

## Olympic Event Riders up their game with cutting edge iPhone app



*“Visualisation is a key part of riders going well cross country”*

[www.crosscountryapp.com](http://www.crosscountryapp.com)

Three National Eventing coaches used a ground breaking new iPhone app to prepare their teams for the Olympic cross country competition. Australian Coach Prue Barrett, Eventing Legend and Team Ireland Coach Ginny Elliot and Belgian Team coach Eric Smiley spoke about how they used CrossCountry app at Greenwich.

Teams used the GPS tracking app to create a map of the testing six kilometer Greenwich course. They added photos of jumps and comments to memorise and study, sharing the courses by email.

Ginny Elliot explained “We used it in our cross country briefings. It enabled us to relate discussion back to the fences and look at minute markers. ***It is visually so much easier for riders to take information and advice on board when they have the course and photos in front of them rather than just imagining it.***”

Irish Rider Mark Kyle added "We reviewed the course and jump photographs together on an iPad. It's very useful to refresh your memory and have the course plan always handy if someone has a question. ***Much better than scraps of paper***". The team placed 5th in the Teams and Mark and his horse Coolio were 21st individual.

Multiple Olympic Medallist, European Champion, Badminton and Burghley Horse Trials winner Ginny Elliot describes the software as ***"Absolutely brilliant. I wish I'd had it when I was riding"***.



## ***“Time is always short at competitions”***

According to Belgian National Coach Eric Smiley "Most riders will walk International cross country courses up to 5 or 6 times, some jumps or combinations even more. There is only so much time available for this as preparation for the dressage is also time consuming". So to have pictures and info at hand ready to look at when there is time is very helpful.

***“Visualisation is a key part of riders going well cross country, so to have seen the course many times can only improve their familiarity with its questions and hopefully better able to produce the correct answers”*** said Eric Smiley

## ***Automatically calculated Minute markers***

Australian Coach Prue Barrett used CrossCountry app for over six months in Australia and overseas in the lead up to the Olympics. She finds the automatically calculated minute markers very valuable.

“On a familiar course like Burghley you have a good idea where the minute markers will be” says Prue, but Greenwich was a clean sheet. “The first 6 minutes were very twisty and steep, then between 6 and 7 and 7 and 8 minutes you only had 1 jump each so if your horse was fit and fast enough you could make up the time – as Chris Burton demonstrated”.

Prue and Clayton Fredericks walked the course individually with their iPhones, while Sam Griffiths wheeled it. Then they all did a group course walk comparing minute markers. ***“The minute markers were accurate with the wheel”***, reports Prue.

Prue Barrett likes the way CrossCountry also displays time at each jump at the bottom of the screen. This is valuable extra knowledge that would be too time consuming to calculate from a wheel.

Jose Diacono of CrossCountry app explains “It is wonderful to be able to work with top riders and coaches like Prue. They help us prioritise new features”. Time is always short at competitions so the app has to be easy to use and rock solid. ***“We worked with Prue to add a special new function for Aachen and London. It will be in the next release of CrossCountry”***.

You can download Belgian Coach Eric Smiley’s Olympic course from the CrossCountry course library to your iPhone, iPad or iPod Touch at [CrossCountry app courses](#) Search for Olympics

## ***For lower levels***

Coaches are also using CrossCountry with amateur riders pre and post competition. "Talking and showing riders after their cross country can also be of huge value as a learning process" says Eric Smiley, though it is, he adds, “not always appropriate or welcome at an Olympics!”

Mark Kyle explains "You can pull up pictures to show to a student or show a course to an owner. It's very beneficial to have the course in advance, especially at a one day event when you are riding a lot of horses and time is short".

Having minute markers easily to hand will help young riders as they go up the grades. “Riding to time is an art”, says Prue. Young riders need to learn how to recognise which parts of a course will ride quicker or slower and know where their horse is capable of catching up.

For lower level riders, the ability to quickly browse the course on your iPhone just before you ride helps calm nerves and avoid the disappointment of elimination for missing a fence or jumping the wrong one.

## ***About Eventing***

Eventing is an equestrian triathlon of dressage (an obedience test on the flat), cross country (galloping and jumping formidable solid obstacles such as banks, ditches and hedges) and showjumping (requiring care and accuracy because of the easily knocked down rails).

## ***About CrossCountry app***

The CrossCountry app helps horse riders memorise their competition courses and ride at the right speed. The app creates a cross country course map with jumps overlaid on a Google satellite map, measures the course with GPS tracking and automatically calculates minute markers. You can add photos, voice memos, notes and striding for each jump and browse them to remind yourself how to ride the course before starting out.

Riders need to know exactly where they must be at any point on the cross country course to avoid costly time penalties or overtiring their horses. Traditionally they measured the course with a wheel. Now they simply start the app, put their iPhone in their pocket, and focus on the jumps and terrain while the app calculates their "minute markers" and beeps when it gets to one.

Pre-recorded maps of different courses around the world with commentary are also available on the website.

CrossCountry is the brainchild of Jose Diacono who has worked for many years in Computer Mapping. It was designed by her daughter Helen who is an event rider and student of Industrial Design and programmed by son James, a mathematician and website developer.

Riders and officials love the app because it saves time, is very easy to use, fast and well designed. It reflects the way riders walk a course, predicting the next jump number so you don't have to type it in. This also alerts you if you have missed a jump.

CrossCountry for iPhone and iPad is being used by riders of all levels.  
<http://crosscountryapp.com/reviews.php5>

The free CrossCountry Lite can be used to view courses and listen to guided course walks. It also runs on iPod Touch.

[www.crosscountryapp.com](http://www.crosscountryapp.com)

[Introductory Video](#)

[What people are saying about CrossCountry App](#)

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