

Introduction to Show Jumping

Show jumping is a year round sport enjoyed by a wide range of people, from professionals to those who have never been near a horse. Television coverage of events such as Olympia and Hickstead has made the sport more accessible to the general public and encouraged individuals to give it a try.

The thrill of leaving the ground combined with the challenge of riding a technically difficult course has made it a popular discipline across the boards. The BSJA (British Show Jumping Association) is the governing body for the sport and a great first point of contact for anyone wanting to have a go. Depending on your age The Pony Club or your local Riding Club can also help someone start their show jumping career.



To find your nearest Pony Club branch look on the main Pony Club website, www.pcuk.org, or give them a call on 024 7669 8300. Being a member of The Pony Club provides children with a wealth of opportunities and among them is the chance to have a go at show jumping. The Pony Club provides a fun, relaxed and safe environment in which to try the sport and they can also help should you want to pursue it to a higher level. Pony Club rallies and Pony Club Camp include tuition in show jumping and are an ideal way for your child to have a “taster” and see if show jumping is for them.

Once you have joined the Pony Club your branch will inform you when the rallies and Pony Club Camp take place. At both, children are taught by qualified instructors who can provide tuition in every discipline. How often rallies occur is up to the individual branch but there will be a minimum of three a year lasting approximately two hours each, again depending on your child’s age.

Pony Club Camp takes place in the summer holidays and lasts for a week during which children are encouraged to try out every discipline and can also have more intensive tuition in show jumping if they choose. It is part of the Pony Club ethos that each child is given a basis in every aspect of horsemanship before they concentrate on one particular discipline.

There are two Pony Club run show jumping competitions a year although each branch will hold competitions of their own. The Dengie Winter League provides children with the chance to compete in an event suited to their ability and also improve their performance. The second event is the Horse and Pony Magazine Championships, which is again an opportunity for children to experience a competition. The BSJA (British Show Jumping Association) holds more than 4,200 competitions a year to suit all abilities. Pony Clubbers and new members are offered discounts to join the BSJA, which is also good place to try show jumping if you are no longer eligible for the Pony Club.

If you do not wish to join the BSJA but want to give show jumping a try, a number of their shows have classes which you can take part in. The advantage of trying it out at a BSJA show is that you will be safe in the knowledge the course has been well thought out and constructed. If when you are at the show you want to have a go at the affiliated course you can buy a BSJA ticket at a cost of £6. You can buy tickets at any BSJA show and they also include cover for personal liability insurance while you are at the show.

To find out what shows are going on look at the BSJA website, www.bsja.co.uk as it has a list of all show dates throughout the year. Once you become a member you can subscribe to monthly Show Dates, which will keep you up to date with all the latest information. Membership to the BSJA costs from £50 - £110 in the first year to £65 - £110 in the second year. To receive Pony Club or Riding Club discounts you will need to prove that you are a member.

Riding Clubs also put on their own shows and training days for show jumpers and like the Pony Club provide for every level. To find your nearest Riding Club branch go the BHS website, www.bhs.org.uk, or give them a call on 0844 848 16666. British Riding Clubs is affiliated to the BHS and has 450 member clubs in the UK. The advantage of joining one of these clubs is that they are run under BHS rules and regulations. Riding Clubs like the Pony Club provide a host of all-round opportunities for riders and are a good point of contact to find out about what is happening in your area.