



Leone Equestrian Law LLC

Your Legal Questions Answered!

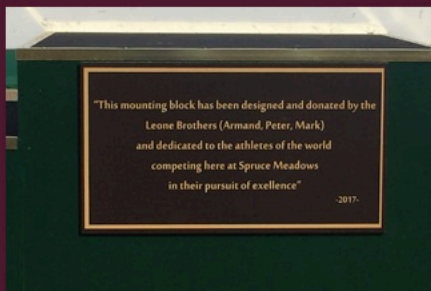
Do you have your own equine legal question that needs answered? Or a situation in which you could really use some advice?

Submit any equestrian legal questions by [email here](#) with the subject line "Leone Equestrian Law Q&A."

We'll answer your questions in our monthly newsletter or on the [Leone Equestrian Law Facebook page!](#)

In the Community

Next time you're at Spruce Meadows in Calgary, Alberta, keep your eyes out for this new mounting block, donated by Armand Leone and his brothers, Peter and Mark.



The placard reads: "This mounting block has been designed and donated by the Leone Brothers (Armand, Peter, Mark) and dedicated to the athletes of the world competing here at Spruce Meadows in their pursuit of excellence."

Throughout the month of October, Leone Equestrian Law's Armand Leone has weighed in on "the mollification of American show jumping" in a three-part series, published by the **Chronicle of the Horse**.

Find excerpts and links to the full-text of each article below, and subscribe to the *Chronicle of the Horse* to read more 'Between Rounds' columns with Armand Leone as they appear.

Part One: In Praise of the Difficult Ones

HORSE SHOWS
BETWEEN ROUNDS WITH:
ARMAND LEONE

In Praise of The Difficult Ones

In the first of this three-part series about "the mollification of American show jumping," our columnist looks at the way bad horses make good riders.

PHOTO BY FRANK SORGE FOR ARND BRONKHORST



Although British, British and other ponies were originally featured in great prize classes in the 1970s, U.S. grand prix classes have pulled the slides and bank jumps out of events like the Hurdle Derby in Germany.

Island, modeled after the Hickstead and Hamburg Derbies in Europe, tested the scope and courage of riders and horses. Today, I doubt any one of our U.S. grand prix riders could jump a horse round over that course. In fact, how many of our country's riders have even successfully competed in the Hickstead Derby, the Hamburg Derby or the Hickstead Derby in the last five years? I would venture to guess you could count the answer on your fingers.

Only Spruce Meadows (Canada) has maintained the standards of jumping that we used to have in the United States, and that we were exposed to by Baker, Mische and Carruthers. There are no slides and bank jumps in our grand prix classes today. Five grand prix riders still make the bank jumps, and I can only think of two winners that have ridden such jumps.

Our younger riders today don't have the necessary experience, toughness and knowledge to jump these courses. They may tell you that their horses are too valuable or too good to risk injury in such an event. That is not true. The horses today are no more valuable in relative terms today than ours were then, and their legs were no less susceptible to injury back then.

If it was Baker, Mische and Carruthers who introduced us to these

jumps, it was Bertalan de Nieuwerf, George Morris, Frank Chaput, Neil Shapiro and others who taught us how to ride and jump them. These coaches bridged the gap between American and European show jumping. Although our younger riders ride well, they again don't have the mental or physical toughness to jump what we jumped 40 years ago. Well-meaning and wealthy, but misguided parents try to help their children by making everything too nice and simplified, and this ultimately creates their growth and potential as world-class riders.

Thelwell Ponies Taught Grit

These days, you will see younger riders of today likely never had a Thelwell pony or we did not call it referring to the kind of pony depicted in Norman Stone's painting. It is the pony that your parents bought you that was not and got level to death, but he would always dump you at the crop jump or stop and spin at the far end of the ring, leaving you to walk back to the barn and get back on.

We kept it through, and we kept getting up on the ground until we learned that we had to jump the way ride around the far end of the ring. Once

Recently, several prominent trainers and riders have discussed how the discipline of show jumping has changed, and it has.

Prior to 1950, American show jumping, with its standing martingales and rub classes without time allowed, was a vastly different sport than the one practiced in Europe. Then in the 1970s, Jerry Baker and Gene Mische, along with the renowned course designer

Pamela Carruthers, brought European style grand prix jumping to the United States, and U.S. show jumping embarked on a meteoric rise. The Cleveland Grand Prix and the Tampa Invitational (Fla.) introduced width, water, walls, combinations and banks to our grand prix riders.

Many barns built simulated natural obstacles at home, and the professionals at that time had to learn how to ride, train and jump them. Double ditches, slides, tables, devil's dykes and open waters were all routine jumps in our day. Starting in the 1970s, the American Grand Prix Association developed a year-long series of events across the country. The fences were big, the water wide, and the riding was physical.

Continue reading part one here!

Part Two: Where Did the Grit Go?

Much like our Thelwell ponies and difficult horses taught us physical and mental toughness, the sport itself and the courses demanded it. In the second part of this series, we discuss taking care of the horse and teaching the horse.

HORSE SHOWS
BETWEEN ROUNDS WITH:
ARMAND LEONE, JR.

Where Did The Grit Go?

In the second of this three-part series about "the mollification of American show jumping," our columnist looks at the way our courses used to demand determination.

PHOTO BY JOSH WALKER

With like our Thelwell ponies and difficult horses taught us physical and mental toughness, the sport itself and the courses demanded it. In the second part of this series, we discuss taking care of the horse and teaching the horse.

Most shows had permanent outside courses for hunter competitions when I started riding as a junior. In the 1970s, Junior Essex Troop (N.J.), Ox Ridge (Conn.), Fairfield (Conn.), Chagrin Valley (Ohio), Jamesburg (N.J.) and New Brunswick (N.J.) all had outside courses with permanent brushes, walls, and posts and rails. It was galloping and jumping without the need to count strides when there were 20 of them between fences. The gates were straight, and the walls were solid. Our small ponies had to jump 2'6" and 2'4" in-and-outs. We only had a 50-50 chance of making it in one stride, but we kept trying.

Chaps Are For Working

It also took work. There's a lot to be had in working field and in riding around. Dad didn't make words when he was angry. Complaining about anything was not getting on any sympathy. It was mid-summer, and the sunset fields were getting more rocks. The horses needed to be worked, and we wouldn't get more breaks in the paddocks was part of the job. Provided we took care of them, we could have them.

Although things changed later as we progressed from local C-level shows to the international arena, that's what we did. We took care of our horses, learned, began, leading, shipping, clipping, packing, foot, washing, fitting, showing and training, showing them the ultimate reward. When we went to the show, we set up, got some horses out, put the horses into the arena for the next day, had dinner, and then did night check. We knew our horses from the bedding up.

Unless you were showing or in a U.S. Equestrian Team class, riding attire was blue jeans with chaps and paddock boots—over when riding in arenas with George Morris. He wore boots and breeches, but he was the trainer! We wore pants because after the horse, we were getting off, taking off our chaps, and getting to work washing the horses, riding them down, wrapping their legs, and preparing them to ship home. When we got home, we washed them, fed them and took care of them. If there was a problem, we stayed until it was resolved in the veterinarian's office.

That's how we spent our summers during high school. We used the privilege of riding and showing by taking care of our horses. We did it. You can't take care of horses wearing fancy boots and breeches. It shows and breeches in your barn, you are an equine owner, not a horseman. No dress-up, but making sure the horses in dirty pants and muddy boots.



"No slouching, but looking after the horses in dirty pants and muddy boots," says Armand Leone Jr.

Serving In the GHM Cavalry Just ask Morris. There was a job that we shared with him. We didn't have to go into the military to get toughened up; our fathers could just send us to ride in the cavalry with Morris. He trained us hard and without sympathy. "One under or through" was the motto. We were trained over every type of natural obstacle imaginable because Morris' field, and our family field later, was designed to train a horse to jump the Hickstead Derby in England, the Aachen Grand Prix (Germany), the Hamburg Derby (Germany), the Hickstead Derby (USA), and Spruce Meadows (Canada) with their ditches, banks and water, alone and in combination.

Of course, the International Jumping Derby (I.J.D.) was a contest sport, and we played for real. The ditches

Most shows had permanent outside courses for hunter competitions when I started riding as a junior. Devon (Pa.), Junior Essex Troop (N.J.), Ox Ridge (Conn.), Fairfield (Conn.), Chagrin Valley (Ohio), Jamesburg (N.J.) and New Brunswick (N.J.) all had outside courses with permanent brushes, walls, and posts and rails. It was galloping and jumping without the need to count strides when there were 20 of them between fences. The gates were straight, and the walls were solid. Our small ponies had to jump 2'6" and 2'4" in-and-outs. We only had a 50-50 chance of making it in one stride, but we kept trying.

Continue reading part two here!

Part Three: What Happens Next?

HORSE SHOWS
BETWEEN ROUNDS WITH:
ARMAND LEONE

What Happens Next?

In the last of this three-part series about "the mollification of American show jumping," our columnist looks at how we can begin to turn riders back into horsemen.

PHOTO BY DOUGLAS LEES

How jumping today is being seen as more American as the costs of participating increase. This is a relative term because the way 50 years ago, riders made their way up the ranks riding both good and bad horses owned by others, even grand prix riders or their families own their own horses.

The youth of today need to avoid riding on easy street. Riding only nice horses and the course is fun and nice to watch, but it doesn't develop the underlying foundation a horseman needs to be a great rider. So, how can we stop the mollification of the sport?



"A fundraising event would help turn riders back into horsemen," says Armand Leone.

Over hill, over dale, tally ho is wholly different than Perfect Prep and whoa, whoa, whoa.

Competition managers need to put natural obstacles of the field and banks in the show arena, and horses points should be awarded for jumping them instead of the post and rail. The second-best arena path is a perfect example of how difficult obstacles are available to us depending on our skills and abilities. As soon as you remove a class unless you jump the ditch, water or bank, riders, riders and riders will be in a class unless you jump the ditch, water or bank, riders, riders and riders. Lower trainers and riders can still have fun and enjoy the sport. Older class, you can't win unless you try and successfully jump the water. Lastly, children must learn how to green and take care of their horses from the ground up. You can never be a great horseman and ride a horse better.

Show jumping today is becoming less accessible to more Americans as the costs of participating increase. This is a dangerous trend, because the wealthy rider has become the new normal. Fifty years ago, riders made their way up the ranks riding both good and bad horses owned by others; now, most grand prix riders or their families own their own horses.

The youth of today need to avoid riding on easy street. Riding only nice horses and nice courses is fun and nice to watch, but it doesn't develop the underlying foundation a horseman needs to be a great rider. So, how can we stop the mollification of the sport?

Continue reading part three here!

An equestrian athlete dedicated to fair play, safe sport and clean competition, Armand Leone served as a director on the board of the U.S. Equestrian Federation and was USEF vice president of international high performance programs for many years. He served on USEF and U.S. Hunter/Jumper Association special task forces on governance, safety, drugs and medications, trainer certification and coach selection.

Leone is co-owner at his family's Ri-Arm Farm in Oakland, N.J., where he still rides and trains. He competed in FEI World Cup Finals and Nations Cups. He is a graduate of the Columbia Business School in New York and the Columbia University School of Law. He received his M.D. from New York Medical College and his B.A. from the University of Virginia.

Connect with Leone Equestrian Law!



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