

GUIDELINES OF AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN AN OWNER AND RIDER

The EHOA firmly believes that what is agreed between the owners of event horses and those who ride and train the horses for them is a private and personal matter and does not favour the implementation of a standard agreement. This leaflet gives owners guidance as to the points they should consider when reaching an agreement with their riders.

General Points:

- Attempt at all times to do what is in the best interests of the horse.
- Be clear about what you want and communicate that to your rider.
- Make sure you are having fun; it is too much time and money otherwise.
- Be clear about terms – ideally, after discussion, have a letter of understanding about key issues.

Key Issues:

- The charge rate (livery, riding fees etc) and what is/is not included.
- When rates will be reviewed and what notice will be given.
- Other charges such as farrier, travel, away from home schooling.
- Which vet will be used and arrangement for payment of veterinary fees.
- Confirm exactly what the horse is covered for under insurance and who is responsible for arranging and renewing the policy.
- Check that the rider is covered for Personal Accident cover.
- How the competition schedule will be decided and who will do the entries. If a horse is double entered, an understanding of where the owner's horse is in the pecking order.
- The split between the owner and rider on prize money and prizes in kind.
- Who pays if a horse does something that only suits the rider – long distance event, lecture/demo – eg owner does not pay travel costs.
- Arrangements for the owner being kept informed of progress and future plans.
- The period of notice should the owner or rider wish to cease the arrangement.
- Mutual respect – be professional and support your rider/owner. It is natural to gossip and complain, but too much undermines the relationship.

Communications:

- Making every effort on this front will pay dividends in terms of a long term relationship.
- Both parties need to be open and honest. No owner should expect to hear what a rider thinks of their horse from a third party, nor should the rider expect to hear what the owner thinks of his/her riding the owner's horse from a third party.
- Be clear about mutual expectations of the horse and what will happen if these expectations look unlikely to be met – some owners will want to sell, others to move to another rider.

Ensure a good horse/rider fit:

- At the professional level owners and riders should encourage each other to get it right in the interests of the horse and not take it personally if a change is needed.
- Some owners will be more committed to the rider than the horse. Other owners will be more committed to their horse. The rider needs to understand fully the relationship between the horse and its owner.
- If an owner decides to sell a horse the rider is keen on, initial efforts should be made to sell so that the rider can keep the ride if possible.
- If a relationship needs to change or end, try to achieve this with good grace.

Commission Rates:

- Agree commission rates in the event of a purchase/sale where possible. It may not be the original aim to sell but circumstances can change.
- A lot of time and effort goes into buying and selling and the commission rate should reflect this. Circumstances will differ between professional and amateur riders.
- Professional agents tend to charge 10% commission to the purchaser. If the rider acts as the agent they should not expect to get commission both ends of the deal without the owner clearly understanding that they are receiving money from the purchaser as well.
- If the owner sells the horse a commission may be paid to the rider as a compensatory fee for the work they have put in. If so, the rider should be a willing participant in the sale – showing the horse, helping with the vetting etc.
- In some cases the rider likes to own a small percentage of the horse so that he/she has some say in any sale decision. This situation should be clarified when the rider takes the horse on.

These notes are suggested guidelines only. The EHOA takes no responsibility for any document in the future that constitutes an Agreement between an owner and their rider.