

2018 Robert Ridland



From Olympic rider and network broadcaster to international official, award-winning course designer, and U.S. Chef d'Equipe, Robert Ridland has had an unparalleled career in show jumping.

While still an undergraduate at Yale, Ridland was selected for his first Olympic team for the 1972 Games in Munich. Four years later, he helped the U.S. to a fourth place finish at the 1976 Games in Montreal.

Ridland achieved great success throughout the 1970s and '80s. His more noteworthy wins came in the American Invitational in Tampa Stadium, the Grand Prix of the United States at the National Horse Show in Madison Square Garden, and the Grand Prix of Switzerland at Lucerne.

Ridland rode on winning Nations Cup teams at Lucerne (1976), Rotterdam (1978), Toronto (1978) and Spruce Meadows (1986) and rode in the FEI World Cup™ Finals in Gothenburg in 1981. Twice he finished in the top 10 of the AGA Rider of the Year standings, including 1986 when he was third. In 1985, he set what were then AGA records by winning three straight events and placing four horses in a single Grand Prix.

Moving into television, Ridland served as a show jumping analyst on ESPN and for the 1986 World Championships on CBS, as well as for NBC at the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona and 2004 Olympic Games in Athens.

Turning to course designing, Ridland was equally successful. He was selected to design courses for major events such as the U.S. Olympic Trials (1992 & 1996), Hampton Classic, Paris CSI, and Central American Games. Twice he was honored as the U.S. Equestrian Federation's Course Designer of the Year.

Ridland served as FEI Technical Delegate at four FEI World Cup™ Finals including Gothenburg (1995), Helsinki (1998), Milan (2004) and Kuala Lumpur (2006). He has served on the FEI Jumping Committee and on the Board of Directors of the AHSA, USET, USEF and Show Jumping Hall of Fame.

Ridland established and became President of Blenheim EquiSports, a company producing approximately 20 show jumping competitions a year and more FEI Championship events than any other company in the U.S. In that role, Ridland managed the 2000 and 2004 Olympic show jumping Trials and the 2002 World Equestrian Games Trials. He produced the Oaks Blenheim International CSI**** from 2001-2003 and was Competition Manager for the FEI World Cup™ Finals in Las Vegas (2000, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009). In 2008, he was named co-manager for the 50th anniversary Washington International Horse Show, a role he continued through 2012.

In 2013, Ridland was named the U.S. Show Jumping Chef d'Equipe/Technical Advisor, following legendary predecessors Bertalan de Némethy, Frank Chapot and George Morris. Since then, the U.S. has won at least one medal in every Pan American Games, World Equestrian Games and Olympics, in addition to winning three FEI World Cup Finals. The success of his program was highlighted in 2018 when the U.S. won team Gold at the FEI World Equestrian Games™ and claimed first, second and fourth places at the FEI World Cup Finals.

