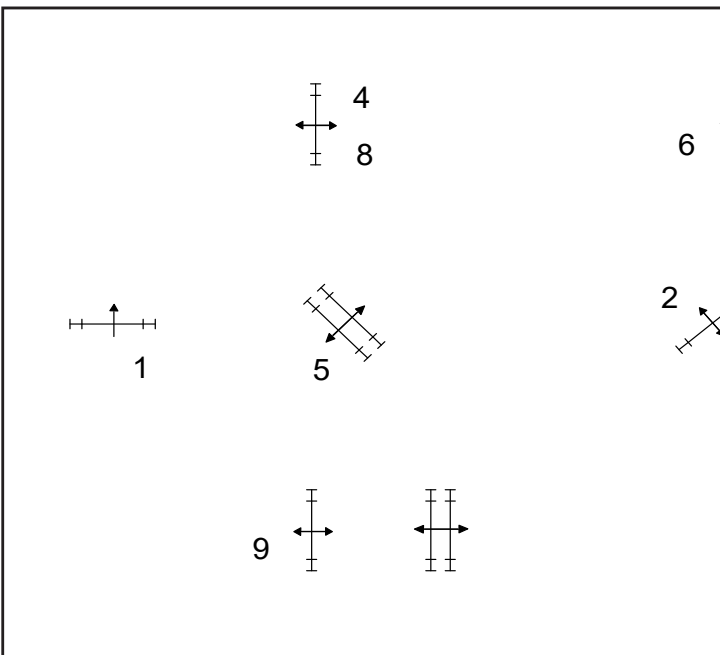


Peter Holmes has been a long time favourite course designer for me. Not only does he hail from my hometown of Victoria, BC, which puts me in his corner, but he is the type of person you want creating your test for the day.

When I worked for Jonathan Asselin I remember watching him riding one of Peter's courses and Peter was right beside me jumping

up and down with each effort the horse made hoping he would beat the course he had set. Some 15 years later Peter did the same thing for me in a 1.20m class standing beside my

husband! Peter is a class act and really wants the best for horse and rider.

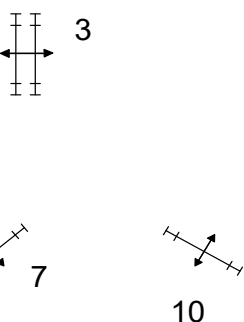


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Equestrisol quoted Peter as saying, "For a while I did get course designers disease – doing things that are clever, but not so good for the horses; it wasn't good course designing. I remember one day Albert Kley (Spruce Meadows Riding Master) said to me 'Peter, what are you doing?' It was the trainers who talked me into coming back down to earth. Your perspective changes a lot with experience – you see things from a different





viewpoint. With good course design, you want horses to go well. In the end, your goal is for

the riders to have success on course and the horses to enjoy it. I truly love watching horses jump. My favourite moment is when a rider pulls up after completing a course and pats their horse.”

It was a natural fit when I was thinking of asking a course designer for an at-home course to keep our horses sharp during show season.

The course as Peter describes it:

The course has jumps set off the rail so horses can exercise on the flat without moving jumps. A straight line of maybe 6 strides is used (#3-4) on course for pace practice and some bending lines where riders could do varying strides (eg. 7-8, 5-6) for jump off practice.

At a show, one course is set up for many horses to compete over. Riders choose their pace and line to find the best striding for their horses. Show jumping is more than just a numbers and distance game however, and the horses way of going makes things much easier or harder. A good course tries to allow the horse to maintain a consistent rhythm not to interrupt the horses forward movement with sharp or awkward corners.



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