

Showing, Take Two

By Holly Werner

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Photo by Philip Caccamise Sunday marked the return of Zephyr and I to the show world. It had been kind of a rough late spring/early summer for us, but I decided to hack down the road about a mile or so from my boarding barn and go to a combined test schooling show (dressage and stadium jumping), entering the Beginner Novice (2'7") and Novice (2'11"). Luckily the forecast was for no rain and temperatures in the MID-SEVENTIES! In Kentucky in July! Unheard of.

Our first dressage test was a little rough, because he was still a bit unfocused. An hour later we had our next test, but they were running pretty late. We warmed up for so long we were exhausted by the time we went! Other than some extremely trapezoidal canter circles, it was a big improvement on the first test. I went to pick up the tests afterwards to look at my scores and was shocked at how difficult they were judging us. Then I found out one of them was a dressage judge for the Rolex Kentucky Three-Day Event!?! Yikes! But we did manage one "8" from him, so that was nice and unexpected.

Next I had to quickly run to our stuff, strip off the dressage tack, and whip on the jumping boots and saddle. Running late on the novice dressage made us REALLY late for the beginner novice show jumping. I zoomed over there and popped over approximately two warm-up fences before they called my number. Thankfully, Zephyr was a saint! He felt very push-button and packed me around to a nice, clear round. They pinned the division and we even got a ribbon (sixth place – about mid-pack).

Last was the Novice jumping round. I watched them hike the jumps up and measure them to make sure they were maxed out. Mostly just the first jump looked scary to me: an airy set of striped rails headed downhill, followed by four tight bending strides to a white gate, followed by another downhill bending line to a large yellow-and-green oxer. But my boy came through and sailed around cleanly ... I guess being tired is a good thing! We've been working on our fitness for this type of show that can really wear you down. We found ourselves with another sixth place ribbon. Hooray, we made it!

Wait, what's that you say? We still have to hack all the way home?! My legs were absolutely killing me by then; I can't even imagine how Zephyr's back felt. Yet somehow, somewhere, he found the energy to spook and snort when a thundering herd of Thoroughbred broodmares saw him and came charging down the hill to their fence, then wheeled around and took off again. Fortunately there was a very wide strip of grass for us to ride on so we weren't in the street. I've never been so happy to dismount as I was when we got home.

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