

PARENT INFORMATION FORM - WESTERN ONTARIO REGION

In most Pony Club activities, there is some element of risk that an accident could occur and result in **injury or death** to a member or their mount. During instruction at Branch and at Regional meetings and/or clinics, members are usually around horses, even when they are not riding. For example, they could be involved with grooming, checking for injuries, etc. There is always a risk of accidents when dealing with large animals even if extreme precautions are taken. Riding instruction often involves having riders attempt things which they have never done before or at a more difficult level than they have done before. For example, every rider must mount for the first time, jump for the first time, etc. Most of our members will have passed one or more Pony Club tests. This means that they have successfully performed to a standard set of requirements. In most cases, their instructors will be preparing these members for the next level of accomplishment and they will therefore be attempting to do more difficult things than the test level which they have passed indicates.

Although all competitors in Regional or National events are required to have passed some sort of Pony Club standard test (e.g. "D" or higher for the "D" Rally), this is only a **MINIMUM REQUIREMENT** and does not in any way guarantee the capability or safety of the rider when competing in a specific event. The testing programme is designed as a **MINIMUM** set of standards for all-round riders while Regional and National competitions are designed to provide good competition for the **BEST** representatives of particular Branches or Regions in a specific discipline. In nearly all cases, a member who just meets the minimum requirement based on Pony Club test level will not be a suitable candidate for Regional or National competitions. Participation in a Regional or National event is not a right but a privilege which must be earned by demonstrating the required capability.

All competitors and parents must also be aware that safe control of a horse under competition circumstances in the presence of crowds of people and other horses is **MUCH** more difficult than control in a non competitive situation. The effect of the excitement of the crowds of horses and people and the stress of the competition itself on the ability of the rider to control the mount **MUST BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED** before entering **ANY** regional competition. Many riders who can safely jump in an arena under instruction, who can safely "hack" across country, do the occasional open field jump, and can play competent games on their home or stable property are still unprepared for Regional riding competitions.

All competitors at Pony Club or other competitions **NEED** to be reasonably familiar with the rules. Not knowing the rules and proper "etiquette" for such things as jumper warmup rings can lead to serious accidents. Don't put your child into an embarrassing or dangerous situation just because you didn't make sure they knew the rules.

D RALLY:

This is an athletic event involving horseback riding on level ground, over fences in an arena, and over solid obstacles in the open field over rough ground. For many members, this will be their first competition involving such a variety of skills.

The dressage test is conducted in an arena with only a small barrier about 1 foot high. There might not be any enclosure outside that barrier. The D test involves halt, walk, and trot only. The D1 and D2 tests also require the canter.

The cross country test is based on foxhunting and for the D1 and D2 levels is held in the open field with no enclosures. The course usually includes hills, paths through wooded areas, and open fields. At the D level, the cross country test is set up in an enclosed field, however it will be a large field, usually with hills and hollows and possibly with some bush area. At all levels, the obstacles are very solid (rock fences, fallen trees, ditches) and are not at all similar to the easily knocked down arena fences most young riders start with. None of the D level achievement tests challenge the riders in a similar way and **all competitors should get specific instruction in handling their mount over solid open field jumps before attempting a Rally at any level.**

The stadium jumping phase uses knockdown jumps similar to those used by most instructors, however the size of jumps and complexity of the course will be more challenging.

D riders will be expected to jump a total of about 18 obstacles (about 10 in a large field) at heights of up to 2 feet high with a top spread of 2 feet and a bottom spread of 2'6" at a speed of 300 meters/min. Although cantering is not required, most mounts will go into a canter when on a jumping course and the rider should be able to handle that situation.

D1's will be asked to jump about 20 (about 12 in the open) obstacles up to 2'6" in height with a top spread of 2'6" and a bottom spread of 3'0" at a speed of 350 meters/min.

D2's will be expected to handle about 24 Jumps (14 in the open) at up to 2'9" high with a top spread of 2'9" and a bottom spread of 3'9" at a speed of 375 meters/min.

The maximum length of the cross country course is 800 meters for D, 1600 meters for D1, and 2400 meters for D2.

Ponies and horses compete on the same courses. No special allowances are made for ponies.

All riders are expected to handle their own with a little or no adult help, however they can get help from other Pony Club members from their own or other branches.

A/B/C RALLY:

This is a knowledge and athletic event lasting up to 3 1/2 days. For the duration of the Rally, the competitors (riders, grooms, and captains) remain at the site of the rally and are expected to look after all of their mount's requirements during the Rally, feeding, cleaning, grooming, and first aid are included.

The form of the riding parts of the event is similar to the D rally described above but the courses are much more challenging, longer, and involve more variety of jumps including water. The courses require a full effort from both the rider and mount. Both should be physically **WELL CONDITIONED** as athletes to avoid injury.

There are 3 major divisions in the Rally, "Pre-Training", "Training" and "Preliminary". Although entry is primarily based on the capabilities of the horses, A and B riders are normally expected to enter the Preliminary division, first time C riders the Pre-Training division, and experienced C riders, C1's and C2's the Training division.

The Pre-Training division involves cross-country and stadium jumping totalling up to 34 jumps at a height of 3'0", spreads of 3'0" top and 4'0" bottom, and a speed of up to 400 meters/minute. Drop Jumps of up to 3'7" may be used.

The Training division involves cross-country and stadium jumping totalling up to 36 jumps at a height of 3'3", spreads of 3'7" top and 5'3" bottom, and a speed of up to 450 meters/minute. Drop Jumps of up to 4'7" and jumps with no height of up to 5'11" may be used.

The Preliminary division involves up to 40 jumps at 3'7" height, 4'7" top spread, and 6'7" bottom spread at 520 meters/min. Drop Jumps can be up to 5'3" and jumps with no height can be up to 9'10" wide. There will be several combination jumps in each course.

The maximum length of the cross country course is 3500 meters for Preliminary, 3000 meters for Training, and 2000 meters for Pre-Training. In addition, a Roads and Trails course of up to 3300 meters is also required for all levels as part of the endurance test.

DON'T underestimate the difficulty of this competition!

TETRATHLON

A 4 phase event (swimming, running, shooting, riding). Pony Club testing covers the riding only.

The running phase is conducted over natural country. The course length is 1000 meters for Novice division, and 2000 meters for Juniors and Seniors.

The swimming phase is conducted in a pool. All Seniors and Juniors swim 200 meters and Novices swim 100 meters .

The shooting phase is conducted in an appropriate location designed for shooting (usually a gun club). Competitors fire 20 shots each from an air or CO2 pistol.

The riding phase is a combination of stadium jumping and cross country jumping (see D Rally above). The stadium courses will involve about 12 jumps for Seniors, 10 for Juniors, and 8 for Novices and the required speed will be up to 350 meters/min for Seniors, 325 for Juniors, and 275 for Novices.

The cross country course may include up to 20 jumps for the Seniors and Juniors and 12 for Novices at a required speed of up to 450 meters/min for Seniors, 400 for Juniors, and 350 for Novices. The courses can be up to 2200 meters long for Juniors and Seniors and 1200 meters for Novices.

The maximum dimensions of both cross country and stadium jumps is 3'3" high with a 4'0" top spread and 5'0" bottom spread for seniors, 2'9" high, 2'6" top spread and 4'0" bottom spread for Juniors, and 2'0" high with a top spread of 2'0" and a bottom spread of 3'3" for Novice. Jumps without height can be up to 6'6" for seniors, 5'0" for juniors, and 4'0" for novice.

NOTE: There are age restrictions which require Novice competitors to be **under** 12 years of age and Junior riders **under** 15 years of age as of the previous Jan 1. Riders who may be best suited for the Novice or Junior division based on their ability will not be allowed to compete at those levels if they exceed these age limits.

PRINCE PHILIP GAMES:

On the surface, this event seems to have little risk. No jumping is required and, although events are timed, cantering is only at the rider's option. In fact, PPG is one of the more accident prone events in part because it attracts many young, inexperienced riders and mounts who may have control problems.

Unassisted mounting and dismounting is required in some games. Other games require riding in pairs or having one member on the ground leading another on horseback. Riders who may have difficulty with any of these movements should check the schedule of games for the division they wish to enter and review the rules for each game.

At some times the competitor may be in an unenclosed area and must be able to handle their mount in the open. The major new thing that a rider may be faced with at a PPG competition is the increased tension which comes from the crowds of people and horses and playing against the clock. The effect of these factors on both the mount and rider cannot be ignored.

All riders and mounts should have had prior experience with the props used for the games. Not familiarizing your pony with the props could lead to severe control problems.

Each game involves competitors racing in relatively narrow lanes (minimum 25 feet wide). The lanes may or may not be marked but there is no dividing barrier between lanes so loss of control can result in serious accidents.

For competitors under the age of 15 as of the previous Jan 1, there are three divisions available ("A", "B", and "C") which are based on ability. All competitors 15 years of age or older compete in a single "Masters" division which is not divided based on ability. This division may include both very experienced and very inexperienced competitors. National competitions include only the "Masters" and "A" Divisions.

DRESSAGE:

Unassisted mounting and dismounting are not required.

Cantering is required in most tests. Candidates must check the test they wish to ride before competing.

Although the test is conducted in an enclosed area, the sides of a dressage ring are only about 1 foot high and it is very easy for a mount to leave the ring. There is not necessarily any secondary enclosure so the rider should be capable of controlling their mount in the open.

As in the other competitions, the effects on both the horse and rider of excitement caused by crowds of people and other horses must be considered.

SHOW JUMPING

Although cantering is not specifically required, most mounts will canter in the ring when on the jumping course. All competitors should be able to handle their mounts at the canter.

As with other Regional competitions, the presence of crowds of people and horses and the excitement of the competition must be considered.

The jumping itself is in an enclosed area but the trailer parking and practice areas are often in the open. All riders should be able to handle their mount in the open.

Up to 7 Divisions may be offered if there are sufficient entries in each. We do not have enough room here to describe each in detail, however the jump heights range from a low of 2'3" (Jumpoff to 2'6") for the Entry Division to 3'9" (Jumpoff to 4'0") in the Open Division. Jump heights increase by 3" for each division.

Courses will be highly technical and will involve double and triple combinations.

MINIMUM TESTING CRITERIA FOR COMPARISON TO ABOVE SPECIFICATIONS OF EVENTS

- D** No Jumping, cantering, or control in the open is included
- D1** Tested over a single jump 2'0"max" but not in the open. Control on the flat in the open is tested but not necessarily at the canter.
- D2** Course of jumps to 2'6" maximum height in an arena and cross country. Not tested over combinations, complex jumps or at a specific speed.
- C** Jumps to 2'9" height in an arena and 2'6" cross country. Test includes rough evaluation of control of pace in the open at LOW speeds. Control on rough terrain not tested.
- C1** Jumps to 3'0" height and spread in Stadium and 2'9" cross country. Stadium testing includes combinations. Cross country testing includes control on the flat over rough terrain but only simple types of cross country jumps. Cross country pace 350 meters/min.
- C2** Jumps to 3'3" height and spread in Stadium and 3'0" cross country. Slightly more complex jumps. Cross country pace 400 meters/min. NOT tested over all types of jumps found at the Rally (water, ski, trakehner).
- B** Jumps to 3'6" height and spread in Stadium only. More complex cross country jumps at up to 400 meters/min. Cross country jumps 3'0" height and width.
- B2** Jumps to 3'9" height and spread in Stadium only. Tested to handle most types of stadium and cross country jumps. Cross country jumps 3'3" height, 3'7" top width at a pace of up to 450 meters/min.
- RA/A** Jumps to 3'9" height and spread In Stadium only. Cross country jumps 3'7" high and 4'7" top spread at a pace of up to 520 meters/min.