

Hunt Etiquette & Protocols

Before The Hunt

Be Prompt!

Make sure that you have prepared enough the day before so you will have plenty of time for the unexpected: the horse you can't catch, the truck that won't start, etc.

When arriving at the meet, and you have a guest, introduce your guest to the Honorary Secretary, pay the capping fee (if applicable), and then go to the Masters for an introduction. Greet the Huntsman while he or she is gathering hounds and greet the Field Master before he or she gathers the Field. Thank them both at the end of the day.

Your horse and tack should be clean, neat and in good repair.

You should be neat and clean as well. Do not wear anything that could get caught in trees or obstacles and cause injury to you or your horse.

During The Hunt

If you choose to ride in First Flight Field, please maintain the pace of the Field Master. Those who wish to pick and choose their jumps should ride in the back of First Flight.

When jumping, don't approach the take-off area until the preceding horse and rider have taken the jump safely and advanced 3 or 4 strides.

If your horse refuses to jump, circle away from the jump to the right or left and go to the back of the field or if there is a gap in the approaching horses "get a tow". Slip in behind a willing horse and follow it over. Never go around a jump as it is being jumped.

Conduct In The Field

The Master, Hunt Staff and hounds should be given the right of way at all times. Always turn your horse's head so that it is facing the hounds, Master or Staff as they pass.

Stay behind your Field Master at all times.

Please be quiet while hounds are being hunted. Speak in a low tone. All hallooing (calling out to and attempts to give direction) to a hound by members of the Field are not only bad manners, but apt to spoil sport for everyone.

However, if hounds come in between horses or you can see that a hound will be coming close to other horses, let others know by calling "hound please" to alert members to give the hound the right of way. If the hound does not appear to be in a position to encounter horses, NO CALL is necessary.

If you see a danger to another rider, such as a hole or a low branch, you should call out “ware hole” or “ware branch”.

If a Whipper-In or Huntsman is coming from behind or ahead and will need to pass through the field of riders, let others know by calling “Whip please” or “Huntsman please”.

If you view a fox and the hounds are on the line, do nothing to interfere with the hounds or the fox. If you view a fox as he breaks covert and the hounds are not on the line, do not make a sound. Wait for him to be well away from the covert, then signal the Field Master by raising your cap so he/she may choose whether to “Tally Ho” or send a rider to the Huntsman. Do not lose sight of where the fox broke covert. You may be asked to show the huntsman exactly where you viewed.

NO SMOKING IS ALLOWED ON ANY OF OUR FIXTURES

Staff Rules

Master/Joint Masters

The Masters are the ultimate authority on any hunting day. His or her word is the law. The Masters are responsible for the kennels and keep in close touch with the Huntsman on all matters relating to the hounds. The traditional greeting for a Master is “good morning,” whatever the time of day.

Greet the Masters politely upon arriving at the meet. Thank him/her at the end of the day.

Huntsman

The huntsman is responsible for the hounds. The huntsman walks, trains and hunts the hounds.

Whippers-in

The Whippers-in are the Huntsman’s assistants on hunting and hound-walking days. They help control the hounds by moving hounds back to the Huntsman should the hounds stray and the whippers-in monitor game movement for the Huntsman. Whippers-in are known as honorary when they are volunteers.

Field Masters

The Field Master(s) are appointed by the Master(s) to lead the Field. Each Field Master is responsible for showing sport to his/her Flight and is the liaison between the Huntsman and the Field. He/she also has to make sure that the Field does not interfere with the hounds. Stay behind your Field Master at all times and follow his or her line. Follow but don’t press your Field Master. He or she is constantly revising their planned route based on how hounds are running, what the huntsman is doing, and how the terrain is unfolding.

BE QUIET WHEN THE FIELD MASTER STOPS. HE/SHE IS LISTENING FOR HOUNDS.

Never pass the Master or ride an alternate route without his or her permission. If he or she crosses a field by hugging the edge, do likewise. Keep up with the Field Master, since leaving gaps can interfere with the day’s sport. If you are on a narrow ride, keep in single file on the same side as the Field Master.

Never leave the Field without informing the Field Master.

Be sure to thank the Masters and Staff at the end of every hunt.