



Representing Woodland Hunt Pony Club as a Team Member

Here are some notes designed to help you understand our expectations when you represent the club. We are delighted that you feel ready to be considered for disciplines and you should be really proud of your achievements to reach this level. However, part of the process is that you are a good team player and you show consideration for your horse/pony, your team mates, your parents, designated trainers and the army of volunteers that make all this possible. These requirements also apply to your supporters. In short, your part of the deal is to be a good ambassador for Woodland as well as a successful competitor!

- ❖ Ensure that your horse/pony is at the centre of all your considerations. Routine foot care, dental care, veterinary care, vaccinations, feeding and appropriate fitness are of paramount importance. If in doubt, seek advice. Remember to take your passport with you for you horse/pony.
- ❖ **CHECK ALL RULES REGARDING TACK AND KIT. DOWNLOAD AND READ THE DISCIPLINE RULEBOOK.**
- ❖ Ensure all tack is safe and fits. Check stitching and buckles ahead of the competition. Tack must be clean. Make sure you have a current standard body protector and your hat has been turquoise tagged. Whips must be within rules. PLEASE USE WHITE WHPC SADDLECLOTHS. Green is ok for non Area Level.
- ❖ Be meticulous in your preparation ahead of the day. Make full kit lists in duplicate. Keep a box of 'spares' to include a headcollar, reins, girth, leathers, studs, spanners, gloves, hairnets etc - all of which are commonly forgotten items.
- ❖ Ensure you have hay/ feed for your horse.
- ❖ Ensure you have plenty of water in containers for rehydrating your horse and washing off. Carry at least 2 x buckets and sponges and appropriate rugs for the time of year.
- ❖ Make sure your horse is thoroughly washed and clean ahead of the day.
- ❖ Keep an equine first aid kit in your lorry/ trailer
- ❖ Be aware of course walk times and plan accordingly – you **need** to know your distances etc - every horse/pony is different.
- ❖ Arrive at tack check **in good time (20 min before or more)** and report to stewards for tack check/ check in straight away. If it is a team event you need to attend AS A TEAM. Please make sure you allow enough time to get ready and don't keep your other team members waiting.
- ❖ Take responsibility for your own performance and become empowered to make your own decisions at an event. Your trainers/ parents are there to guide you on the day only – the rest is down to you. The outcome is normally determined by your preparation.

- ❖ Thank **every** steward, starter and official you meet and make sure to greet your dressage judge with a **cheesy** “good morning/ afternoon” as you ride around arena –a smile and good manners go a long way.
- ❖ If it goes wrong and you have a bad day, maintain dignity and composure at all times. Learn how to lose - horses are great levellers even with the best preparation in place! Public displays of anger or emotion are never acceptable, however disappointed you feel. Pat your horse and walk away, go somewhere quiet until you have calmed down. Do not direct your anger at your parent/s – if it wasn't for them you wouldn't be there! As was discussed, agree a strategy with them well ahead of the season to allow you to get into your ‘zone’ before you perform and to ‘cool down’ after you have performed (parents note -this is not a good time for needless interruptions, your nerves are a separate matter!) Anger directed at your horse will not be tolerated and **will** compromise future selection - this includes misuse of spurs/ whips and reins. If this is seen, you will also be reported to the chief steward and are likely to be eliminated and your name kept on a blacklist.
- ❖ Learn how to do well – winning is fabulous, but you should also be thrilled if you and your horse have performed to the best of your ability and are not placed. Again, dignity needs to be maintained even if you do want to dance for joy on the top of the trailer!
- ❖ Be supportive of your team mates – however they have done. Every team has a discard score and that could be any member, perhaps you next time. Give your peers the space they need and be kind and considerate when appropriate. Never complain about their status or lack of performance; it is destructive and does not create ‘team spirit’. If you have nothing nice to say, say nothing. Likewise, refrain from being publicly opinionated about other riders – this is unforgiveable and embarrassing for all.
- ❖ If you have a genuine objection, you need to go through your team manager, DC or representative and follow the correct protocol. This will include laying down a deposit which will only be returned if the objection is upheld. It is fine to do, but must be done politely and correctly. Have a copy of the rules book to hand.
- ❖ Congratulate other winning clubs/ section winners.
- ❖ **EVERY** team member **MUST** attend prize giving **correctly dressed** in dressage/SJ kit (including hats and gloves, right one held in left hand), even if they are the discard score if you have a team or individual placing. This is a **non-negotiable** part of being on the team and a courtesy to organisers and sponsors. However late it is, be assured that they will be there long after you have left. Accept that this is part of the process and factor in the timing. Woodland has only just been forgiven for not adhering to this guideline at areas many years back!

- ❖ Make sure you go and **thank the organisers** as a team. One of our lovely mothers has been brilliant at bringing a box of chocolates and a card for them and this has not gone unnoticed by the events!
- ❖ If you have a long wait, make sure your pony is walked regularly and not left on trailer for hours.



We hope these notes help and that you have a fantastic time representing your club – please ask the DC, Team manager or trainers if there is anything you are not sure about