





AVIVA VINCENT

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2527-940X>
Syracuse University, New York, USA
School of Social Work

RUTH BURKE

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8689-525X>
Illinois State University, USA
Wonsook Kim School of Art

KAYLYNN COATES

Cleveland Clinic Lerner Research Institute, Ohio, USA

A Competition Question: Horse Welfare, Pentathletes, and Competitive Riding

Проблемы состязаний: благополучие лошадей, пятиборцы и соревновательная верховая езда

Абстракт

Виды конного спорта различаются по степени связи и принадлежности между человеком и животным: от разовой езды до владения лошастью. Современное пятиборье не освещалось в основных СМИ до Олимпийских игр 2020 года в Токио. К сожалению, растущее количество комментариев и освещения в СМИ было вызвано низким уровнем верховой езды, негативным поведением спортсменов и агрессивной тренировкой. Соревнования по современному пятиборью 2020 года были важны, поскольку они выявили резкие различия между видами спорта, в которых отношения всадника и лошади основаны на

A Competition Question:
Horse Welfare, Pentathletes,
and Competitive Riding

Abstract

Equestrian sports vary in degree of human-animal bond and affiliation, from catch-ride to perceptions of ownership. The Modern Pentathlon has not garnered mainstream media coverage until the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo. Unfortunately, the rise in conversation and coverage was in response and reaction to poor horsemanship, negative behavior, and aggressive coaching. The events of the 2020 Modern Pentathlon were profound in that they highlighted the extreme juxtaposition of competitions that focus on bonded relationships and catch-riding experiences. The implications are far reaching with increased critique of equestrian sports, trans-

прочной связи между ними, и теми, в которых выбор всадника и лошади является делом случая. Последствия имеют особо далеко идущий характер: растущая критика конного спорта, отсутствие подготовки спортсменов к верховной езде до соревнований и игнорирование роли партнерских отношений между лошадью и всадником. Современное пятиборье рассматривается в статье в контексте связи человека и лошади. Стандарты потребностей и благополучия лошадей обсуждаются в связи с ролью всадника в поддержке лошади-партнера в соревнованиях, включая последствия эмоционального стресса в ответ на разочарование, неудачу или падение. Кроме того, обсуждается роль всадников в период, когда они не занимаются соревновательными видами спорта (например, тренировки и общий уход за лошадью-партнером). В статье представлены рекомендации относительно взаимоотношений спортсмен-лошадь и конного спорта, а также профессиональные возможности укрепления имиджа этих видов спорта.

Ключевые слова: связь человека и животного, благополучие лошадей, конный спорт, Олимпийские игры, современное пятиборье

parency about the lack of riding training athletes engaged in prior to competition, and the omission of partnership between horse and rider. The Modern Pentathlon is discussed in the context of the human-equine bond. The standards for equine welfare and wellbeing is considered in regard to the role of the rider in supporting their equine partner in the face of competition, including the implications of emotional distress in reaction to disappointment, and tragedy. Additionally, the role of riders when they are not engaged in the competitive sport (e.g., training and general care of their equine partners). Recommendations for the process and guidelines of the sport are delineated, as well as professional opportunities to strengthen the sport.

Keywords: Human-Animal Bond, equine welfare, equestrian, Olympics, Modern Pentathlon

Introduction

Horseback riding has been considered a sport and included in the Olympics in a range of events. Though the sports of three-day eventing (stadium jumping, dressage, and cross country) gained the most viewership, sponsorship, and accolades, the 2020 Olympics changed the sport by putting the focus on the Modern Pentathlon (MP). The sport became central in conversations about the Olympics, in regard to discipline-specific training, and the role of human-animal bond in competition sport.

The Pentathlon is a multi-sport competition comprising five individualized sports, stemming from the Greek term (πένταθλον) meaning five (pent-), competition (-athalon). The centurion sport's origins lie in assessing the elite tier of society in skills required by common soldiers. The events of the Pentathlon evolved over time, with the "modern" competition shifting to include: cross country running, eventing, fencing, shooting, and swimming. Based on the recent UIPM vote to re-

move the equestrian component, there will be one last round of the MP before transitioning to the next iteration of the sport.

Competing at an Olympic level requires training and skill development: there is no doubt that all pentathletes have developed some level of skill. The questions pertinent to the sport are: to what degree were they prepared to compete in competitive riding? Is it important that they were/are equestrians in addition to athletes in all other areas? Moreover, as a human-centric activity, how do we bear responsibility for the horse's needs while performing at a competitive level? And to that end, what is the relationship and responsibility between the horse and human in catch-riding and bonded-riding?

History of the Equine-Human Bond

Riding horses, physically getting on their back, goes against the very nature of their prey instinct. Horses in the range of fight-flight, tend to choose flight as they do not have the facilities required for self-defense. As herbivores, their teeth have large flat surfaces, their hooves are rounded with no claws for defense or climbing, and their eyesight has blind spots (in front, below, behind, and on their back). The horse is physically built to run from threats: with their haunches driving power from behind, their shoulder blades are not attached to the skeleton/spine, thus allowing the shoulder blades to rotate upwards making more space to increase their length of stride and give space for greater lung capacity.¹

It would be a psychological challenge for the horse to perceive humans as anything other than a threat.² However, “most horses are designed by nature to be submissive; very few are truly “alpha” animals [...] when we allow a horse to maintain his dignity, which utilizes his own code of ethics to engender mutual respect, everyone wins.”³ Perhaps this is why training methods tend to fall into the categories of *breaking* (modeling the predator-prey, power relationship) or *gentling* (becoming a horse by using play and horse language to build trust). And yet, horses and humans have found a unique way to achieve partnership and connection. In this regard, the core attributes of a successful, bi-directional interspecies relationship are trust, respect, and acceptance.

¹ Sharon Wilsie and Gretchen Vogel, *Horse Speak: An Equine-Human Translation Guide* (North Pomfret: Trafalgar Square Books, 2016), 8–9.

² Ulrike Thiel, *Ridden: Dressage from the Horse's Point of View* (North Pomfret: Trafalgar Square Books, 2013), 12.

³ Thiel, *Ridden*, 1

Domestication of Horses & Horses in Sport

The array of disciplines of riding far outnumber the expanse that rise to the level of Olympic sport. Olympic athletes compete within the English riding discipline. Riders access the eventing discipline from a range of showing opportunities including lesson programs, Interscholastic Equestrian Association (high school) and Intercollegiate Horse Show Association/Intercollegiate Dressage Association (college), and work-to-ride programs. In all of these modalities, riders may ride a horse that they have a minimal relationship with, referred to as catch-riding. Only if riders own or lease a horse are they privy to the time to develop a bond with a horse out of the ring, travel to shows together, compete, and continue through the process together.

Sport by Bond vs. Catch-Ride

The events of the 2020 Olympic MP were profound in that they highlighted the extreme juxtaposition of competitions that focus on bonded riding compared to catch-riding. Given the omission of a bond, or partnership, and the lack of training on behalf of the rider, there has been extreme critique and structural changes to the sport. However, those who have “drawn the short straw” at the start of an IHSA show, stayed seated with a red string in their mount’s tail, and left the ring with a smile, have experienced the athleticism of horse and rider in catch-riding.

Catch-riding requires developed skills—observe a horse in a warm-up ring, get on no more than twenty minutes before the class begins, and enter the ring with confidence. Some competitors ride in a group flat class, some jump a set course, others ride a dressage pattern. The MP is intended to take this model to a higher level of competition. If a rider has been taking lessons for an extended period of time, presumably they thrive on catch-rides, or riding different horses in lessons week to week. Based on the rulebook for conduct and sportsmanship, if a collegiate rider or their trainer acted as athletes in the MP did, the collegiate sport would have come under review too.

The Modern Pentathlon

The MP required a different type of training than most Olympic events. In 2020, seventy-two athletes from twenty-nine nations rode “unfamiliar horses” over twelve jumps up to 120 cm in height and 130 cm wide for a length of 400 meters.⁴ All athletes drew a horse at random, then were allotted twenty minutes to practice up to five jumps with the intention of familiarizing themselves with the horse. The competition consists of two rounds. Similar to stadium jumping, the competitors have a time-cap in which to complete the course. They receive a deduction of one fault for each second exceeding the time cap. Multiple refusals, falls, or jumping an obstacle in the wrong direction is cause for dismissal. A round with no faults earns the competitor 300 points.⁵

A question immediately emerged: “are there any decent pentathlon riders?” To answer the question, yes, there are accomplished equestrians who compete in the pentathlon. This question would *never* be asked in the highlighted Olympic sports, like gymnastics, ice skating, and swimming. A few athletes facing challenges has never put the entire sport at risk, but rather illuminates the challenges of the athlete or the country’s training program (e.g., NYT 2019). Video and images of the German rider Annika Schleu and equestrian coach Kim Raisner went viral for their unsportsman-like behavior before and during competition. Images capturing clear distress and asynchronicity (example above) between horse and rider were circulated in media outlets such as *Business Insider*, *The Guardian*,⁶ and Reuters,⁷ among others. The incident was upheld as abuse; Raisner was ordered to take equine welfare classes.⁸ However, the intolerance for the behavior opened dialogue within UIPM to remove the equestrian component. With the removal of this sport, catch-riding will be removed, leaving only those with access to Olympic level horses and coaching to compete at this caliber.

⁴ Olympics, “Tokyo 2020 Modern Pentathlon,” *Olympics*, 2021, accessed December 11, 2021, <https://olympics.com/en/olympic-games/tokyo-2020/results/modern-pentathlon>.

⁵ UIPM, “Modern Pentathlon at Rio 2016: How the Competition Will Work,” last modified August 2016, accessed December 13, 2021, <https://www.uipmworld.org/news/modern-pentathlon-rio-2016-how-competition-will-work>.

⁶ Beau Dure, “Cruel and Random Modern Pentathlon Should Replace Horses with Climbing,” *The Guardian*, accessed August 18, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2021/aug/18/modern-pentathlon-horse-punch-olympics-changes-tokyo-2020>.

⁷ Karolos Grohmann and Steve Keating, “Germany’s Modern Pentathlon Coach Disqualified after Punching Horse,” *Reuters*, August 7, 2021, accessed December 11, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/life-style/sports/germanys-modern-pentathlon-coach-disqualified-after-punching-horse-2021-08-07/>.

⁸ ESPN, “Olympic Pentathlon Athletes to Meet with Sport’s Governing Body about Removal of Riding Event,” *Associated Press*, accessed November 8, 2021, https://www.espn.com/olympics/story/_/id/32581990/olympic-pentathlon-athletes-meet-sport-governing-body-removal-riding-event.

Equine Welfare & Care

Care includes welfare and well-being. Care is compassion to provide for another living being. Welfare is providing food/nutrients, water, shelter, socialization, and veterinary care.⁹ Well-being is ensuring that the horse has the resources to thrive based on their health, mental capacity, interest and capability. Similar to humans horses have a hierarchy of needs, wherein safety (physical and psychological) is a precursors to being able to provide social enrichment, skill-based training, and engage in collaborative partnership. While there is no standard definition of quality of care, there is a guideline for what welfare includes and what an absence of abuse entails. Horses should never experience “[s]ocially unacceptable behavior that intentionally causes unnecessary pain and suffering, or distress to and or death of an animal.”¹⁰ The contention is in deciding what “socially unacceptable behavior” is or is not. However, as noted in the MP (2020), punching the horse in the hindquarters when the rider and horse’s body language was demonstrating distress was evidently causing unnecessary distress to the horse and the rider.¹¹

Humans have the responsibility to care for horses. Equine welfare is at the core of understanding the bond between humans and animals. In riding for sport, there is no horse to ride if the horse is not of sound mind and body. It is the responsibility of the rider to support their equine partner in the face of hardship, including the implications of emotional distress in reaction to disappointment, and tragedy. Sometimes hardship and tragedy is at a horseshow as seen in the MP. The role of riders when they are not engaged in the competitive sport (e.g., training and general care of their equine partners) is conceptually more important to establishing a bond and/or a baseline of behavior for turbulent times ahead. When the horse’s wellbeing is negatively impacted by a human’s negative internal feelings and external emotions, there is an issue worthy of discussion.

⁹ Aviva Vincent, Shelby McDonald, Bethanine Poe, and Vicki Deisner, “The Link between Interpersonal Violence and Animal Abuse,” *Society Register*, vol. 3, no. 3 (2019): 83–101.

¹⁰ Frank R. Ascione, “Children Who Are Cruel to Animals: A Review of Research and Implications for Developmental Psychopathology,” *Anthrozoös*, vol. 6, no. 4 (1993): 226–247.

¹¹ Matthew Schwartz, “German Modern Pentathlon Coach Disqualified for Punching a Horse,” *NPR*, August 7, 2021, accessed December 11, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/sections/to-kyo-olympics-live-updates/2021/08/07/1025814959/german-modern-pentathlon-coach-disqualified-for-punching-a-horse>.

Care Over the Horse

The responsibility of care, inclusive of welfare and wellbeing, for a horse often does not rest on the shoulders of one person, but rather a team of people who are involved in the horse's daily life to varying degrees. By virtue of being domesticated, horses require a caretaker for daily stall care (i.e., mucking), turnout, feeding, interaction/play/training, and physical needs. A caretaker knows the horse and may see them on a daily or a sporadic basis. Some caretakers provide for the horses' physical well-being: veterinarians, farriers, chiropractors, and others. Alternatively, a caretaker may see the horse on a daily basis and have in-depth knowledge of the horse: the owner, trainer, and barn staff (if the horse is boarded). Given the breadth of caretakers and their roles, it is essential to define and understand each other's responsibilities of care for the horse. Given that well-being is subjective, it is moreover important to define. Although responsibilities are not in silos (i.e., there's overlap/gray area), it is important to define the key responsibilities of each party to ensure maximum welfare and wellbeing of the horse both at home and when off-site.

Welfare Starts at Home

The primary role is as an Owner/Guardian (referred herein: owner). In this capacity, one person assumes financial, emotional, and physical responsibility for the welfare and well-being of the horse. Culturally, horses may be reliant on stall and turnout rotation, live strictly outside in herds, or any array of options in-between. The amount of turnout may be a financial decision, a restriction/asset of regional access to land, cultural habit, or a horse's unique need (e.g., stall rest for medical needs). As diverse as turnout schedules, so too is feeding and supplement care. An entire industry exists for the care of horses' medical needs (i.e., teeth, vaccines, hooves, etc.), for that too owners are responsible. At times, the responsibility for care is in the hands of the barn owner or staff. They may relay needs to an owner, however, there are situations that require immediate response (e.g., colic) and become the staff's responsibility. Horses can simultaneously be an asset and support, and a labor of love and financial burden. For this reason, some owners choose to half or quarter lease their horse to another rider.

In leasing, a second party contracts with the owner/guardian to act in the capacity of owner/guardian by providing care and activity (e.g., riding the horse) for an agreed upon number of days per week or month. A lease may be at no cost (i.e., "free-lease"), or for a specified cost. Similarly, a horse may be leased to one person, or to multiple people. There is an ethical component about ensuring the leasee

is able to care for and bond with the horse *as if* they were their own, but they are not. Some leases have the option to for “lease to own” or “buy out,” meaning that if the lessee develops a bond and wants to buy the horse, the owner/guardian may consider their offer to do so.

Horses have welcomed students into the saddle through lesson programs as a prominent equine industry. Often lessons are thirty to sixty minutes in length, with one to five people, taught by a professional or individual with extensive experience in the discipline. Those who take lessons are often referred to as students. Those who ride in lessons may ride the same horse weekly, or different horses every week. Students often pay the trainer a set fee per lesson for the service of teaching the lesson which may include using the facility and the lesson horse assigned to the student.

Rider’s Responsibility to the Horse

Classical horsemanship views the horse’s well-being as the “foundation for a successful team.”¹² Moreover, horsemanship is dedicated to the “longevity, soundness, and a good life” for the horse.¹³ Riders, therefore, have a responsibility to their horses to ensure that the work they do is harmonious, promoting physical and mental relaxation of the horse. This is achieved through trust and respect for the rider by the horse, and a rider’s attitude of an empathetic leader and partner who does not hinder the horse physically or mentally.¹⁴

A rider merely sitting on the horse’s back alters the horse’s balance.¹⁵ Being out of balance can be distressing to the horse, triggering their flight response.¹⁶ Riders therefore have the responsibility to ensure that they are not hindering, unbalancing, or restricting the movement of the horse, making it as easy as possible for the horse to carry them. Riders must learn to coordinate their own body movements and balance upon a second being whose balance and motion is constantly changing. In addition to coordinating their own body, the rider must harmonize their own movement with the horse to stay in balance, but also coordinate subtle cues to the horse about how to balance itself and execute movements in

¹² Charles De Kunffy, *The Ethics and Passions of Dressage* (Boonesboro: Half Halt Press, 1993), 64.

¹³ DeKunffy, *The Ethics and Passions of Dressage*, 63.

¹⁴ Walter Zettl, *Dressage in Harmony: From Basic to Grand Prix* (North Pomfret: Trafalgar Square Books, 1998), 41; Thiel, *Ridden: Dressage from the Horse’s Point of View*, 16–17.

¹⁵ Simon Coccozza, *Core Conditioning for Horses: Yoga Inspired Warm-Up Techniques That Increase Suppleness, Improve Bend and Unlock Optimal Movement* (North Pomfret: Trafalgar Square Books, 2019), 14–15.

¹⁶ Thiel, *Ridden: Dressage from the Horse’s Point of View*, 160.

the most biomechanically favorable way. Much like how weight-lifting with poor form can lead to injury, riding a horse in a suboptimal way, even if the exercise is not strenuous, can be detrimental to the horse in the long run.¹⁷ Likewise, a rider with poor equitation and biomechanics restricts the horse's movement and can lead to injury.¹⁸

Though horses typically weigh 400–550 kg, they are sensitive beings who require minimal pressure to move and respond to cues. When in harmony with the horse, an accomplished rider's single exhale can bring a horse from a canter to a halt; a gentle squeeze on the rein can spring-load the hindquarters to prepare for a jump. Part of this harmony is due to knowledge and skill both horse and rider have developed throughout training. Thus, very subtle tensions by the rider trigger the horse's flight response, even if the human is consciously unaware. Thus, riders must be cognizant of their attitude, behavior, and emotional/mental state to ensure ethical and fair treatment of the horse.

Rider Mental State

Riding is a cognitively and psychologically demanding sport as a whole. The stresses of competition can exacerbate intense emotions, and in some cases, negative behaviors.¹⁹ The desire to define emotions is intrinsically a human condition and a human social construct. The conversation (expressed and perceived emotion) between horse and human (i.e., rider) is grounded in "Kinesthetic Empathy,"²⁰ whereas the depth of a horse-human bond is grounded in emotional connection (e.g., emotional intelligence).²¹ As sentient beings, all domesticated horses perceive and react to emotion as a function of self-preservation and relational skills. Horses need the skill of understanding emotion to understand their environment, herd-mates, and human counterparts. Horse's herd dynamics may impact their internalization of internal emotions, and external gestures and actions.²²

¹⁷ Mette Uldahl, Janne W. Christensen, and Hilary M. Clayton, "Relationships between the Rider's Pelvic Mobility and Balance on a Gymnastic Ball with Equestrian Skills and Effects on Horse Welfare," *Animals*, vol. 11, no. 2 (2021): 453.

¹⁸ Jane Williams and Gillian Tabor, "Rider Impacts on Equitation," *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*, vol. 190 (2017): 28–42.

¹⁹ Thiel, *Ridden: Dressage from the Horse's Point of View*, 48–50.

²⁰ Kenneth J. Shapiro, "Understanding Dogs through Kinesthetic Empathy, Social Construction, and History," *Anthrozoös*, vol. 3 (1990): 184–195.

²¹ Shapiro, "Understanding Dogs through Kinesthetic Empathy, 184–195.

²² John D. Mayer, Peter Salovey, David R. Caruso, Gill Sitarenios, "Emotional Intelligence as a Standard Intelligence," *Emotion*, vol. 1 (2001): 232–242.

Horses being intuitive for survival, their reacting quickly to human body language, emotion, and energy is commonly referred to as *mirroring*.²³ Horses perceive incongruence when the humans' external behaviors are not aligned to the humans' emotional state. The depth of the human-horse relationship may allow for nuanced communication and potentially subtle communication of emotion, however, the pre-existing relationship is not explicitly necessary for the horse to read and internalize human emotion.²⁴

To keep horses happy, riding and training are optimal in a non-confrontational approach; horses respond best to positive reinforcement. Every second a rider is in the saddle, they are teaching the horse, whether intentionally or not. A rider should therefore not be hasty to exhibit compulsory or reactionary behaviors due to misunderstanding by the horse or due to the rider's own emotional state. "The attitude that 'you will listen and obey' must never be found around horses."²⁵ Likewise, it is the rider's responsibility to recognize and respond to the horse's mental state. Experienced and attentive riders develop an acumen for assessing the horse's mental state in different situations. While long-standing partnerships increase harmony of horse and rider, experienced catch-riders are also able to quickly tune into a horse's body language to figure out the best approach to riding that horse.

Riding is not formulaic; the exact cues used on one horse may not work on another horse and require the rider to shift their approach. Or, as in the case of catch-riding, the horse's response to one rider may shift their behavior ahead of the next athlete's ride. It is the rider's responsibility to assess the best way to communicate with the horse in an empathetic way which minimizes stress to all parties. This is the act of meeting the horse where they are at, or understanding their needs in the moment. In this complex interaction, the horse "must do what the human choose, be that right or wrong for the well-being of the horse [...] some humans, guided by a kind moral compass and a true understanding of biomechanics and overall horse care, will carefully prepare the horse to withstand the stresses that riding [...] will put on the horse, so that the tradeoff is fair."²⁶

In catch-riding competitions (e.g., MP, IHSA), horses and riders are matched predominantly on skill, as the horse is drawn from a pool based on the class. A nuanced understanding of physical and mental responsibility is relevant in analyzing the performance of Saint Boy and German pentathlete Shleu, as "[a] reactive and

²³ Wilsie and Vogel, *Horse Speak*, 18.

²⁴ Paolo Baragli, Angelo Gazzano, Franco Martelli, and Claudio Sighieri, "How Do Horses Appraise Humans' Actions? A brief Note Over a Practical Way to Assess Stimulus Perception," *Journal of Equine Veterinary Science*, vol. 29 (2009): 739–742.

²⁵ Zettl, *Dressage in Harmony*, 10.

²⁶ Denny Emerson, *Know Better to Do Better: Mistakes I Made with Horses (So You Don't Have To)* (North Pomfret: Trafalgar Square Books, 2018), 160–161.

emotional rider response to stimuli could result in the demonstration of unwanted behaviors.”²⁷ Before their round of showjumping, Saint Boy refused multiple jumps for the previous rider. This negative experience likely influenced the horse’s attitude and willingness to perform. The emotional distress of Shleu probably exacerbated the horse’s distress.

Responsibility of Care Throughout the Industry

Coach/Trainer

The coach (or trainer) works with the rider-horse pair to ensure progression in the sport. The trainer has the responsibility to educate and ensure that the training program is appropriate for the horse and rider, such that neither are physically or psychologically overfaced. The coach also advises on the appropriateness of shows for the rider-horse pair. In the context of catch-riding, the coach prepares the student to ride a variety of horses. A core competence of the sport is becoming comfortable with riding an unfamiliar horse. At competitions, the coach will advise on preparation strategies before the class (note: does not coach while in the ring), be knowledgeable of show policies, and coach on outcomes of the show.

Stewards/Show Grounds

Show grounds have the responsibility of ensuring a safe competition area for the horse and rider across the entirety of the property. This includes competition areas, ground surfaces, canceling events in the event of extreme weather conditions, and providing stabling that is appropriate and safe for the horses. Moreover, show grounds must enforce the horses’ general welfare, fitness to compete, health status, and be free of doping or banned medications.²⁸ Judges and stewards at shows also have a responsibility to assess the welfare of the horse. However, since they are not intimately familiar with the horse, their perspective is at a broader-level, ensuring appropriate tack and equipment in accordance with competition governance, and observing the physical wellbeing of the horse.

²⁷ Williams and Tabor, “Rider Impacts on Equitation,” 28–42.

²⁸ FEI: “FEI Code of Conduct for Equine Welfare,” accessed December 11, 2021, https://inside.fei.org/sites/default/files/Code_of_Conduct_Welfare_Horse_1Jan2013.pdf.

Though the rules and regulations on equine welfare are backed by an abundance of scientific literature,²⁹ the actualization of the rules at competitions are often generalized. Two primary sets of guidelines related to horse welfare and competing or showing have become widely accepted within the horse industry: the American Horse Council's Welfare Code of Practice,³⁰ and the Fédération Equestre Internationale Code of Conduct for the Welfare of the Horse.³¹ The International Federation for Equestrian Sports, or FEI, which serves as the international governing body of equestrian sports has an accessible Code of Conduct for the Welfare of the Horse which includes: general welfare, fitness of the horse to compete, events must not prejudice horse welfare, humane treatment of the horse, and education. While important, the document is only three pages in length and leaves much to be desired as all content is limited to a mere sentence of two. Nowhere in the guidelines is the rider's ability or partnerships with the horse indicated as a priority.³²

As a primary resource for youth/young adults to experience catch-riding the Intercollegiate Horse Shows Association (IHSA) rulebook was reviewed in full. IHSA offers one sentence in the Code of Conduct under Personal Conduct of Exhibitors, Coaches, and Show Personnel related to equine welfare: "It is the responsibility of all parties concerned to consider the welfare of the horse."³³ The rules often refer to the rider in absence of the horse (e.g., "rider shall comply with the suggested use of aids") without the context of the horse included.

In the MP rulebook, of the 176 page document welfare and well-being are not mentioned a single time. Care is referenced nine times, with only two pertaining to the horse and rider. While both references are of important value, they are fully subjective: 4.3.5 Horse Selection (68) and 4.4.1 Treatment of Horses (70).³⁴

²⁹ Melissa Voigt, Kristina Hiney, Candace Croney, Karen Waite, Abigail Borron, and Colleen Brady, "Show Horse Welfare: The Viewpoints of Judges, Stewards, and Show Managers," *Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science*, vol. 19, no. 2 (2016): 183–197.

³⁰ American Horse Council, "National Welfare Code of Practice," accessed December 11, 2021, <https://www.horsecouncil.org/resources/national-welfare-code-2/#:~:text=The%20AHC%20drafted%20the%20Welfare,transport%20and%20retirement%20of%20horses.>

³¹ FEI: *FEI Code of Conduct for the Horse*, accessed December 11, 2021, https://inside.fei.org/sites/default/files/Code_of_Conduct_Welfare_Horse_1Jan2013.pdf.

³² FEI: *FEI Code of Conduct for Equine Welfare*.

³³ IHSA: *IHSA Rules 2020*, accessed December 11, 2021, https://ihsainc.com/docs/default-source/board-documents/ihsa-21-22-rulebook-clean-copy43fecbbfb4366d6da3beff000a185d7.docx?Status=Temp&sfvrsn=8c8a605_2.

³⁴ UIPM: *Modern Pentathlon at Rio 2016: How the Competition Will Work*, last modified August 2016, <https://www.uipmworld.org/news/modern-pentathlon-rio-2016-how-competition-will-work>.

Conclusions of Responsibility of Care

Equine welfare is subjective, but best assessed through a combination of moral reasoning and scientifically supported practices.³⁵ Having guidelines established by governing bodies which specifically define equine welfare and what constitutes negligence can reduce subjectivity and improve outcomes for horses. Education of individuals in all levels of equine care, from at home to the show grounds, can establish a baseline of knowledge for all. U.S. Hunter Jumper Association (USHJA) has acknowledged the need for safeguarding the sport by providing a mechanism to report concerns about equine welfare specifically.³⁶ Just as SafeSport was established to prevent abuse, and facilitate education, and accountability of human athletes, a similar program could be developed for promoting the welfare, facilitating education, and accountability for their equine counterparts. With guidance, knowledge, and access to resources (see Figure 1 and the flowchart and table included therein) individuals can make informed decisions and recognize cases where welfare may be at risk.

Figure 1

Flowchart for the ethical decision making as it relates to horse competition (Helesky and Anthony, "Science Alone Is Not Always Enough," *Journal of Veterinary Behavior*, vol. 7, no. 3 (2012): 175); "Table 3. Questions to ask when examining the competition horse's welfare status" referred to in the flowchart Helesky and Anthony, "Science Alone Is Not Always Enough," 176).

³⁵ Camie R. Heleski and Raymond Anthony, "Science Alone Is Not Always Enough: The Importance of Ethical Assessment for a More Comprehensive View of Equine Welfare," *Journal of Veterinary Behavior*, vol. 7, no. 3 (2012): 170; Voigt et al., "Show Horse Welfare," 184.

³⁶ USHJA: *Safeguarding Our Sport: Reporting Horse Welfare Concerns and Other Rule Violations at Competitions*, accessed December 11, 2021, https://www.ushja.org/application/files/1715/3814/6657/HRA_July_eNews_-Safeguarding_Our_Sport.pdf.

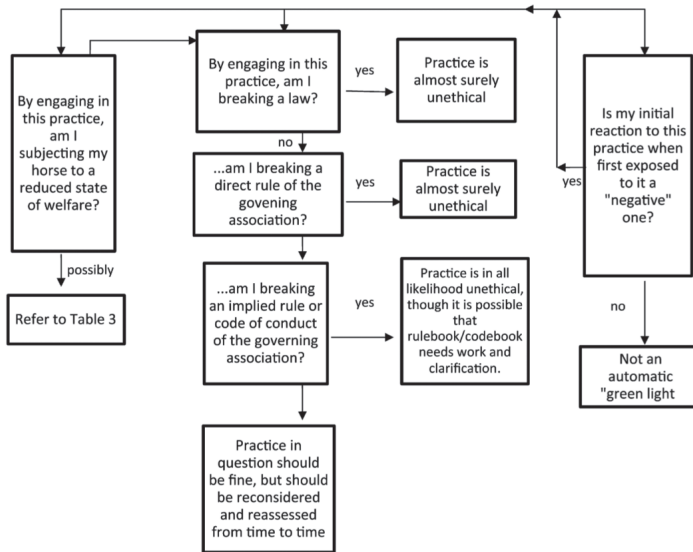


Table 3 Questions to ask when examining the competition horse's welfare status

- Does this practice cause my horse short-term pain/discomfort?
- Does this practice cause my horse long-term pain/discomfort?
- Is this practice done solely for cosmetic reasons?
- If yes, can I be competitive if I do not engage in this?
If not, how do I feel about that?
- Is there a way I can modify this practice to still be competitive but with less of a negative impact on the horse's welfare?
- Is this practice done mainly to intimidate the horse?
If yes, is there an alternative practice that can achieve approximately the same result?
If yes, should switch to it
If no, how comfortable do I feel participating in this discipline?
- Am I asking the horse to do something he is physically/mentally not capable of doing without "unfair" manipulations?
- All things considered, is the practice "fair" to my horse?
- Have I been timely (contingent) in my reinforcements?
- Does the horse have the option of making a "correct" choice?

Sports & Social Media Sites

The 2020 Tokyo Olympics was the most extensive media event in history, racking over 7,000 hours of media content on various online and cable broadcast platforms. Despite low viewership compared to previous games, the 2020 international sports event was widely viewed and almost exclusively viewed virtually due to the ongoing pandemic. The MP has not garnered mainstream media coverage until the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo (occurred in 2021). The new model of streaming different events, on-demand viewing, multiple channels, and social media made watching more events possible. Clips to the riding segments of the Pentathlon were

posted to YouTube, Facebook and Instagram, quickly making them accessible nearly worldwide. Unfortunately, the increase in coverage and sharing gave rise to social commentary with a sharp focus in response and reaction to poor horsemanship, negative behavior, and aggressive coaching.

The Olympics occurred alongside the highest numbers of global participants in social media sites (SMS). Seeing animals on screens via social media created a sense of connection, regardless of actual contact or experience with the animals. The user-generated structure of SMS creates space for those who were moved to watch, comment, and voice opinions about the sport,³⁷ despite minimal or absent interactions with the equestrian world. The media coverage from the Olympics sensationalized the performance of intense distress between the German Pentathlete, her horse, and her coach.

In contrast, the same Olympics hosted three-day eventing (a sport which includes dressage, stadium jumping, and cross country). While the Swiss team gained positive reviews for three horses competing in stadium jumping barefoot,³⁸ there was minimal media coverage for the untimely death of the Swiss horse Jet Set, who passed after suffering severe ligament damage landing a jump incorrectly.³⁹ Gabriels was the rider, not the owner of Jet Set. He had been riding, training, and working with Jet Set as an experienced and well-trained equestrian in his discipline. This is an example of a positive horse-human bond. And yet, in this example, Jet Set was euthanized for an injury, whereas Saint Boy received a punch to the haunch, which is not acceptable, but not an equivalent to death.

One result of the display of poor horsemanship is the circulation/virality of the event on SMS. Despite low viewership of the 2020 Olympics, the virality of the Pentathlete video and images reached beyond an equestrian-minded audience and as a result created both positive and negative implications for the sport and perceptions of equestrian sports by the general public.⁴⁰ One particularly useful tool for contextualizing these implications is framing theory, an idea that argues *how* information is presented influences the reception and perception of that information by, in the case of SMS, a user. Framing theory exists and functions differently based

³⁷ Hamid Khobzi and Babak Teimourpour, "How Significant Are Users' Opinions on Social media?" *International Journal of Accounting and Information Management*, Emerald Group Publishing, vol. 22 (4) (2014): 254–272.

³⁸ NBC Olympics, "Swiss Horse Euthanized after Appearing Lame on Course," *NBC Olympics*, October 8, 2021, accessed December 13, 2021, <https://www.nbcolympics.com/news/swiss-horse-euthanized-after-appearing-lame-course>.

³⁹ Reuters, "PETA Calls on IOC President to Remove Equestrian Events from Games," last modified August 13, 2021, accessed December 11, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/sports/peta-calls-ioc-president-remove-equestrian-events-games-2021-08-13/>.

⁴⁰ Elizabeth Riddle and Jill R.D. MacKay, "Social Media Contexts Moderate Perceptions of Animals," *Animals*, vol. 10, no. 5 (2020): 845.

on the objectives of those presenting the information. In early August of 2020, animal rights organization, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), made a passionate call for removal of the equestrian portion of the MP.⁴¹ It is ultimately unclear how framing directly impacts attitudes towards animals by users on SMS, but PETA has a long history of harnessing media platforms to incite an emotional response as a call to action.

Equestrian magazines, such as the *Horse and Hound*, discussed the UIPM's decision as harmful to global equestrianism.⁴² In a separate article, the publication raises concerns about the repercussions of removing the sport, essentially calling it a gateway decision for removing horses from all Olympic events.⁴³ Reaching past audiences directly interested in animal welfare or involved in/adjacent to an equestrian lifestyle, media outlets with significant global followings on SMS, such as *Business Insider*, Reuters, *Insider*, NPR, and *The Guardian*, fueled the viral outrage of the event (e.g., Martin 2021).⁴⁴ The general public contributed to conversations around the coverage, as well as those in the equine industry, or those living alongside horses.

Philosopher and professor Erin McKenna calls out the public's opposition to using livestock in farming. McKenna's conversation is useful in considering attitudes towards horses from a non-equestrian audience. "Those opposing the farming of animals often have little or no experience with those animals. They often have little contact with actual farmers as well. This limits their understanding of what might constitute a 'good life.'"⁴⁵ This observation provides guidance on how to weigh the opinions of both those disconnected and deeply enmeshed in the daily realities of living with, caring for, and competing with horses.

Moving images hosted on SMS like Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok allow a viewer to feel connection with species with which often no realtime experiential connection exists, and sociologist Jocelyne Porcher would agree:

Our society is as populated with animals as it is with humans, even if many of those animals have no place and are made invisible. Our society is populated,

⁴¹ Reuters, "PETA Calls on IOC President to Remove Equestrian Events from Games."

⁴² Eleanor Jones, "How Pentathlon's Riding Decision Could Hit all Equestrian Sports, and Other Things the Horse World is Talking about," *Horse and Hound*, December 8, 2021, accessed December 13, 2021, <https://www.horseandhound.co.uk/news/how-pentathlons-riding-decision-could-hit-all-equestrian-sports-and-other-things-the-horse-world-is-talking-about-771327>.

⁴³ Eleanor Jones, "Pentathletes revolt—And What Dropping Riding Means for All Horse Sport," *Horse and Hound*, December 7, 2021, accessed December 10, 2021, <https://www.horseandhound.co.uk/news/pentathletes-revolt-and-what-dropping-riding-means-for-all-horse-sport-771274>.

⁴⁴ Will Martin, "Uncooperative Horses Wreaked Havoc and Killed Dreams in the Weirdest Event at the Olympics," *Insider*, August 6, 2021, accessed October 22, 2021, <https://www.insider.com/misbehaving-horses-wreak-havoc-kill-dreams-at-olympic-pentathlon-2021-8>.

⁴⁵ Erin McKenna, *Livestock: Food, Fiber, and Friends* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2018), 106.

moreover, in a more distant and selective manner, and more often by means of images than by the real presence of animals close to us, by “wild” animals that we worry about, such as bears, whales, wolves and birds of prey.⁴⁶

This false connection opens the door for individuals to make assumptions about nonhuman animals, their care, needs, thoughts and feelings. Amateurs have flooded SMS with animal-related content, often with uninformed or absent contexts. The still images of a frustrated Shleu and distressed Saint Boy quickly became “meme-ified” and were used in justifying calls for ending horse riding and equine sports altogether, as well as being humorous imagery used to comment on various non-equestrian related issues. A Google image search of “pentathlon” brings up many negative images referencing the 2020 MP, specifically of Shleu and Saint Boy. The vast majority of images are of Shleu, or other riders being unseated or mid-fall while the horse refuses a jump.

Based on Porcher’s research, Despret⁴⁷ summarizes that animal’s contribution to working and collaborative relationships often only become visible when they actively refused in partnership. “It is only during conflicts where the order is disrupted [...] in short, when they resist—that one begins to see, or rather to translate differently, these situations where everything functions.”⁴⁸ Porcher articulates the importance of the human-animal bond in making work function well. In the case of SMS and the public outcry of riding in the MP, it is clear how the refusal to cooperate in work on the part of Saint Boy created a larger platform for both equestrians and the general public to critique the structure of the Pentathlon.

Heading into Paris 2024: Recommendations

Based on the UIPM decision, changes will be made to the sport; most recent conversations indicate that the riding portion will be exchanged for a different sport. Should the riding be fully removed, there will be no opportunity for catch-riding at the Olympic level. Those in positions of authority to review and change equestrian sport are encouraged to consider the attributes of catch-ride in an effort to recognize

⁴⁶ Jocelyne Porcher, *The Ethics of Animal Labor: A Collaborative Utopia* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 24.

⁴⁷ Vinciane Despret, *What Would Animals Say If We Asked the Right Questions?* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), 179.

⁴⁸ Vinciane Despret and Brett Buchanan, “Y for YouTube—Are Animals the New Celebrities?,” *Ctrl-Z*, accessed December 21, 2021, <http://www.ctrl-z.net.au/articles/issue-6/despret-y-for-youtube/>.

the unique skill required for competing at the Olympic level. Athletes who have trained through IEA and IHSA with aspirations of the Olympics are skilled in the ability to catch-ride — their entire experience is predicated on this unique facet of the sport. To remove riding from the MP removes catch-riding in full. Already the focus is strictly on English riding, this change limits the scope of the equestrian sport even further. The decision to remove riding was made expeditiously because of the impact of SMS (ESPN 2021). Rather than a reflective practice of reviewing the sport, athletes, and equines, a vote was made to remove the equine portion in private.⁴⁹

At the start of competitions, horses are presented in a jog to the judges and stewards. The horses are objectively measured to move forward to competition. If horses and riders are a partnership, then there should be a comparable presentation of the rider, even in catch-riding. Currently, equine competition is essentially a subjective scoring of the athlete's ability to ride. Instead, there should be an objective baseline that the athlete can perform at a specific level, then the competition is between horse and rider communication and relationship at the moment.

Across all disciplines, standards of care, inclusive of well-being and welfare are required. Organized bodies of equine sport (e.g., IEA/IHSA, FEI, Olympics) have standards for behavior at and during events; not expectations for the care of the horse at home, in training, and leading up to the event. The omission of language for the on-going care, responsibility, and expectations for the care of the horse as a partner in the sport should be explicit. Should UIPM reverse its decision to keep the equestrian sport, all other organizing agencies have a clear opportunity to update policies.

References

- American Horse Council. "National Welfare Code of Practice." Accessed December 11, 2021. <https://www.horsecouncil.org/resources/national-welfare-code-2/#:~:text=The%20AHC%20drafted%20the%20Welfare,transport%20and%20retirement%20of%20horses.>
- Ascione, Frank R. "Children Who Are Cruel to Animals: A Review of Research and Implications for Developmental Psychopathology." *Anthrozoös*, vol. 6, no. 4 (1993): 226–247.
- Baragli, Paolo, Angelo Gazzano, Franco Martelli, and Claudio Sighieri. "How Do Horses Appraise Humans' Actions? A Brief Note over a Practical Way to Assess Stimulus Perception." *Journal of Equine Veterinary Science*, vol. 29, no. 10 (2009): 739–742.
- Coccozza, Simon. *Core Conditioning for Horses: Yoga Inspired Warm-Up Techniques That Increase Suppleness, Improve Bend and Unlock Optimal Movement*. North Pomfret: Trafalgar Square Books, 2019.

⁴⁹ Reuters, "PETA Calls on IOC President to Remove Equestrian Events from Games."

- De Kunffy, Charles. *The Ethics and Passions of Dressage*. Boonesboro: Half Halt Press, 1993.
- Despret, Vinciane. *What Would Animals Say If We Asked the Right Questions?* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016.
- Despret, Vinciane, and Brett Buchanan. "Y for YouTube—Are Animals the New Celebrities?" *Ctrl-Z*. Accessed December 21, 2021. <http://www.ctrl-z.net.au/articles/issue-6/despret-y-for-youtube/>.
- Dure, Beau. "Cruel and Random Modern Pentathlon Should Replace Horses with Climbing." *The Guardian*. Accessed August 18, 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2021/aug/18/modern-pentathlon-horse-punch-olympics-changes-tokyo-2020>.
- Emerson, Denny. *Know Better to Do Better: Mistakes I Made with Horses (So You Don't Have To)*. North Pomfret: Trafalgar Square Books, 2018.
- ESPN. "Olympic Pentathlon Athletes to Meet with Sport's Governing Body about Removal of Riding Event." *Associated Press*. Accessed November 8, 2021. https://www.espn.com/olympics/story/_/id/32581990/olympic-pentathlon-athletes-meet-sport-governing-body-removal-riding-event.
- FEI. "FEI Code of Conduct for Equine Welfare." Accessed December 11, 2021. https://inside.fei.org/sites/default/files/Code_of_Conduct_Welfare_Horse_1Jan2013.pdf.
- FEI. "FEI Code of Conduct for the Horse." 2012, Accessed December 11, 2021. https://inside.fei.org/sites/default/files/Code_of_Conduct_Welfare_Horse_1Jan2013.pdf.
- Grohmann, Karolos, and Steve Keating. "Germany's Modern Pentathlon Coach Disqualified after Punching Horse." *Reuters*, August 7, 2021. Accessed December 11, 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/sports/germanys-modern-pentathlon-coach-disqualified-after-punching-horse-2021-08-07/>.
- Heleski, Camie R., and Raymond Anthony. "Science Alone is Not always Enough: The Importance of Ethical Assessment for a More Comprehensive View of Equine Welfare." *Journal of Veterinary Behavior*, vol. 7, no. 3 (2012): 169–178.
- IHSA. "IHSA Rules 2020." Accessed December 11, 2021. https://ihsainc.com/docs/default-source/board-documents/ihsa-21-22-rulebook-clean-copy43fecbbfb4366d6da3beff0000a185d7.docx?Status=Temp&sfvrsn=8c8a605_2.
- Jones, Eleanor. "How Pentathlon's Riding Decision Could Hit All Equestrian Sports, and Other Things the Horse World is Talking about." *Horse and Hound*, December 8, 2021. Accessed December 13, 2021. <https://www.horseandhound.co.uk/news/how-pentathlons-riding-decision-could-hit-all-equestrian-sports-and-other-things-the-horse-world-is-talking-about-771327>.
- Jones, Eleanor. "Pentathletes Revolt—And What Dropping Riding Means for All Horse Sport." *Horse and Hound*. December 7, 2021. Accessed December 10, 2021. <https://www.horseandhound.co.uk/news/pentathletes-revolt-and-what-dropping-riding-means-for-all-horse-sport-771274>.
- Khobzi, Hamid, and Babak Teimourpour. "How Significant Are Users' Opinions on Social Media?" *International Journal of Accounting and Information Management, Emerald Group Publishing*, vol. 22(4) (2014): 254–272.
- Martin, Will. "Uncooperative Horses Wreaked Havoc and Killed Dreams in the Weirdest Event at the Olympics." *Insider*, August 6, 2021. Accessed October 22, 2021.

- <https://www.insider.com/misbehaving-horses-wreak-havoc-kill-dreams-at-olympic-pentathlon-2021-8>.
- Mayer, John D., Peter Salovey, David R. Caruso, and Gill Sitarenios. "Emotional Intelligence as a Standard Intelligence." *Emotion*, vol. 1 (2001): 232–242.
- McKenna, Erin. *Livestock: Food, Fiber, and Friends*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2018.
- NBC Olympics. "Swiss Horse Euthanized after Appearing Lamé on Course." *NBC Olympics*, October 8, 2021. Accessed December 13, 2021. <https://www.nbcolympics.com/news/swiss-horse-euthanized-after-appearing-lame-course>.
- Olympics. "Tokyo 2020 Modern Pentathlon." *Olympics*, 2021. Accessed on December 11, 2021. <https://olympics.com/en/olympic-games/tokyo-2020/results/modern-pentathlon>.
- Porcher, Jocelyne. *The Ethics of Animal Labor: A Collaborative Utopia*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.
- Reuters. "PETA Calls on IOC President to Remove Equestrian Events from Games." Last modified August 13, 2021. Accessed December 11, 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/life-style/sports/peta-calls-ioc-president-remove-equestrian-events-games-2021-08-13/>.
- Riddle, Elizabeth, and Jill R. D. MacKay. "Social Media Contexts Moderate Perceptions of Animals." *Animals*, vol. 10, no. 5 (2020): 845.
- Scopa, Chiara, Laura Contalbrigo, Alberto Greco, Antonio Lanatà, Enzo Pasquale Scilingo, and Paolo Baragli. "Emotional Transfer in Human–Horse Interaction: New Perspectives on Equine Assisted Interventions." *Animals*, vol. 9, no. 12 (2019): 1030.
- Shapiro, Kenneth J. "Understanding Dogs through Kinesthetic Empathy, Social Construction, and History." *Anthrozoös*, vol. 3, no. 3 (1990): 184–195.
- Schwartz, Matthew. "German Modern Pentathlon Coach Disqualified for Punching a Horse." *NPR*, August 7, 2021. Accessed December 11, 2021. <https://www.npr.org/sections/tokyo-olympics-live-updates/2021/08/07/1025814959/german-modern-pentathlon-coach-disqualified-for-punching-a-horse>.
- Straits Times. "Olympics: Germany's Modern Pentathlon Coach Kim Raisner Disqualified after Punching Horse." *The Straits Times*, August 7, 2021. Accessed December 11, 2021. <https://www.straitstimes.com/sport/olympics-germanys-modern-pentathlon-coach-kim-raisner-disqualified-after-punching-horse>.
- Uldahl, Mette, Janne W. Christensen, and Hilary M. Clayton. "Relationships between the Rider's Pelvic Mobility and Balance on a Gymnastic Ball with Equestrian Skills and Effects on Horse Welfare." *Animals*, vol. 11, no. 2 (2021): 453, 1–14.
- Thiel, Ulrike. *Ridden: Dressage from the Horse's Point of View*. North Pomfret: Trafalgar Square Books, 2013.
- TMZ. German Coach Kicked out of the Olympics for Punching Horse. *TMZ*. August 7, 2021. Accessed December 13, 2021. <https://www.tz.com/2021/08/07/coach-kicked-out-olympics-punching-horse-german-modern-pentathlon/>.
- UIPM. "Modern Pentathlon at Rio 2016: How the Competition Will Work." Last modified August 2016. Accessed December 13, 2021. <https://www.uipmworld.org/news/modern-pentathlon-rio-2016-how-competition-will-work>.

- USHJA. "Safeguarding Our Sport: Reporting Horse Welfare Concerns and Other Rule Violations at Competitions." 2021, Accessed December 11, 2021. https://www.ushja.org/application/files/1715/3814/6657/HRA_July_eNews_-_Safeguarding_Our_Sport.pdf.
- Vincent, Aviva, Shelby McDonald, Bethanie Poe, and Vicki Deisner. "The Link between Interpersonal Violence and Animal Abuse." *Society Register*, vol. 3, no. 3 (2019): 83–101.
- Voigt, Melissa, Kristina Hiney, Candace Cronney, Karen Waite, Abigail Borron, and Colleen Brady. "Show Horse Welfare: The Viewpoints of Judges, Stewards, and Show Managers." *Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science*, vol. 19, no. 2 (2016): 183–197.
- Williams, Jane, and Gillian Tabor. "Rider Impacts on Equitation." *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*, vol. 190 (2017): 28–42.
- Wilsie, Sharon, and Gretchen Vogel. *Horse Speak: An Equine-Human Translation Guide*. North Pomfret: Trafalgar Square Books, 2016.
- Zettl, Walter. *Dressage in Harmony: From Basic to Grand Prix*. North Pomfret: Trafalgar Square Books, 1998.

Aviva Vincent, doktor, licenjonowany pracownik społeczny (LMSW), uzyskała stopień doktora na Case Western Reserve University, certyfikat weterynaryjnej pracy społecznej na University of Tennessee, stypendium Animals in Society oraz praktykowała w The Institute for Interdisciplinary Salivary Bioscience Research. Jej zainteresowania badawcze obejmują fizjologiczne wpływy więzi między człowiekiem a zwierzęciem, a w szczególności badania nad analitami śliny w naukach społecznych (n.p. oksytocyna, alfa-amylazy, kortyzol). Jest współzałożycielką i właścicielką Healing Paws LLC. Jest prezydentem International Association of Veterinary Social Work, członkinią Rady Nadzorczej PATH Intl oraz Komitetu Doradczego Center for Human Animal Education Research and Education w Ohio State University. Praktykuje w obrębie Equine Assisted Services ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem *ground-based programming* dla zdrowia psychicznego.

Aviva Vincent, PhD, LMSW, earned her doctoral degree from Case Western Reserve University, Veterinary Social Work Certificate from the University of Tennessee, a fellowship with Animals in Society, and trained at The Institute for Interdisciplinary Salivary Bioscience Research's "spit camp." Her research interest includes exploring the physiological impact of the human-animal bond; specifically, including salivary analytes in social science research (e.g., oxytocin, alpha-amylase, and cortisol). She is co-founder and owner of Healing Paws LLC. Aviva is the president of the International Association of Veterinary Social Work, on the Board of Trustees for PATH Intl, and an advisory board member for the Center for Human Animal Education Research and Education at Ohio State University. Aviva practices within Equine Assisted Services with a focus on ground-based programming for mental health.

Kaylynn Coates uzyskała stopień doktora w dziedzinie biologii (z naciskiem na neurobiologię) w 2020. W trakcie studiów wykorzystywała muszkę owocówkę, *Drosophila melanogaster*, jako model do badań nad skomplikowaną siecią neuronów serotoninowych w mózgu z zastosowaniem fizjologicznych, behawioralnych i obrazujących metod. W chwili obecnej asystuje badaczom biomedycyny w przygotowywaniu konkurencyjnych wniosków grantowych poprzez swoją pracę w Badaniach i Rozwoju. Jako jeździec z ponad dwudziestoletnim stażem, Kaylynn kocha doświadczenie harmonii więzi między człowiekiem a koniem oraz lekturę i praktyczne zastosowanie teorii jeździectwa.

Kaylynn Coates graduated with a PhD in Biology (emphasis in Neuroscience) in 2020. During her graduate career she used the fruit fly, *Drosophila melanogaster* as a model to study the complex wiring of serotonin neurons in the brain using physiological, behavioral, and imaging techniques. She now assists biomedical researchers develop competitive grant proposals through her work in Research Development. As an equestrian for over twenty years, Kaylynn loves the harmony and experience of the horse-human bond as well as reading and applying riding theory to her practice.

Ruth Burke, MFA, jest interdyscyplinarną artystką, która współpracuje ze zwierzętami w procesie twórczym. Jest woźnicą, farmerką, profesorem, jeźdźcem i pracownikiem kultury. "Dosiadając" praktyki sztuki współczesnej i sfery studiów nad relacją człowieka i zwierzęcia, Burke od 2015 skupia się wyłącznie na związkach między człowiekiem a zwierzęciem. Jej wystawy indywidualne to, między innymi, Polyrythms (2020) w HSpace Gallery/The Muted Horn w Cleveland, Ohio, Susurrus (2019) w Mantle Artspace in San Antonio w Texasie, oraz Mapping Empathy (2016) w halka art project w Istambule. Była artystką rezydentem w ACRE (2019), artystką rezydentem Michele Schara w Detroit Community School (2017), oraz członkinią inauguracyjną Animals & Society Institute (2017) na University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. W chwili obecnej, Ruth K. Burke pracuje na stanowisku Assistant Professor of Video Art w Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts, School of Art na Illinois State University.

Ruth Burke, MFA is an interdisciplinary artist who collaborates with animals in her creative practice. She is a teamster, farm laborer, professor, equestrian, and cultural worker. Straddling the practice of contemporary art and the field of human-animal studies, Burke has exclusively focused on human-animal relationships in her practice since 2015. Her solo exhibitions include Polyrythms (2020) at HSpace Gallery/The Muted Horn in Cleveland, Ohio, Susurrus (2019) at Mantle Artspace in San Antonio, Texas, and Mapping Empathy (2016) at halka art project in Istanbul, Turkey. Burke was a resident artist at ACRE (2019), a Michele

A Competition Question: Horse Welfare, Pentathletes, and Competitive Riding

Schara AIR at Detroit Community School (2017), and a member of the inaugural cohort at the Animals & Society Institute (2017) at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Ruth K. Burke is currently an Assistant Professor of Video Art in the Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts, School of Art at Illinois State University.