

Representing Woodland Hunt Pony Club at a Pony Club Competition

Here are some notes designed to help you understand our expectations, and that of The Pony Club as a whole, when you represent Woodland at a Pony Club competition whether as an individual or as a team member. When you are attending a competition remember you are an ambassador for the Branch and you should show consideration for your horse/pony, your team-mates, your parents, designated trainers and the army of volunteers that make the event possible. Pony Club DC's all know each other, and it is always lovely to hear reports of good sportsmanship and behaviour and not so nice to have to deal with any issues regarding bad sportsmanship or behaviour after the event. Please make sure parents, members and supporters are all aware and understanding of their obligations.

Before entering a Competition

Before entering a competition, and we recommend that you enter in good time as they often close early due to popularity which can lead to disappointment, make sure you have **carefully read through the schedule** and that you understand what classes you are/are not eligible for. On entering you are accepting to abide by the rules under which the competition is being run. In the case of a Pony Club competition, this will be under the relevant Pony Club discipline rule book for that year.

- Make sure you have read and understand the rules and that you know what tack and equipment, whips, bits etc are permitted for each discipline. It is entirely the responsibility of the members, to be familiar with how and why you can be eliminated. Please do not trouble officials with requests outside of the rules such as being allowed to continue after elimination.
- Ensure all tack is safe and fits. Check stitching and buckles ahead of the competition.
- Make sure you have a current standard body protector (BETA 2018 from January 2024) and your hat has been PINK tagged.
- You need to be prepared to compete at **ANY TIME** on the competition day so best not to make other plans and factor in prize giving and course walks.
- Digital copies of the rule books can be downloaded from www.pcuk.org and hard copies ordered from www.amazon.co.uk. It is a good idea to have a copy of the rules in your 'kit' to take with you in case you need to check on anything while you are there.
- Parents, please have a plan of roles and responsibilities between you and your child before the day.

Preparing for an Event

Prior to the event, 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. Be meticulous in your preparation ahead of the day. Make full kit and 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 to last the duration and an extra in case of emergency.
- Ensure you have plenty of water in containers for rehydrating your horse and for washing off. Carry at least 2 x buckets and sponges and appropriate rugs for the time of year.
- Keep an equine first aid kit in your lorry/trailer.
- Remember to take your horse/pony passport with you when you travel wherever you are going be it a rally, course or arena hire or competition.

Tack and Turnout

Both horse and rider will need to be **immaculacy** turned out with:

Rider

- Hat PINK tagged. (Plain navy, black or dark green if using a skullcap)
- Body protector (BTEA 2018 from January 2014 ONLY)
- White shirt (collared for use with a tie and stock shirt if using a stock)
- Pony Club tie or stock
- Hacking or Show Jacket with PC badge on left lapel with felt under (
- WHPC base layer (green or white for Cross Country elements if applicable)
- White/Green hooped WHPC cross country hat silk (for Cross Country elements if applicable)
- White or cream jods for all elements
- Clean (polished!!) LEATHER long boots or jodhpur boots with half chap or jodhpur clips
- Hair neat and tidy - in a hairnet
- Gloves (compulsory for dressage)
- No jewellery (watch and studs ok but safer to remove ANY earrings)

- Number bib with either printed number (usually available to download from www.ponyclubresults.co.uk) or reusable.

Pony

- PLAITED (for Area Competitions)
- Hooves picked out and hoof oil applied covering all the hoof
- Body well brushed – no stable stains
- Tail and mane well brushed and free of tangles/bedding etc
- Eyes/nostrils/dock clean

Tack

- Plain brown or black tack (not sparkles)
- Saddle and bridle clean, free of dirt and grease
- Bit clean
- Woodland white saddlecloth (available from GGGear)
- Stirrup treads clean
- Keepers on bridle done up

On the day

- Be aware of course walk times and plan accordingly. Do you need to warm-up before course walk if you are one of the first to go in a class? How many can you watch before your turn? You **need** to know your lines and 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.
- Thank **every** steward, starter and official you meet and make sure to greet them with a big smile and a "good morning/ afternoon" – a smile and good manners go a long way.
- If you have a long wait, make sure your pony is walked regularly and not left on trailer for hours.

Prize Giving

- If you are lucky enough to be placed, you **must** attend Prize Giving **correctly dressed** including:
 - jacket, shirt and tie/stock
 - riding boots
 - hat with him strap done up and hairnet. Boys may 'carry'; their hat under their arm
 - gloves, right one held in left hand
 - no mobile phones in pockets
 - Not in XC kit if ODE (OK for Arena Eventing)
- This is a **non- negotiable** part of being a Pony Club member 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.
- **For team competitions EVERY** team member **MUST** attend prize giving, even if they are the discard score, whether you have a team or individual placing. Congratulate other winning clubs/ section winners.

Sportsmanship and Behaviour

- 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.
- 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 teammates or other members – 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 unforgivable 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 your copy of the rules book to hand.

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