

Rookies in the warm-up will have a better experience if they follow the rules of the ring



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OWNER & EVENT ORGANISER

Kings Sedgemoor Equestrian Centre in Somerset, Charlotte Warman's base, plays host to affiliated and unaffiliated dressage, jumping and arena cross-country events and there isn't much that she hasn't seen happen in a warm-up.

However, Charlotte says that most problems could be avoided if riders followed the rules of the collecting ring...

- Pass left shoulder to left shoulder.
- Slower pace stays on the inside track. Don't stop on the track.
- Red ribbon means keep back or give space.
- Green ribbon means young or inexperienced horse.
- When jumping, the red flag or wing is on the right. Call your fence on approach.
- Respect those around you.
- Allow a minimum of one horse's length between you and the next horse.
- Use your time productively. Don't stand around and chat in the warm-up.

She advises reading the relevant discipline's rule book beforehand.

"Read about tack, turnout, and warm-up rules and what assistance you're allowed," she says. "If you have any questions, ask them *before* leaving for the competition. Having to change your plans at the last minute, such as having to alter tack, can lead to very stressful situations at the venue."

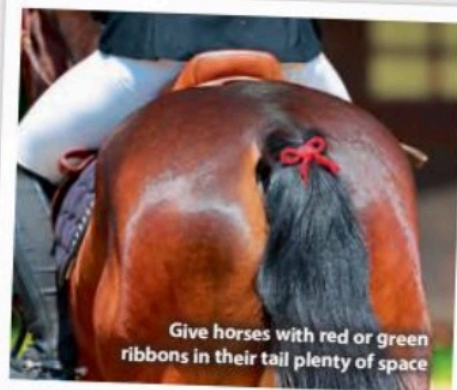
She also recommends communicating with the event organiser or the collecting ring steward on arrival.

"I love talking to our competitors. I want them to feel happy and, above all, safe."

The more prepared the rider is, the easier things will be once they get to the competition.

"Visit the venue prior to the actual event for schooling hire," advises Charlotte. "Do arena walks if on offer. And at home create a competition environment by placing banners around the area, or even asking a friend to walk around the outside with a pram. Competition venues aren't sterile. You never know what may appear or happen, and this is just as likely to happen in or near the warm-up as anywhere."

Charlotte also advises learning from local professionals.



Give horses with red or green ribbons in their tail plenty of space



Always pass left shoulder to left shoulder