

A brown horse with a white blaze on its face stands in a field. The horse is the central focus of the cover. The background is a blurred field with a fence.

The CAROLINAS EQUESTRIAN[®]

\$5.00 USD

Vol. 4, No. 4
Winter 2017

**Driving to
Success**

with Meghan Benge

GALLOPING
WITH GIRAFFES

HOME
DESIGN

*with the Equestrian
IN MIND*

4 TIPS TO SUCCESSFULLY PLAN YOUR 2018 COMPETITION SEASON

By Steve Heinecke, SOCK, Inc.

As the 2017 show season draws to a close, you may be enjoying a few months of down time, furthering your horse's training and relaxing from show ring pressure. However, in order to establish a clear path to competition success, it is imperative to be proactive and begin outlining your show calendar for the 2018 season. Not only do I plan out my own show schedule and goals, but I also sit down with each of my clients to help lay out a roadmap for how to best achieve their desired goals. I follow four simple steps: reflect on your previous shows' results, realize objectives, be realistic in your aspirations and research competitions. Consider these tips further in order to obtain a more organized and rewarding show season in 2018:

- **Reflect** - Analyze your results from the current year so you can better understand what went well, where you could improve and what you would like to change about your upcoming season. What show was the most difficult (i.e. tougher competition, electric atmosphere, difficult courses)? Regardless of placement, was that show an overall good experience,

and did it push you to improve or did it undermine your horse's confidence? Where did you get most of your points and why did that show go better than others? What shows are a must for your schedule and important to help attain your goals? Speculate over what worked and what didn't and make the necessary adjustments to your schedule and plan in order to improve in the new year.

- **Realize objectives** - It's vital that you establish goals, whether they are regional, national or personal. Setting goals gives you long-term vision, while also motivating you each week. With my clients, we start with a long-term goal or picture, even three to five years down the road, and we devise a plan on what should be accomplished each year. As the rider, you need to recognize the steps to achieve that goal as well as have a clear understanding that there may be roadblocks that will delay your dreams.
- **Be realistic** - How many horse shows can you, your horse and your budget handle? This is one of the more important questions to consider so you don't end up burning out your horse or your wallet by the end of the year. Being proactive is key so you can save money and limit stress by pre-planning.
- **Research** - Take the time to educate yourself and learn how the qualification process works for the horse shows you want to attend including the amount of points you will need to collect to make the cut. Review your desired organization's event calendar and keep in mind location, judges, classes offered and the quantity and quality of exhibitors. I even recommend adding a few more shows closer to the end of your season for some last-minute opportunities to gain points before the qualifying period is over. These can also be removed later if you don't need the extra points.

As a trainer, it is my obligation to always set my clients up for success and guide them in the right direction in order to best achieve their goals. I hope these tips help you and your horse put your best foot (and hoof!) forward as you embark on the 2018 competition season! The Sock Inc. and Robindale Farm team wishes everyone a wonderful holiday season and best of luck in the New Year!



Happy Holidays from



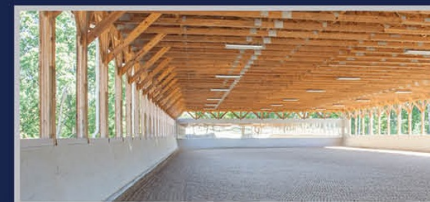
Sock Inc. and Robindale Farm!

SOCK

and
Steve Heinecke
at Robindale Farm



SALES
JUDGING
PONIES
CLINICS
TRAINING
BOARDING



561-254-2223 | 7414 Broomes Old Mill Rd., Waxhaw, NC
sockinc2012@gmail.com | www.steveheinecke.com | www.facebook.com/sockincequestrian
Robindale Boarding or Facility Inquiries: Carolyn Rechkemmer at 704-618-7474 or robindalefarm@gmail.com