



24

HOURS IN THE LIFE of

Doug PAYNE



In this 24 Hours in the Life of Doug Payne, we look back with him on one of the most exciting days of his life, when he competed in the cross-country phase with his partner Vandiver at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. He and his horse, known as “Quinn” in the barn, would go on to be the highest-placing American combination at their first Olympics. Follow along to see how his day went!

as told to
Jump Media



4:45 am

I wake up at the hotel and get food delivered. Due to strict COVID-19 regulations, we were restricted to our hotel, the shuttle and the venue. That was pretty much it. Before I eat or drink anything, I have to spit into a little vial for our daily COVID test. I leave the hotel by 5:45 a.m. and head to the cross-country venue, called Sea Forest, which is a temporary site just for the day of cross-country.

6:15 am

I arrive at the Sea Forest Cross-Country Course venue. The Olympic Organizing Committee created a really great environment for the horses with air-conditioned, tented





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stabling. The night before, The Jockey Club and Japanese racing association provided all of the air-conditioned transportation for the horses to travel from permanent stabling at the Baji Koen venue. It was a pretty amazing set up with two waves of horses and a line of vans that looked like a conga line! While some riders arrived early and got on their horses for a short ride first thing in the morning, I didn't feel that was necessary since I was scheduled to go early as third in the order.

6:30-7:30 am

I head out and walk the cross-country course one last time. It's always nice early; it's always super quiet and you've got the whole thing to yourself and there's not much noise or distraction. You can refine your lines and you can also get a better idea of what the lighting is going to be like. I

probably walked this course more than I walked anything else in my life! I then go back to the barn, get changed and hop on Quinn.

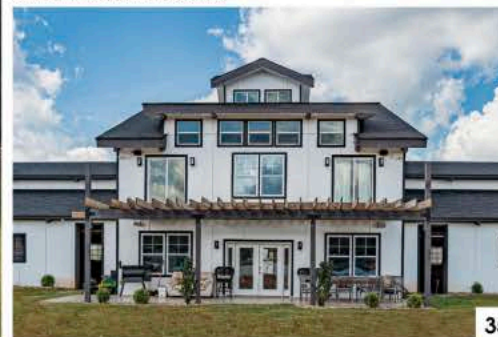
7:45 am

Quinn and I are warming up for our cross-country run. I've had Quinn for six years and know him really well. Going first out for the team in some ways is probably not an advantage, but he is super genuine and predictable, yet not conventional. He definitely does his own thing. So in this way, I have a plan walking the course and am ready to execute.

7:51 am

I start my cross-country ride. Going out onto the course, I think it's the best prepared I've ever been, but with that said, clearly I've probably never had so much focus on myself and my horse at one time in my career or lifetime. It's such a huge honor that we were selected and I want to make the most of

Photos: Pam Jensen Photography





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the opportunity. My personal mindset is that I tend to function best if I make it like any other day. I try to minimize as much as possible and think of it like any other event, because if I think of the magnitude of what it is, I would probably get more wrapped up in that than I would in riding well. My thought process walking up to the start box is actively going through the plan on the entire course and just trying to focus on that. I'm trying to make it as much of a common cross-country course that I've been on 8,000 times before. But not until I cross the finish line does it hit me that I was able to just do what I did.

8:00 am

Quinn and I are back in the cooling out area following our run. I do a quick debrief with our coach, Erik Duvander, who relays down to my teammates Phillip

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Doug Payne's Favorite Things

My Grumman Tiger airplane

That's the top of the list, but I'd love to fly an A-10 one day.

Maui Jim sunglasses

Garmin D2 Air Aviator watch

My flying watch at the moment.

Charles Owen helmet

My Charles Owen helmet keeps me safe when I put my feet in the stirrups.

True Religion jeans

Outside of boots and breeches, I wear True Religion jeans and 5.11 clothing.

Bourbon

I'm a huge bourbon fan and love Blanton's, Rowan's Creek, and Angel's Envy.

Trucks

We drive a Freightliner truck, but if I had anything smaller, it would be a Chevy.

Skiing

Besides riding, I also love skiing. I raced when I was in college at Rochester Institute of Technology in New York. My degree is in mechanical engineering.

Biking

I also love biking, either mountain or road cycling. I always travel with my Montague Paratrooper Pro mountain bike with upgraded components to shows. It's a foldable frame so you can stick it anywhere.



Photo: Shannon Brinkman Photography

Dutton and Boyd Martin any information about the course, how it rode, what they expected versus what happened. I try to give them as much insight as possible. My groom, Courtney Carson, has Quinn, and although he is a bit tired, he recovers really, really well.

8:10 am

I get pulled away to go talk to the media and give interviews on my ride. In the meantime, Courtney and our team vet, Dr. Susan Johns, and our whole crew cool out Quinn. The tents have misting fans and ice water, so they are able to instantly put the horses in an environment to help them cool down quickly. After the interviews, I head back to the barn, change into some shorts, and go back out to the course to watch Phillip go on course at 9 a.m. and talk to Quinn's co-owners, Debi and Kevin Crowley, who also bred him.

10:09 am

Our last U.S. team rider, Boyd Martin on Tsetserleg, heads out on course. I watch the rest of the competition, which wraps up before noon, and then we catch a shuttle back to our hotel.

1 pm

Back at the hotel, I'm able to take a shower, get changed, get some lunch and relax. The grooms are busy getting the horses shipped back to Baji Koen at the main show venue.

4 pm

I am at Baji Koen to see Quinn and talk to Courtney about plans for the next day's final phase of showjumping. We have the trot up first thing in the morning to check for soundness, so it's important to make sure that Quinn feels good and is healthy heading into the last day.

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“
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6 pm

It's back to the hotel and time to get dinner. After that, I'm able to FaceTime with my wife Jessica and our kids. Abby is 3-and-a-half years old, and Hudson is a year-and-a-half. My trip to pre-quarantine in Aachen, Germany, and then on to Tokyo is the longest I've ever been away from them. I've never been away more than a day or two in their lives and this has been more than three weeks. We try to FaceTime a couple times a day if possible. Not being with Jess and the kids is probably the hardest part about being there.

8 pm

The 13-hour time change still is affecting me, so honestly, I call it a night and head to bed! I'm really looking forward to the final day of competition for our U.S. eventing team. I'm thankful for the incredible support from abroad, from my family and crew at home, Courtney here in Tokyo, and most importantly today, for Quinn. 😊