



The Cross Buck

RECOGNIZE that this can be a very dangerous obstacle if horses have not had an opportunity to understand it on the ground first. These logs are unforgiving and could create situations where horses feel claustrophobic and when their feet are trapped, could produce panic at any point along the body of the obstacle.

REALIZE:

Entrance: your horse must line up with the exact middle where the logs cross each other (the lowest point of this obstacle). You should also get yourself situated before reaching the obstacle which would mean that your horse needs to be at or near the end of your line so that you are free from reaching into the obstacle "body" and possibly tripping yourself.

Body: your horse needs to be able to look down at the logs and be responsible for his feet. If you look down instead of up and beyond you will make his job much more difficult. This is not an obstacle that the judge will want to see you meander through! Straight and centred through the body will not only get you a "0" score, it is the safest way to handle this obstacle together. Add forward motion with your horse looking down and you may get you a "wow" point.

Exit: collecting up your line or reins too soon at this point will probably interfere with having your horse walk straight out of the obstacle at least one horse length. Try not to change a thing until you are well out of the obstacle. Let your horse be responsible for his feet and let him feel your leadership by looking up and ahead, slowly gathering your line or reins if you need to.

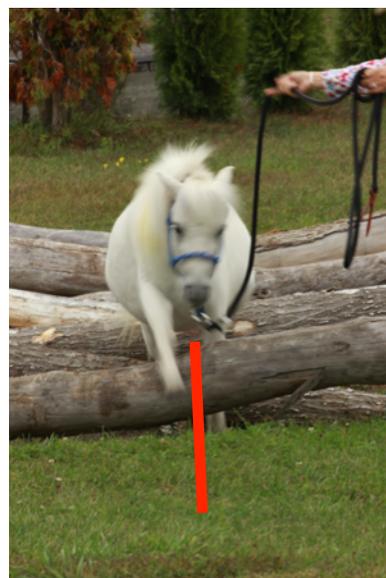
REMEMBER: A must for this obstacle is to start on the ground with 2 or 3 poles that cross each other with lots of width between them. Start to build confidence and successful opportunities for your horse to understand how to solve the problem before adding more poles. Three or more cavalettis can help him practise lifting his feet up and over something before adding a complicated design. Once again teach your horse to feel your intentional energy from the end of your lead line and with the longest of reins so that you leave them to do what they need to do.. "Leading is never a position but a way of being."

This horse was allowed to have slack in the line and the human was at the end of it, however you can see that although pretty relaxed he was too far to the right of the obstacle and stepping over the higher side. He was also not straight as seen by the angle of his hips. Points would be deducted for lack of centre and straightness and there would most likely be some "ticking" of the logs, which would result in a deduction.



This horse has chosen a nice straight path but you can see it is not centred. Teaching your horse on the ground to follow your feel from the end of your line will help him to be centred as well. The soft eye and ears forward show relaxation which is a very good thing but given a longer lead line he should feel more freedom to stretch down to see where he is going.

This horse was straight and centred across the body. This was a youth rider but if this were an adult with more weight, the fact that there was some imbalance in the saddle would probably result in the horse moving off centre as well. I thought she did a very good job though and what I really love is that she was looking up and ahead. Remember you are not being judged alone but your horsemanship skills sure influence your horse's success.



NAILED IT!!!! straight and centred, especially impressive since his little legs are just a little higher than the criss cross of the logs. Chances are his entry and exit were straight and centred. I remember this little pony having lots of try. He never waverednow if we can just get him to the end of the line. :-)