

Professional National Hunt Jockey

Role Summary:

A Professional Jump Jockey is a licensed athlete who rides racehorses in National Hunt races under rules, including hurdle and steeplechase events. The role demands advanced riding skill, physical strength and stamina, as well as the ability to judge pace and safely negotiate obstacles at speed. Jump jockeys work closely with trainers to deliver optimal race performance while prioritising safety, integrity, and equine welfare. The role is physically demanding, and involves irregular hours, extensive travel, and year-round competition.

Core Skills:

- Advanced riding and jumping ability: balance, timing, strength, and control over obstacles
- Race tactics and pace judgement: positioning, rhythm, and decision-making over longer distances
- Physical strength and endurance: upper- and lower-body strength, cardiovascular fitness
- Horse handling and welfare awareness: understanding jumping technique, fitness, and behaviour
- Risk management and safety awareness: judgement around obstacles, falls, and race conditions
- Clear communication: working effectively with trainers, owners, and racing officials
- Mental resilience: confidence, courage, focus, and the ability to recover from setbacks
- Professionalism and integrity: compliance with rules of racing and licensing requirements

Training:

- Entry begins through full-time employment as a conditional jockey pathway with a licensed trainer; however, it is common for jockeys to gain experience as an amateur jockey in point-to-point or rules races prior to this.
- Completion of mandatory jump jockey coaching and assessment programmes, including:
 - Riding over hurdles and fences
 - Balance, timing, and obstacle technique
 - Race tactics and safety training
- Ongoing professional development covering:
 - Physical conditioning and injury prevention
 - Nutrition and weight management
 - Equine welfare and integrity education
 - Rules of racing and disciplinary procedures
- Conditional jockeys progress to full professional status once they have achieved 75 winners under rules or reach the age of 26 where they are considered a 'claiming professional'
- Regular medical, fitness, and licensing checks are required throughout a jockey's career.

Scan Me
to sign up to
our newsletter



Pay

- Earnings are performance-based and vary widely
- Income typically includes:
 - Riding fees per race ride
 - Prize money percentages for placed rides
 - Retainers with owners or trainers (in some cases)
- Annual income can range significantly:
 - There is no guaranteed salary; earnings depend on rides secured and performance.
 - Costs such as travel, agents' fees, fitness training, and nutrition are usually paid by the jockey.