Heads Up! Practical Sports Psychology for Riders, their Trainers and their Families
by Janet Sasson Edgette, Psy.D.
New York: Doubleday Equestrian Library
1996, 220 pages

Janet Sasson Edgette, Psy.D., is a clinical and sports psychologist with a well-rounded background in counseling services including extensive work with hypnosis. Co-director of the Milton H. Erickson Institute of Philadelphia, her teaching expertise in the psychotherapeutic arena is broad and well-rounded. She also is a highly accomplished horsewoman, trainer and competitor as well as being an influential teacher in the equestrian arena. A serious rider for more than 30 years, she has written extensively about this field and, at one point, hosted "Horse Sense," a radio talk show. Her web site, www.HeadsUpSport.com, details some of her current endeavors.

Edgette manages to bridge psychotherapy and the world of competitive horsemanship effectively. Her expertise provides her with a special advantage in working with athletes to plan and prepare an individualized program effective in preparing the student, and parents or spouses, for the intense mental demands of training and competition.

The book is organized in three sections: for the rider, trainers and instructors, and for everyone, including families of the riders involved in competitive riding circuits. Written in a straightforward manner, Heads Up! addresses general ideas, gives practical advice and details ways in which individual differences are regarded as tools. Generously illustrated with everyday anecdotes it shows practical applications for the tips and techniques outlined using a building block style that allows readers to immediately apply techniques and methods and then come back again and again.

Heads Up! while ostensibly written for those in the competitive show circuit, has a broader appeal. Using horses as vehicles to popular psychotherapeutic techniques is clearly demonstrated. Edgette then carefully explains what she has done. The psychologically sophisticated reader can understand the ideas and principles demonstrated and the average horseman can use the ideas for training. Edgette has unique insights gained from his experiences and these have provided her with a fertile field for the reader.

Reviewed by:
Roxanna Erickson Klein, Ph.D., R.N
Dallas, TX

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