



SHARON P. FIBELKORN

Upward transitions often make the difference between a blue ribbon and no ribbon. In a flat class, it's not a contest to see which rider can get into a canter first; it's about who can properly apply their aids to achieve a well-executed canter. The competitors who chase their horses into the canter with a driving leg, and then yank back on the reins when the horse gallops off, are penalized by the judge. It's far better horsemanship to quietly transition into a canter from the walk, even if it takes a few extra seconds.

A well-schooled horse should step sprightly into the canter. When asking for an upward transition into the canter, it's best to follow these three steps: ask your horse. If you don't get a response, then tell your horse. And finally demand if he has ignored the increased leg aids. Your horse will learn to respect your leg because he knows you'll follow up with a more aggressive request if he doesn't comply. And your transitions will be smooth enough to impress any horse show judge. —Cindy Hale

PONY MAKES IT BIG IN EVENTING

When ThinLine Pads announced its sponsorship of Theodore O'Connor, it was noted that not only is "Teddy" a worthy athlete, he's believed to be the first Advanced Level eventer to hold a United States Equestrian Federation permanent pony card, a document that confirms he's under 14.2 hands. Teddy is ridden by Olympian Karen O'Connor and owned by Sportponies Unlimited. "Our sport needs stars like Teddy to attract attention from both spectators and sponsors," says P. Wynn Norman, the owner of Sportponies Unlimited. "Teddy is unusual, talented and shows the public a lot of personality."

For more information, visit www.sportponiesunlimited.com and www.thinlinepads.com.



SPORTHORSESTUDIO.COM

New Championship for Young Dressage Riders

The United States Equestrian Federation Dressage Committee has launched a new dressage championship program for 2006. The Passage Cup, which will be held for the first time June 15 - 18 in Gladstone, N.J., is designed for riders ages 18 - 26 who are competing at the Intermediare-II level. "With this exciting new program, we're looking to 'bridge the gap' for our talented dressage riders who are graduating from the Young Rider ranks to High Performance competitors," says George Williams, chairman of the USEF's High Performance Dressage Committee. "We hope that the Passage Cup will be a yearly goal for this age group and help develop our future U.S. dressage team members."

For more information, visit www.usef.org.



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A Saddle You Can Jump Into

Courbette's latest saddle, the AXXIS Close Contact Saddle, promises riders "More Saddle for Less Money."

The AXXIS features Courbette's flexible E-Motion spring tree with memoryflex panels designed to adapt to fit most breeds. The saddle also offers extra-soft seat padding and jumping blocks. Soft, easy grip leather comes in a Newmarket color, with seat sizes ranging from 16 to 17%.

For more information, visit www.courbette.com. 

