

Sweet Briar College New Year, New Team: Riding Program to Offer Dedicated Show Team

Sweet Briar will relaunch its Show Team in 2026-27, giving independent riders a structured, team-based way to compete with their own horses.

AMHERST, VA, UNITED STATES, January 28, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Beginning in the 2026-2027 academic year, Sweet Briar Riding will once again offer its Show Team for independent competitors, a club program last offered in 2014.

The Show Team will provide independent competitors who currently show with their own or leased horses to continue doing so, but in a more formal, structured, and consistent manner. In contrast to varsity collegiate equestrian competitions, where riders are assigned a horse at random, independent competitors train and compete with the same horse, enabling them to set long-term goals with their four-legged partner.

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Director of the Riding Program, Merrilee “Mimi” Wroten ’93.

“The difference for independent competitors is the opportunity for them to create and pursue goals for themselves and their horse. They can work toward them together through a consistent, planned schedule. They’re a team,” said Director of [the Riding Program](#) and Head NCEA Coach Merrilee “Mimi” Wroten ’93.

The student group will enjoy aspects of a team sport while continuing to compete individually as part of this club,

which Wroten anticipates will start with around six riders. The Riding Program will offer a calendar of rated and local association shows across the East Coast for each rider to choose



Sweet Briar Riding to welcome back dedicated Show Team.

from, with opportunities for both hunters and jumpers.

"It might be that the whole team goes to the same exact shows or there may be a little variety in where each individual horse and rider duo goes," Wroten said. "For Sweet Briar Riding, it's really exciting to be able to offer a formalized program like this again. We have been going to shows individually, but to take a group of riders more consistently will be great for reminding people of the quality within our program, not only in the instruction and training, but also the opportunities that we offer students so that they can achieve their showing goals."

All members of the [Sweet Briar Riding Program](#) benefit from the support and expertise of the College's instructors and incredible [on-campus facilities](#). The Harriet Howell Rogers Riding Center includes an indoor arena, the Richard C. Colton, Jr. Equestrian Arena, our newest two-sided covered ring, outdoor rings, renovated Howell Lykes Colton '38 Stables, trails, and more, all on Sweet Briar's 2,847-acre campus.

Sweet Briar's Show Team reflects the College's commitment to meeting students where their passions thrive. For riders seeking a women's college that combines elite equestrian facilities, individualized coaching, and the flexibility to pursue long-term goals with their own horses, Sweet Briar offers a truly distinctive experience. Prospective students interested in equestrian studies and competitive riding are encouraged to visit sbc.edu/admissions or contact Admissions at admissions@sbc.edu to learn how they can ride forward at Sweet Briar.

Pictures by Noah Dachis, On Course Creative, and Peterson III Photography



Josie Flannery '29 celebrates a win on Sweet Briar's Jetson at the 2025 SWVHJA Hunter Seat Equitation Finals



Wyette Felton '26 rides Sweet Briar's Rise Up in the hunter discipline.

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