



Central Ontario Region of Canadian Pony Club

The Canadian Pony Club has three Regions in Ontario: Saint Lawrence-Ottawa Valley in the east, Western Ontario in southwestern Ontario, and Central Ontario in, well, the centre. While renewals are still coming in, Central Ontario normally has about 500 active members spread among 30-35 local Branches. Members can join at any age up to 20 years as of January 1, and can now remain as educational or testing members up to the age of 25.

Despite our name, we are not all about little kids on ponies. Only one of our activities, Prince Philip mounted games, is limited to ponies. For everything else, any horse or pony who is sane, sound, safe and able to perform at the level asked can enter (with one exception: no stallions).

We offer opportunities to compete in dressage and show jumping, some activities that are like recognized competitions with a bit of a twist, plus some activities that are unique to Pony Club.

- Rallies are like events, with dressage, cross-country and stadium jumping phases, but with scoring for stable management and turn-out as well as the riding phases. Rallies are run with a minimum of coaching and a maximum of self-reliance by the kids. Teams include non-riding captains and grooms, and they get scored as well.
- Mounted games come in two flavours: Prince Philip games for those up to the age of 14, and Masters games for older members. The games we play are similar to, but not exactly like, those played by any other association.
- Tetrathlon is a four phase competition comprising target shooting (with air pistols), swimming, running and cross-country riding. Occasionally stadium jumping is added.
- Quiz is a non-riding competition and is an outgrowth of Pony Club's educational program. Members compete as individuals and as teams in written tests, visual tests (in which competitors must identify unusual horsey objects) and oral tests. There are also several "Quiz Stations". These are games that teams, helpers and spectators can play; they don't count for points, but they are fun for everybody. For example, one calls for the player to identify various horse-related objects that have been put into socks, by feel alone. Clubs may also compete in a "Projects" category, in which team members from all levels prepare displays or exhibits based on one of a "menu" of topics.

For 2005, Central Ontario offered a total of 13 competitions at the Regional level, plus two show jumping clinics and several educational sessions. We also hosted part of the Inter-Pacific Exchange, with Pony Club members from all over Canada, the US, Australia, Hong Kong, Japan and New Zealand taking part.

Branches may also run their own local shows and clinics, and all of them run educational sessions. Successful riders at the Regional level can qualify for Zone competitions – against riders from the other two Ontario Regions – and from there advance to national or even international Pony Club events.

For more information, check out the Canadian Pony Club website at www.CanadianPonyClub.org, click on Regions/Branches and select Central Ontario.