

Ride After the Jump

By Cindy Hale

So much preparation is spent riding toward a jump that riders often neglect to continue riding after the jump. Whether it's contemplating what just went wrong, mentally celebrating a wondrous effort or just plain old daydreaming, a lot can go wrong if active riding ceases when the horse's front feet land.

When your horse lands after a jump, continue riding forward. Unless there's a need for an immediate rollback turn, ride in a straight line. With each stride concentrate on your horse: Is his pace too fast or too slow; are you on the correct lead; is he falling in or drifting out; is he leaning on your hands? Now is your chance to fix any problems. If you wait until you're in the middle of your turn, you'll lose your length of stride and your horse's impulsion. Usually what follows next is a sudden surge out of the turn, as you try to "send" your horse to the upcoming jump. The judge easily notices such erratic changes in pace. To win a ribbon in hunters, you need to keep your horse flowing around the course, and that is best achieved when you ride the entire trip, including those first few strides after each jump.