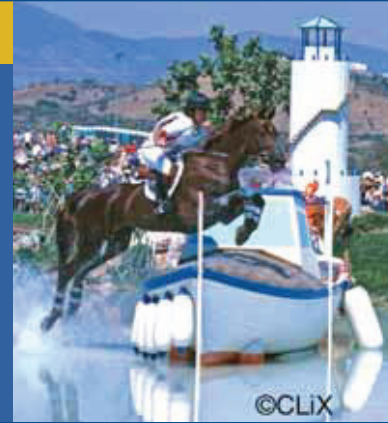


Bruce Mandeville

Class of 1986



Olympic competitor, equitation, 2000 Summer Olympic Games, Sydney, Australia; and 2004 Summer Olympic Games, Athens, Greece



Getting Back on the Horse

The doctors said he'd never ride again. "I was jumping a horse in the back field of the farm I was working on," recalls Bruce Mandeville, "and the horse stumbled on landing and fell underneath me. My knee hit a boulder. It shattered my femur in five places. Getting from the ground onto the stretcher was the most painful experience of my life. I had lots of surgical hardware implanted. But it wasn't that bad an injury. I didn't have any trouble getting back in the saddle."

That was May, 1998. Mandeville was riding again by September, and went on to compete in the 2000 and 2004 Summer Olympic Games. Never say never—to a lawyer or an athlete.

Mandeville has represented Canada in equine Three-Day Eventing since 1994, competing in two Olympics, two Pan-American Games and two World Championships. Eventing has its roots in the chariot races of the original Olympics, and in modern times began as a test for military mounts. Introduced into the 1912 Olympic Games and referred to as the *Militaire*, eventing consists of three components: dressage, to demonstrate the horse's elegance and training; cross-country, a reenactment of the dispatching of messages between army camps, to showcase the horse's speed and technical abilities; and stadium jumping, to prove the horse's enduring fitness after the cross-country event. Olympic eventing was originally open only to military officers. In 1924, it was opened to male civilians, and in 1964 to women. Equestrian sports are the only Olympic events in which men and women compete against one another.

An all-around athlete, Mandeville was a competitive skier and winner of the British Columbia Slalom Championship in his teens, and began Three-Day Eventing at 13 with Canadian Olympian Nick Holmes-Smith. Surrounded by a family of science majors, doctors and dentists, however, Mandeville was encouraged to pursue academics, and for a number of years gave up sports to do so. He earned three diplomas in French from the Sorbonne as

well as a combined commerce and law degree from UBC, and says law school gave him the ability to see a situation from another's perspective: "That's an invaluable tool to have for life in general," he says, "to be able to look at situations from many sides." By 1990, though, he was back on a horse, looking at things from above.

As an equestrian, Mandeville's "team" consisted of himself, his horse and his groom. "I don't know how it is for other athletes," he says, "but for people that rely on a horse, we have so many variables that if anything goes wrong, it could mean you can't even compete. Getting to the Olympics, it's always like, 'Am I really here?'" His groom Sarah Weldon, now an osteopath in England, worked with him for 15 years. They and Canadian Trakehner mare Larissa made the long journeys to Sydney, Australia and Athens, Greece, placing 22nd and 41st respectively.

Mandeville has supported his athletic career by teaching, running clinics on equitation, and by managing barns, which has included writing contracts for boarding, sales, breeding and syndication. He is now Chair of the Equine Science Department at Otterbein College in Ohio, combining athletics and academics in the best of both worlds. His courses include Legal Aspects of the Equine Industry, and he is in the process of establishing a program in Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy. Animal Assisted Therapy of all kinds takes advantage of the healing bond that can exist between humans and other species. People dealing with psychological trauma or addictions can benefit simply from being in close proximity to horses, which so closely mirror human emotions. For those with physical challenges, getting on a horse can provide an experience of physical freedom and mobility they might never otherwise experience. The link is easy for Mandeville to understand; from injury to international competition, he has shared almost every rise and fall with a horse.