

## Tackling the Trainer Certification Program

*The USHJA Trainer Certification Program has now gone beyond the original study manuals, symposiums and old-fashioned testing. Today's applicants have the convenience and ease of completing coursework online, thanks to a partnership with [www.EquestrianCoach.com](http://www.EquestrianCoach.com). But no matter which educational method is utilized, the goal of the TCP is the same: To help professionals within the hunter/jumper sport by providing continuing education and a forum for long-term professional growth and recognition.*

### SUE LYMAN

**HOMETOWN:** Middleburg, Virginia

**PRIMARY DISCIPLINE:** Hunter

**FOCUS:** Trains young horses and off-the-track Thoroughbreds, also working with amateur riders

**EDUCATIONAL FULFILLMENT/COMPLETION:** Trainers Symposium



Sue Lyman completed the Trainer Certification Program during its initial phase, using the TCP Manual and attending special Trainers Symposiums. She believes the program has had a positive impact on her abilities as a trainer and caregiver and said the TCP encourages trainers to develop as individuals.

"I found the certification manual a great resource as a review of techniques and skills that I've learned all along, and it also helped fill in gaps that may have been missing in my lifelong education," she said. "Using this system to become well educated in the schooling and conditioning of our horses and riders ensures their safety and welfare."

A fundamental part of the program for Lyman was the Trainers Symposium.

"We had three fantastic clinicians—Jeff Cook, Sandy Ferrell and Melanie Smith Taylor. I took away great exercises to try with my students and horses from each of them. The opportunity to ask questions during the clinic was highly beneficial. I often use Melanie's expression 'As little as it takes and as much as you need' on a daily basis."

Lyman believes training horses and riders is an art form, and participating in the symposiums helped keep that passion alive and reaffirmed her career path decision.

"I support and identify with the philosophy of the TCP. I was inspired to conduct clinics of my own, using the basics of the American Forward Riding System, combining them with the insights of animal communicator Laura Rowley, to encourage the

COURTESY OF SUE LYMAN

development of 'feel,'" she said. "I got the idea of developing this innovative clinic when asking Melanie Taylor how to teach this elusive and essential quality."

After an established and successful professional career, Lyman offers this advice to new trainers: "Take advantage of the educational opportunity that the TCP has to offer. In fact, have an open mind and always take the opportunity to learn from other professionals. It will keep you fresh and help you grow as an individual. Your horses and riders will be safer and happier. Essentially, it will remind you of what's most important—developing horses and horsemen, as well as staying competitive at shows."

### HALEY SCHOOLFIELD

**HOMETOWN:** Waxahachie, Texas

**PRIMARY DISCIPLINE:** Hunter and Hunt Seat Equitation

**FOCUS:** Southern Methodist University Equestrian Team Head Coach

**EDUCATIONAL FULFILLMENT/COMPLETION:** Online Course



A professional since 2002, Haley Schoolfield was among the first to take advantage of the online TCP courses. "I was excited to learn about and to participate in the online program, as it allowed for schedule flexibility and reduced travel expense," Schoolfield said.

As the head coach of the successful Southern Methodist University NCAA Equestrian Team, Schoolfield is in a constant state of perpetual motion that makes free time all the more important. She understands the need for continuing education and appreciates a program that can be tailored around the demands of work.

"I attended a Trainers Symposium in Katy, Texas, and the George Morris/TCP Clinic in Dallas, and while I definitely gleaned some information from the live clinics, I also found the videos [on [www.EquestrianCoach.com](http://www.EquestrianCoach.com)] and the variety of instructors in the videos extremely helpful," she added.

Schoolfield's SMU Mustangs finished their 2012 fall season with a victory over the No. 1-ranked South Carolina Gamecocks, and she's adamant that much of the team's growth and success stems from the invaluable materials she picked up from the TCP.

"The TCP reminds me to go back to basics and simplify things more often," she said. "It also provides at-hand references in the manual that are incredibly helpful."

The SMU achievements serve as Schoolfield's testament of the positive impact the TCP can provide a professional. The additional benefits range from developing and improving teaching skills to increased credibility and visibility to current and potential clients. Schoolfield also noted that the perks of inclusion in the USHJA Certified Trainers Directory and the eligibility for insurance premium discounts through Markel Insurance "are an extra plus."

Of course, it's no surprise that a trainer in an academic setting

COURTESY OF HALEY SCHOOLFIELD