

Bad trainers + beginner riders + 3'6" fences = SCARY/STUPID
<http://groups.myspace.com/hunterjumps>

From a post on one of my groups -

Worth resaying - the girl was 14, riding for less than a year, and was jumping 3'6" at camp and asked what everyone thought. EVERYONE thought it sounded pretty damn stupid.

My reply:

Um ditto to everyone else out there. Sure - a push button horse pointed at a 3'6" fence w/a beginner rider can probably handle it and from the sounds of it, you didn't get hurt - THIS TIME.

Here's some food for thought - how big was this horse's stride (in feet)? How many strides did you need to the fence? Coming off the fence - between fences? What's the average horse's stride length? How does this horse compare to the standard hunter stride on course? How does the horse like to jump - chip, fly, just right and do you know the difference and why horses do what they do? And how to correct it if you hit a wrong spot?

Counting 1, 2, 3 to a fence does not at ALL by any means constitute knowing where to take off. Anyone can count strides but how do you pick your distances? If you just trust the horse to do it for you, eventually he'll make a mistake and if you don't know how to ride that long spot or that half stride chip, you're in for a world of hurt.

I've been riding for 25+ years, even went to Centenary and got my degree in training, and evented jumping solid obstacles up to 4', and that took YEARS to get to. Even now, my Grand Prix horse that I will be training with one of the top Grand Prix riders on the East Coast, and showing professionally in the next year or two when he is ready is only doing a max of 2'6" - 3' to school on a regular basis, even though he's jumped 4'3" under saddle and 5'6" free jumped. There's a whole lot of technical work we are doing well before we start hitting the pro shows. And it sounds like that's a lot of what you are missing.

Like stridage and the difference in riding a vertical or an oxer or a triple bar or a 1 stride or a bounce and how all of that affects the rest of the course. Riding a gymnastic combination for balance and position and takeoff spots. Lead changes over fences, riding deeper to bigger fences, jumping up and down inclines, over liverpools, taking a broken line vs. a bending line vs. a straight line vs. a combination thereof that includes oxers, combinations, triple bars, and liverpools.

Hey - I don't think anyone here is bashing you - we just all want you to know how stupid and dangerous what you're doing is, and if you are comfortable with that, well then hey, that's your prerogative.

Final Thought: Christopher Reeves - AKA Superman - was jumping a well-trained horse that he had ridden before with an excellent trainer that knew what he was doing, and the horse was a good jumper and knew his distances and was able to just point at a fence and go. Look how tragically that turned out. Even the best horses make mistakes.

Guts only get you so far. Skills and Heart will get you Grand Prix.