

AIDAN O'CONNELL: CV FOR RIDING COURSES

Aidan O'Connell was born in Cork, Ireland in April 1950.

He has been hunting since he was 10 years old, and started show jumping horses at the age of 16. He rode Grand Prix and Puissance for 5 years and was successful at all the major shows in Ireland including a victory at the Royal Dublin International Horse Show on his famous little horse "Suntan". His trainers were international trainers and riders from several countries.

In 1969 Aidan trained and rode his first steeplechase winner. In subsequent years he trained and schooled his own young horses, whose futures lay in hunting, steeple chasing, show jumping and eventing. Some of these horses reached the highest levels in their respective disciplines. "Outstanding" was a multiple steeplechase winner for English champion trainer Fred Winter, and "Lord Roseneath" was a successful international Grand Prix and Nations Cup horse for Swiss rider Colonel Paul Weier,

He also trained race horses professionally, both steeplechasers and flat horses, with successes in Ireland and abroad. He rode in about 150 steeple chases (in Ireland, England, Germany and South Africa); winning 11, and also rode 3 times in the famous and formidable English Grand National at Aintree.

During the Irish hunting season, from mid October until early March, Aidan hunts an average of six days a week. This is mainly to educate and school young horses whose futures may lie in either the hunting, eventing or show jumping disciplines, and to source talented young horses for his overseas clients. The hunting season is also a time when he entertains his friends and those riders who have attended his cross country training courses by arranging their hunting,

From such a wide experience base, Aidan has developed a unique cross-country training program, which benefits all riders, from beginners and pleasure riders to advanced competitors. Its emphasis is on safety (controlling the risk), and improving balance and confidence. He gives the lesson on horseback and demonstrates what he requires of the participants before asking them to jump. He teaches in Germany, Ireland and the United States.

During his racing career, Aidan held a professional trainers license and an amateur Steeplechase jockeys license from Ireland's racing authority, The Turf Club. He is a member of The Irish Horse Board, Eventing Ireland, The Show Jumping Association of Ireland and holds a coaching certificate from the Equestrian Federation of Ireland.