



THE BARRIER SPRING FESTIVAL: NORTHERN IRELAND 2026

(For England/Wales & Scotland see Regional Rules)

RULES FOR ARENA EVENTING, DRESSAGE & SHOW JUMPING

**Championships to be held at Castle Irvine
25th – 26th April 2026**

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1. GENERAL RULES FOR ALL SPORTS

Every eventuality cannot be provided for in these rules. In any unforeseen circumstances, it is the duty of the relevant officials to make a decision in a sporting spirit and to approach as nearly as possible the intention of these rules.

If not covered by these rules, please refer to the relevant and current Pony Club Sport Rulebook.

1.1 QUALIFYING STAGES

There are two stages of the Barrier Spring Festival competition in Northern Ireland:

1. Preliminary Rounds will be held any time before 4th April 2026
2. Those who are successful at their Preliminary Round will go forward to the Barrier Spring Festival Championships in Castle Irvine 25-26th April 2026

1.2 TEAM COMPETITION

Should a Branch/Centre have three or four members qualify at any Preliminary Competition, at any level, these members can combine to compete as a mixed level team at the Spring Festival Championships. The team members can compete at different levels with a maximum of two members at the same level, the exception being the PC110/Open class where only one member is allowed. Music classes are excluded from the teams. A team must be comprised of at least three members (i.e., one member may ride two horses) and the top three scores to count at the Championships. Teams must be declared prior to entries closing for the Spring Festival Championships in April.

1.3 SADDLERY & DRESS

The current Pony Club saddlery and dress rules apply.

1.4 GENERAL ELIGIBILITY

Multiple Horses – competitors may qualify a maximum of two horses for the Championships in any one class. In the event of a rider qualifying more than two horses for the Championships, they must nominate which two they will take at the Preliminary Round. The other qualifying place will be passed down the line.

Multiple Riders – horses may be ridden by up to two different riders at a Preliminary Round but by only one rider at the Championships, in any one sport.

Multiple Levels – riders cannot compete in more than two consecutive classes per day on the same horse/pony. Horses/ponies cannot compete more than once in each class or in more than two classes on the day.

1.5 REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT

Reasonable Adjustment may be considered if required, please see <https://pcuk.org/officials/equality-diversity/reasonable-adjustment/>.

2. PRELIMINARY ROUND RULES FOR ALL SPORTS

Held in Area 17 any time before 4th April 2026. Preliminary Round competition dates can be found at <https://pcuk.org/spring-festival/>.

2.1 PASSING DOWN THE QUALIFICATION

On the day - If a competitor is unable to go to the Championships, then the qualifying place/s will be passed down the line. Please ensure every competitor confirms to the organiser/steward that they are intending to enter the Championships.

After the Preliminary Round – If a competitor is unable to go to the Championships, they must notify The Pony Club Office as soon as possible so that their qualifying place can be passed down the line. This will only be done up until the closing date for entry to the Championships.

A list of qualified members can be found at <https://pcuk.org/spring-festival/>.

2.2 ENTRY FEE

Entry fee to be set by the organising Branch/Centre or venue.

Please contact the relevant Show Secretary for details, these can also be found on The Pony Club website.

2.3 PRELIMINARY ROUND COMPETITION RESULTS

All Preliminary Round organisers must submit the results of their competition, including the combinations in a qualifying position as soon as the competition has finished. If the competition is canceled or there are no qualifiers, please ensure the office is notified.

All qualifier competitions are required to submit their results. Results should be recorded either via www.ponyclubresults.co.uk or by using the [templates available from the website](#). All results should be submitted via the [online form](#).

Please ensure you submit your results quickly after your event as this ensures the published list of current Qualifiers is up-to-date and passed down places can be offered.

3. CHAMPIONSHIP RULES FOR ALL SPORTS

3.1 SUBSTITUTIONS

Substitute of horse/pony or rider will not be accepted at the Championship.

3.2 ENTRY FEE

Championship Classes:

- Arena Eventing - £40.00 per combination
- Dressage - £32.00 per combination
- Show Jumping - £32.00 per combination

Championship entries and stable bookings opening TBA
Entry deadline is 10th April 2026

3.3 CENTRE MEMBERS

Centre members who qualify for and attend the Championship will be awarded a special commemorative rosette for attending the Championship.

3.4 TRIPLE QUALIFIERS LEAGUE

Should a combination qualify for Spring Festival 2025 in all three disciplines and enter and take part on all three days within a Championship class (excluding Freestyle to Music) they will automatically be entered into the Triple Qualifier League at the Championship. They must complete all disciplines in each day and their best score from each day will be ranked, and all three scores will be added together to create an overall score.

4. ARENA EVENTING RULES

4.1 SADDLERY AND DRESS

As per the current Pony Club Eventing Rulebook. Cross-country compliant kit and saddlery should be worn.

Stop watches are not permitted.

4.2 ELIGIBILITY

Horses/ponies must be aged 5 years or older.

PC70 – Riders in this class must be aged 14 years and under on 1st January 2025. A combination of horse/pony and rider are NOT eligible if they have:

- Previously ever finished 1st to 3rd as an individual in the PC70 Show Jumping or PC70 Arena Eventing Spring Festival Championships on two occasions.

PC80 – A combination of horse/pony and rider are NOT eligible if they have:

- Previously ever finished 1st to 3rd as an individual in the PC80 Show Jumping or PC80 Arena Eventing Spring Festival Championships on two occasions.

PC90, and PC100 – Open to all Members of The Pony Club.

PC110 – Open to all Members of The Pony Club. **It is not necessary to qualify for the PC110 competition, entries can be made directly for the Championships.**

4.3 NUMBERS TO QUALIFY FOR THE CHAMPIONSHIPS

The first SIX highest-placed individuals from each Preliminary Round will qualify for the Championships and be eligible for their Branch team selection. Branches may make up as many mixed-level teams as they can from their qualifiers.

Competitors may qualify a maximum of two horses and/or ponies for any one Championship class. Riders/horses/ponies and/or combination of horse and rider can qualify for more than one Championship class.

4.4 GUIDELINES FOR PONY CLUB ARENA EVENTING

Arena Eventing is a two-phase competition, which can be run on either an indoor arena, outdoor surface, or a grass arena. General rules follow the current Pony Club Eventing Rule book except as modified below.

Competitors will jump a course of show jumps immediately followed by a course of cross-country style fences**. There will be no more than 20 (dependent on the size of the arena) jumping efforts in total. This may be increased to 25 jumping efforts at the Championships.

The course at the Spring Festival Championships will finish with the last fence as a show jump, the bogey fence, which may be up to 10cm higher than the rest of the course. Knocking down the Bogey Fence will incur 6 penalties, for all other penalties the Bogey Fence will be deemed as part of the Show Jumping section. Preliminary Rounds may include a bogey show jump fence to finish the course if they wish.

The optimum time should be based on a speed of 325mpm for PC70, 350mpm for PC80 and PC90, and 375mpm for PC100.

The winner will be the competitor with the lowest number of penalties. In the event of a tie the winner will be the one closest to the optimum time.

There should be a drawn order and, where possible, approximate start times given in advance of the day.

The course will only be open for walking before the class starts.

The Judge's decision is final.

4.5. NOTES

****XC Portable Fences/Fixed Fences** – These must not be used unless they can be properly and safely anchored. (See Eventing Organisers Handbook and [Guidance on Cross Country Fences](#). In their place, and especially on surfaces, knockdown substitutes should be used, i.e. rustic show jumps or those supplied by specialist manufacturers such as “Jump for Joy”

Both the Show Jumping and Cross-Country sections must be timed for all competitions. It is preferred that Qualifier classes use digital timing equipment, however if not available a stop watch may be permitted.

Safety Cups – Safety Cups are mandatory for all Pony Club Show Jumping Competitions including any practice fences. To be used on the back rails of spread fences and middle and back rails of triple bars. They should also be used for all knockdown fences in the XC Phase.

It is recommended a Show Jumping Ireland or Eventing Ireland Course Designer, preferably one with Arena Eventing experience, is used if possible. For Area Competitions this is mandatory. If the course designer is not qualified, then approval must be sought from The Pony Club.

Courses should be built within the dimensions set out in The Pony Club Eventing Rules.

4.6 PENALTIES

SJ Phase:

Knocking down obstacle	4 penalties
Knocking down Bogey Fence (if applicable)	6 penalties
First disobedience of horse	4 penalties
Second disobedience of horse in whole course	8 penalties
Third disobedience of horse in whole course	Elimination*

(Each circle or crossing tracks between fences counts as one disobedience)

First fall of rider	Elimination*
Fall of Horse	Elimination*
Error of course not rectified	Elimination*
Failure to start or jump next fence within 60 seconds	Elimination*
Starting before the Bell	Elimination*
Continuing the course without a hat, or with chinstrap undone	Elimination*

*Competitors eliminated in this phase may not proceed to the XC phase

XC Phase

Knocking down an obstacle	4 penalties
First refusal, run out or circle of horse at obstacle	5 penalties
Second refusal, run out or circle at same obstacle	10 penalties
Third refusal, run out or circle at same obstacle	Elimination
Four refusals around the course	Elimination
Fall of horse	Elimination
Fall of rider	Elimination
Error of Course not rectified	Elimination
Horse trapped in obstacle	Elimination
Horse resisting rider for 60 consecutive seconds anywhere on the course	Elimination
Failure to cross the finish line mounted	Elimination
Continuing the course without a hat, or with chinstrap undone	Elimination
Time will be taken overall.	
Exceeding the time limit	Elimination
For every commenced second in excess of the optimum time	0.4 penalty
Every commenced second in excess of 5 seconds under the optimum time	0.4 penalty
Time limit is twice the optimum time.	

5. DRESSAGE RULES

5.1 SADDLERY AND DRESS

As per the current Pony Club Dressage Rule Book.

Whips of any length are permitted at all levels and at the Championships.

5.2 COMMANDERS

Commanders are permitted at Preliminary Rounds but **not** at the Championships.

Reasonable Adjustment (i.e. use of a commander) may be considered if required, please see <https://pcuk.org/officials/equality-diversity/reasonable-adjustment/>.

Commanders are permitted for warm-up classes, if held.

5.3 ELIGIBILITY

Preliminary PC70: Riders must be aged 13 and under on 1st January 2025

A combination of horse/pony and rider are NOT eligible if they have:

- Competed at a Grassroots or above Spring Festival Championship for Dressage in 2024 or prior years.
- Completed above Prelim level with BD/DI or completed at BD/DI Novice My/Team Quest
- Previously ever finished 1st to 3rd as an individual in the Preliminary PC70 Spring Festival Championships on two occasions.
- Completed at Novice or above level Dressage

Grassroots PC80: A combination of horse/pony and rider are NOT eligible if they have:

- Competed at a Novice or above Spring Festival Championship in Dressage in 2024 or prior years.
- Completed above Prelim level with BD/DI
- Completed at BD/DI Novice My/Team Quest
- Previously ever finished 1st to 3rd as an individual in the Grassroots PC80 Spring Festival Championships on two occasions.
- Completed at Intermediate or above level Dressage

Novice: A combination of horse/pony and rider are NOT eligible if they have:

- Competed at an Open Area level or above Spring Festival competition in Dressage in 2024 or prior years.

- Won any BD/DI points (BD/DI Preliminary points do not count for the purposes of this rule)
- Completed at BD/DI Elementary level or above (BD/DI Team/My Quest competitions do not count for the purpose of this rule)
- Completed in BD/DI Novice Music classes.
- Previously ever finished 1st to 3rd as an individual in the Novice Spring Festival Championships on two occasions.
- Completed at Open level Dressage

Intermediate: A combination of horse/pony and rider are NOT eligible if they have:

- Competed at an Open Area level or above Spring Festival competition in Dressage in 2024 or prior years.
- Won any BD/DI points at Elementary level or above.
- Completed at BD /DI Medium level or above (BD/DI Team/My Quest competitions do not count for the purpose of this rule)
- Previously ever finished 1st to 3rd as an individual in the Intermediate Spring Festival Championships on two occasions.

Open: Open to all members of The Pony Club.

It is not necessary to qualify for the Open Competition; entries can be made directly for the Championships.

5.4 SECTIONS

If there are 30 competitors or less the section will be held in one arena. If there are more than 30 competitors, the section may be split into two arenas.

5.5 NUMBERS TO QUALIFY FOR THE CHAMPIONSHIPS

The first SIX highest-placed individuals from each Preliminary Round will qualify for the Championships and be eligible for their Branch team selection. Branches may make up as many mixed-level teams as they can from their qualifiers.

Competitors may qualify a maximum of two horses and/or ponies for any one Championship class. Riders/horses/ponies and/or combination of horse and rider can qualify for more than one Championship class.

5.6 DRESSAGE TESTS

	Preliminary Rounds	Championships
Preliminary	Preliminary PC70 Dressage Test 2022	Preliminary PC70 Dressage Test 2022
Grassroots	Grassroots PC80 Dressage Test 2018	Grassroots PC80 Dressage Championship Test 2024
Novice	Novice Dressage Test 2020	Novice Dressage Championship Test 2025
Intermediate	Intermediate Dressage Test 2024	Intermediate Dressage Championship Test 2023
Open	N/A	Open Dressage Championship Test 2018

Test sheets are available to download from: [The Pony Club Website](#)

5.7 DRESSAGE TO MUSIC

Direct entry at the Championships. All classes held in 20m x 60m arena.

Novice Individuals – Novice Freestyle Dressage to Music 2023

Combination of horse and rider are NOT eligible if they have:

- completed an Open Area level or above summer competition in Dressage in the current year or have done so in previous years
- won any BD (or DI) points (BD/DI Preliminary points do not count for the purposes of this rule)
- completed at BD (or DI) Elementary level or above (BD/DI Team/My Quest competitions do not count for the purposes of this rule)
- competed in BD (or DI) Novice Music classes

Intermediate Individuals – Intermediate Freestyle Dressage to Music 2023

Combination of horse and rider are NOT eligible if they have:

- won any British Dressage (or Dressage Ireland) points at Elementary level or above
- completed at BD (or DI) Medium level or above (BD/DI Team/My Quest competitions do not count for the purposes of this rule)

Open Individuals – Open Freestyle Dressage to Music 2023

Open to all Pony Club Members.

Pairs – Pairs Freestyle Dressage to Music 2023

Open to pairs from any Branch, Centre or combination of Branches or Centres.

Test sheets are available to download from [The Pony Club Website](#)

Score sheets are available to purchase from [The Pony Club Shop](#)

RULES

1. To be run in accordance with the current Pony Club Dressage Rules.
2. Age as on 1st January of the current year.
3. Test sheets can be downloaded from the Dressage Test page of the website.
4. The test may not contain movements above the standard of The Pony Club Test indicated on the relevant test sheet. If included, marks may be deducted.
5. The test should not be of more than 5 minutes in duration. The time is taken from the exact moment when the horse/pony moves forward from halt at the beginning of the test. The test finishes with a halt and salute anywhere on the centre line facing the Judge.
6. The music may start either before the entry at A or after the first halt and shall be provided by competitors on their own CDs containing only the music for this competition. It is recommended that a second CD is kept by the competitor to act as a back-up. Competitors need to be aware that some CDRW discs cannot be read by all CD machines, so it is advisable to use CDR discs.
7. Classes may be split into junior and senior sections at the discretion of the organiser.
8. CDs must be clearly marked with the rider's name and class number and be handed in to the Commentary box on arrival.
9. Failure to complete the test in the allotted time will not incur time faults but may be taken into consideration when marking the 'Artistic Marks'.
10. There are no errors of course and the bell will not be rung should a rider make an obvious mistake, but marks may be deducted under 'Artistic Marks'.
11. The test should be simple and pleasing to watch.
12. In the case of a technical failure interfering with the competition, the judge at C will ring the bell. In the case of the rider's music failing, skipping or jumping during a test, the rider may make one request to restart, or the judge can suggest that they restart. When possible, the restart should be immediate but if not, the rider should return to complete or restart their test during a scheduled break or at the end of the competition. It is up to the rider whether to restart the test from the beginning or to commence from the point the music failed. In either case, the marks already given to the point at which the music failed will not be changed.

6. SHOW JUMPING RULES

6.1 SADDLERY AND DRESS

As per the current Pony Club Show Jumping Rule Book.

Whips must be “padded” and comply with the current British Showjumping rule (see the PC Show Jumping Rulebook for key points). In all Pony Club Show Jumping, excessive use of the whip, including repeated slapping down the shoulder, is prohibited. The rules state that the whip may be used a **maximum of three times** after entering the arena. Use of the whip will be monitored, especially at the Championships, and excessive use may result in elimination at the discretion of the judges.

6.2 ELIGIBILITY

PC70 – Riders must be aged 13 and under on 1st January 2025. A combination of horse/pony and rider are NOT eligible if they have:

- Completed at PC90 or above at any Spring Festival Championship for Show Jumping or Arena Eventing.
- Previously completed a BS/SJI Competition with a starting height of 90cm or above.
- Previously ever finished 1st to 3rd as an individual in the PC70 Show Jumping or PC70 Arena Eventing Spring Festival Championships on two occasions.

PC80 – A combination of horse/pony and rider are NOT eligible if they have:

- Completed at PC100 level or above in any Spring Festival Show Jumping or Arena Eventing Championship in 2024 or prior years.
- Previously ever finished 1st to 3rd as an individual in the PC80 Show Jumping or PC80 Arena Eventing Spring Festival Championships on two occasions.
- Previously completed a BS/SJI Competition with a starting height of 100cm or above.

PC90 – A combination of horse/pony and rider are NOT eligible if they have:

- Completed at PC110 level or above in any Spring Festival Show Jumping or Arena Eventing Championship in 2024 or prior years.

PC100 – Open to all members of The Pony Club.

PC110 GRAND PRIX – Riders CANNOT compete in the Open Grand Prix Competition if they have ridden in the PC90 Spring Festival Championship Competition in the same year.

6.3 NUMBERS TO QUALIFY FOR THE CHAMPIONSHIPS

The first SIX highest-placed individuals from each Preliminary Round will qualify for the Championships and be eligible for their Branch team selection. Branches may make up as many mixed-level teams as they can from their qualifiers.

Competitors may qualify a maximum of two horses and/or ponies for any one Championship class. Riders/horses/ponies and/or combination of horse and rider can qualify for more than one Championship class.

Qualifiers must have jumped a clear round in the first round or first phase if run under single or two phase.

6.4 COURSE DIMENSIONS – PC70

All dimensions apply to the first round of each competition. The jump-off or the timed section of a single or two-phase will be higher.

PC70 – Preliminary Rounds

BS Table A7, single-phase or two-phase

Speed 325 metres per minute

Maximum Height & Spread: **0.70 m**

PC70 - Championship Warm Up* subject to time and entries

Table A: One round not against the clock.

Placings to be decided by faults and in the event of equality of faults the time that is closest to an optimum time based on the speed of 325 metres per minute. The optimum time will not be published until the end of the competition.

Maximum Height & Spread: **0.70 m**

PC70 - Championship

BS Table A7, single-phase or two-phase depending on entries

Speed 325 metres per minute

Maximum Height of Fences **0.75 m**

6.5 COURSE DIMENSIONS – PC80

All dimensions apply to the first round of each competition. The jump-off or the timed section of a single or two-phase will be higher.

PC80 - Preliminary Rounds

BS Table A7, single-phase or two-phase

Speed 325 metres per minute

Maximum Height & Spread: **0.80 m**

PC80 - Championship Warm Up* subject to time & entries

Table A: One round not against the clock.

Placings to be decided by faults and in the event of equality of faults the time that is closest to an optimum time based on the speed of 325 metres per minute. The optimum time will not be published until the end of the competition.

Maximum Height & Spread: **0.80 m**

PC80 - Championship

BS Table A7, single-phase or two-phase depending on entries

Speed 325 metres per minute

Maximum Height of Fences **0.85 m**

6.6 COURSE DIMENSIONS – PC90

All dimensions apply to the first round of each competition. The jump-off or the timed section of a single or two-phase will be higher.

PC90 - Preliminary Rounds

BS Table A7, single-phase or two-phase

Speed 325 metres per minute

Maximum Height & Spread: **0.90 m**

PC90 - Championship Warm-Up* subject to time & entries

BS Table A4

Speed 325 metres per minute

Maximum Height of Fences **0.90 m**

PC90 – Championship

BS Table A7 (single-phase or two-phase depending on entries)

Speed 325 metres per minute

Maximum Height of Fences **0.95 m**

6.7 COURSE DIMENSIONS – PC100

All dimensions apply to the first round of each competition. The jump-off or the timed section of a single or two-phase will be higher.

PC100 - Area Competitions

BS Table A7, single-phase or two-phase

Speed 325 metres per minute

Maximum Height & Spread: **1.00 m**

PC100 - Championship Warm-Up* subject to time & entries

BS Table A4

Speed 325 metres per minute

Maximum Height of Fences **1.00 m**

PC100 – Championship

BS Table A7

Speed 325 metres per minute

Maximum Height of Fences **1.05 m**

6.8 COURSE DIMENSIONS – PC110 GRAND PRIX

All dimensions apply to the first round of each competition. The jump-off or the timed section of a single or two-phase will be higher.

There are no Preliminary Rounds at Open level

All dimensions apply to the first round of each competition. The jump-off or the timed section of a single or two-phase will be higher.

PC110 Grand Prix - Championship Warm-Up * subject to time & entries

BS Table A4

Speed 325 metres per minute

Maximum Height of Fences **1.05 m**

PC110 Grand Prix - Championship

Speed 325 metres per minute

Maximum Height & Spread of Fences in the first round **1.10 m**

All Clear Rounds or the top 10 Competitors (from the 1st Round) will go through to the 2nd Round. In the event of equality of faults time will decide. All scores in the 1st Round will be carried forward to the second round.

Other competitors will be placed according to their faults and time.

All those placed equal first on faults for the two rounds will go through to the Jump Off which will be against the clock.

Other Competitors will be placed on faults and time.

6.9 NOTES TO COURSE DESIGNERS

It is recommended that a SJI Panel Course Designer is used if possible.

For Area Competitions a SJI Course Designer is mandatory. If the course designer is not qualified, then approval must be sought from The Pony Club.

It is important to use some 'fill-in material' so that the fences look inviting and hollow plastic poles are not allowed.

Safety Cups - Safety Cups are mandatory for all Pony Club Show Jumping Competitions including any practice fences. To be used on the back rails of spread fences and middle and back rails of triple bars.

All Qualifier classes MUST use digital timing equipment not a stop watch or phone.

The Course:

- If possible, the first two fences should be sited to be jumped towards the Collecting Ring.
- One third to one half of the obstacles should be spreads and must include at least one square oxer.
- Distances - Unless the competition class stipulates the height of pony the distances should be for horses.
- In a course designed for a mixed class (horses and ponies) it is important not to use difficult committed distances so that ponies can adjust their strides. There should be no three stride distances anywhere in the course. There must be no less than five strides on the approach or following any combination, (either double or treble). Except where the rules for the competition stipulate and there is a significant mix of sizes of ponies/horses, one or two double combinations instead of a double and a treble may be better suited to the competition.
- **The second element of a double combination must be an upright.**

6.10 BRITISH SHOWJUMPING TABLE DEFINITIONS

Table A7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● All equal clears (or equal faults if no clears) go through to a jump-off● One jump-off against the clock● Competitors placed on faults and time
Single Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Faults cumulative over both sections● Second section against the clock● Five to seven fences in each section (minimum 10 & maximum 13 fences overall. Minimum 12 numbered fences in qualifying competitions)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Competitors must complete the whole course to be eligible for a prize placing
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