



# RULEBOOK 2026



## POLO

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# OBJECTIVES

To provide Members of The Pony Club with an introduction to the game of polo.

Pony Club Polo has four objectives:

- i. Help young players to understand the basic principles of polo; rules, riding, tactics, striking the ball and the care and welfare of ponies
- ii. Set high standards of conduct with a competitive spirit in a team
- iii. Provide a bridge to the adult game
- iv. Have fun

# RULES

These Rules are made by the Pony Club Polo Committee in conjunction with other Pony Club Committees.

The Pony Club Office provides administrative support. Queries relating to these rules should be directed to the Polo Chairman at [polochairman@pcuk.org](mailto:polochairman@pcuk.org) and copied to the Office at [polo@pcuk.org](mailto:polo@pcuk.org).

**All Branch, Centre and Team Managers, players, parents and guardians in Pony Club Polo must read, understand and comply with the rules.**

Every eventuality cannot be provided for in these rules. In any unforeseen or exceptional circumstances or any other issue in connection with Pony Club Polo 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. It is the player's responsibility to ensure they are complying with the rules of the competition.

**NOTE: Rules which differ from those of 2025 appear in bold type and side-lined (as this note).**

# PONY CLUB POLO COMMITTEE

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## The Pony Club

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## DISCLAIMER

The Pony Club, the Pony Club Polo Committee, the HPA and tournament and event organisers or any person acting on their behalf, do not accept liability for loss, damage, accident, injury or illness to players, spectators or any person or property whatsoever. The Pony Club, the HPA, Pony Club Polo and tournament and event Organisers aim to meet the necessary medical, veterinary and health and safety standards but the responsibility for the players, spectators and supporters rests with the individuals and, if they are under 18 years, with their parents or guardians both on and off the ground. A player with a known medical condition must obtain qualified medical approval before participating in any Pony Club Polo activity.

Parents or guardians are responsible for the behaviour of their children at all times when their children are participating in any Pony Club Polo event.

# **1. INTRODUCTION**

Do you enjoy riding and team games? Does your pony enjoy an occasional gallop? Have you got a good eye for the ball? If so, you should contact your local Pony Club and find out more about polo.

The Hurlingham Polo Association is the governing body for polo in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Its history goes back to 1874 when the first polo match was played at the Hurlingham Club in London, following which the first set of rules was drawn up in 1875. The HPA makes an annual grant to Pony Club Polo and was delighted that the following Pony Club Branches/Centres were represented in 2025:

Beaufort Hunt, Berkeley Hunt, Bicester & Warden Hill Hunt, Bisley & Sandown Chase, Blackmore & Sparkford Vale Hunt, Cambridgeshire Hunt, Cambridge & Newmarket Polo Academy, Cattistock Hunt, Chiddingfold, Cotswold, Cowdray Hunt, Dorset Polo Centre, Druids Lodge Polo Centre, Grafton Hunt, Hambledon Hunt North, Hampshire Hunt, Hertfordshire Polo Academy, Heythrop Hunt, Hurworth Hunt, Lord Leconfield, Minninooka Polo Centre, New Forest Hunts, North Cotswold Hunt, North Warwickshire, Old Berkshire Hunt, Old Surrey & Burstow Hunt, Oxford Polo Centre, RAC Saddle Club, Puckeridge Hunt, Royal Artillery, South Dorset Hunt, South Oxfordshire Hunt (South), Warwickshire Hunt, Vine, West Hants, Wilton Hunt, Woodland Hunt.

The introduction of Pony Club Centres has been a welcomed addition to Pony Club Polo making the sport accessible to children who do not have their own ponies.

The Polo Charity very kindly gave a grant to the Pony Club for introducing and training young players in 2018. The committee hopes that this will encourage more Branches and Centres to play. The Martin Treves grant is also available to encourage players on their Pony Club ponies.

## **GENERAL**

**1.1** Pony Club Polo is played by young people aged 6-21 years old. There are five Pony Club Sections based on age groups: Jorrock's, Jorrock's on Polo Ponies, Handley Cross, Surtees and Loriner/Rendell; and four Sections based on age and handicap: Hipwood, Rocksavage, Langford and Gannon. The best teams in each Section play the finals at The Pony Club Polo Championships over a weekend in early August. In addition to a full programme of tournaments and training in the summer holidays, there are arena tournaments and training courses throughout the rest of the year.

**1.2** In 2024 there were 63 teams playing. Pony Club Polo is designed, above all, to be fun.

**1.3** Pony Club Polo is founded upon the principle of one player, one pony, making it widely accessible. It is possible to play polo starting at 6 years old and finishing at 21 with only one pony. However, to cater for those who wish to progress further, and to provide a bridge into adult polo, four Sections of Pony Club Polo, Langford, Hipwood, Rocksavage, and Gannon, play two, three and four chukka matches needing two to four ponies per player. The flagship of Pony Club Polo is the Gannon competition.

**1.4** Pony Club Polo has a comprehensive training and coaching system to teach all aspects of the sport: riding, hitting the ball, tactics, umpiring and pony management. Local training is organised by individual Pony Club Branches and Centres.

**1.5** Individuals and teams are invited to represent The Pony Club abroad and in the UK. Individuals can also be selected on merit to go to the main Pony Club Championships and participate in HPA Select Teams.

**1.6** The Hurlingham Polo Association (HPA) makes a major contribution to Pony Club Polo in pursuit of its objective to improve the sport. They provide the structure for training and accrediting coaches.

**1.7** Pony Club Polo acts within the rules of the HPA, except where they are overridden by Pony Club Polo rules which will then take precedence.

## **SHORT HISTORY**

**1.8** Pony Club Polo started in 1933 but it was not until 1959 that it emerged in its modern format. Brigadier Jack Gannon and Major Claude Davenport organized five Branch teams to play at the Mons Officer Cadet School, Aldershot on 8th September 1959 (New Forest, Hampshire Hunt, Old Berkshire, Staff College and Bisley participated). Today Pony Club Polo is run by a voluntary committee and is an independent sport under the auspices of The Pony Club. There have been nine Chairmen: Col Jacobs 1959-60, Col Cubitt 1961-66, Col Pat Langford 1967-76, Buff Crisp 1977-89, Brigadier John Wright 1990-97, Luke Borwick 1998, David Cowley 1999-2007, Theresa Hodges 2008-2013 and Charles Whittington 2014-2023. Justin Stanhope-White is the current Chairman. The Championships have been played at five different locations: Aldershot 1959, Cirencester 1964 and 1974, Kirtlington 1968 and Windsor 1971. Since 1977 the Championship finals have been held at Cowdray Park. Pony Club Polo saw an explosion of interest in the 1980s and 1990s. In 1985 there were only 23 teams but by 1991 the number of teams competing had grown to 84 with over 100 teams competing in 2003. In 1988 the Gannon competition became four chukka matches and has

been a great success. The following year the Loriner Section was introduced and in 1993 the Jorrocks Section. In 1998 the Langford Section, playing three-chukka matches came in and in 2003 the Surtees Section for under 14s on polo ponies. In 2008 Rendell became two chukkas and a new Section called Ledner to provide one chukka polo for under 21s was introduced. Also in 2008, along with the HPA two new sections were introduced; Hipwood, for players under 15 playing three chukka matches and Buckmaster for players under 19 playing four chukka matches. In 2016 Rocksavage was introduced for players under 17 playing four chukka matches. From 2010 until 2021 these sections were run by the HPA independently to The Pony Club. In 2019, Loriner and Rendell were merged although all the trophies will still be awarded. In 2022, Hipwood and Rocksavage were reintroduced to The Pony Club and Buckmaster is no longer played.

Today a large majority of the 50 best players in the United Kingdom played Pony Club Polo.

## 2. GENERAL RULES FOR ALL SECTIONS

### 2.1 ORGANISATION OF SECTIONS

Pony Club Polo is organised in nine Sections, some of which may be divided into a number of divisions. Each Section is run by a Section Manager on the Committee.

Section Managers have the discretion to accept players, on a case by case basis, of a different age/handicap, to that of the Section, based on:

- ▶ Safety
- ▶ Ability

<b>Name (Abbreviation)</b>	<b>Min Age on 1st Jan 25</b>	<b>Age on 1st Jan 25</b>	<b>Min HPA Handicap</b>	<b>Max HPA Handicap</b>	<b>Chukkas</b>
Gannon (GAN)	N/A	Under 21	-1*	N/A	4 chukkas
Langford (LAN)	N/A	Under 21	-2**	N/A	2 x 2 chukkas
Loriner/Rendell (LOR/REN)	14	Under 21		See section	1 chukka
Rocksavage (ROCK)	13***	Under 18		1 (only one per team)	4 chukkas



Surtees (SUR)	11	Under 15		-1	1 chukka
Hipwood (HIP)	11****	Under 14		0 (only one per team)	3 chukkas
Handley Cross (HX)	9	Under 14		-2	1 chukka
Jorrocks on Polo Ponies (JOPPS)	6	Under 11		-2	1 chukka
Jorrocks (JOR)	6	Under 11		-2	1 chukka

\* -2 players under the age of 16 may play GAN at the discretion of the Section Manager.

\*\* -2 players under the age of 14 may play LAN at the discretion of the Section Manager.

\*\*\* Players under the age of 13 may play ROCK at the discretion of the Section Manager

\*\*\*\* Players under the age of 11 may play HIP at the discretion of the Section Manager

## 2.2 PLAYERS' DRESS

New equipment is not expected, but what is worn must be clean, neat, tidy and safe.

It is the player's and their parents or responsible adult's responsibility to ensure their dress complies with the Rules. Contravention may incur disqualification.

### a) Clothing

At tournaments all players must wear team shirts with numbers (see rule 2.d) and white breeches/white jeans.

### b) Footwear

Only standard riding, polo or jodhpur boots with a fairly smooth, thin sole and a well-defined square cut heel may be worn. Plain black or brown half chaps must be worn with jodhpur boots of the same colour. Tassels and fringes are not allowed. NO other footwear will be permitted.

Stirrups should be of the correct size to suit the player's boots (see the Stirrup rule).

### c) Kneepads

Players in all Sections, other than HX, JOPPS and JOR, must wear kneepads. It is strongly recommended that HX, JOPPS and JOR players do as well, but it is not compulsory.

### d) Shirts





A register of team colours for Pony Club Polo is kept at The Pony Club office. Teams wishing to change or select colours should apply to The Pony Club office. In the event of a clash of colours in a match the team to change shirts will be the one lower in the draw (as per HPA rules).




### e) Hats and Hair

**Hair:** Must be tied up and back (preferably in a hairnet) and securely, in a safe manner to reduce the risk of hair being caught and to prevent scalp injuries. It is recommended that long hair is plaited.

**Hats:** Players MUST always wear a protective hat when mounted. Only hats to the following specifications are acceptable at any Pony Club activity. The Pony Club is consistent with fellow BEF (British Equestrian) Member bodies in its Standards for Riding Hats. It is strongly recommended that secondhand hats are not purchased.

**The hat standards accepted as of 1st January 2025 are detailed in the table below:**

Hat Standard	Safety Mark
Snell E2016 & 2021 with the official Snell label and number	
PAS 015: 2011 with BSI Kitemark or Inspec IC Mark	
(BS) EN 1384:2023 with BSI Kitemark or Inspec IC Mark	
VG1 with BSI Kitemark or Inspec IC Mark	

ASTM-F1163 2015 & 2023 with the SEI mark	
AS/NZS 3838, 2006 with SAI Global Mark	
NOCSAE certificate(for Polo ONLY)	<p>Manufacturer Certifies</p> 

**Note: Some hats are dual-badged with different standards. If a hat contains at least one compliant hat standard it is deemed suitable to competition, even if it is additionally labelled with an older standard.**

- ▶ No recording device is permitted (e.g. hat cameras) as they may have a negative effect on the performance of the hat in the event of a fall.
- ▶ The fit of the hat and the adjustment of the harness are as crucial as the quality. Players are advised to try several makes to find the best fit. The hat should not move on the head when the head is tipped forward. The Pony Club recommends you visit a qualified BETA (British Equestrian Trade Association) fitter.
- ▶ Hats must be replaced after a severe impact as subsequent protection will be significantly reduced. Hats deteriorate with age and should be replaced after three to five years depending upon the amount of use.
- ▶ Hats must be worn at all times when mounted with a chinstrap fastened and adjusted so as to prevent movement of the hat in the event of a fall.
- ▶ The Official Steward / Organiser or a member of the Committee may, at their discretion, eliminate a player riding in the area of the tournament without a hat or with the chinstrap unfastened or with a hat that does not comply with these standards.

## Hat Checks and Tagging

The Pony Club and its Branches and Centres will appoint Officials, who are familiar with The Pony Club hat rule, to carry out hat checks and tag each hat that complies with the requirements set out in the hat rule with an Pony Club hat tag. Hats fitted with a Pony Club, British Eventing (BE) or British Riding Club (BRC) hat tag will not need to be checked on subsequent occasions. However, the Pony Club reserves the right to randomly spot check any hat regardless of whether it is already tagged.

**Tagging is an external verification of the internal label and indicates that a hat meets the accepted standards. The tag does NOT imply any check of the fit and condition of the hat has been undertaken.** It is considered to be the responsibility of the player's parent(s) / guardian(s) to ensure that their hat complies with the required standards and is tagged before they go to any Pony Club event. Also, they are responsible for ensuring that the manufacturer's guidelines with regard to fit and replacement are followed.

For further information on hat standards, testing and fitting, please refer to the British Equestrian Trade Association (BETA) website: [British Equestrian Trade Association - Safety and your head \(beta-uk.org\)](http://beta-uk.org)

#### **f) Spurs**

**Spurs are not permitted to be used in any Pony Club Polo Section.**

#### **g) Whips**

Restricted to 48 inches in length, including the tag. Broken whips are not allowed.

At all times, the whip must only be used

- ▶ For a good reason, as an aid to encourage the pony forward.
- ▶ At an appropriate time, namely when the pony is reluctant to go forward under normal aids of seat and legs.
- ▶ In the right place, namely down the shoulder or behind the leg but never overarm.
- ▶ With appropriate severity.
- ▶ No more than ONCE for any one incident.

Excessive use of the whip anywhere at the event will result in disqualification. The following are always considered excessive and will result in immediate disqualification:

- ▶ Use of the whip to vent a player's anger.
- ▶ Use of a whip which causes injury e.g. broken skin or a weal.
- ▶ Use after a chukka has finished.
- ▶ Use after elimination or retirement.
- ▶ Use on a pony's head, neck etc.
- ▶ Using the whip from the ground after a player has fallen or dismounted.
- ▶ If the player's arm comes above the shoulder when using the whip.

#### **h) Jewellery**

**Wearing jewellery while handling or riding a horse or pony is not recommended.** To reduce the chance of injury, necklaces, bracelets (except medical bracelets), and large or dangling jewellery—including items attached to piercings—must be removed. The following are allowed: a wristwatch, a wedding ring, a stock pin worn horizontally, and a tie clip. For cross-country, it is advised to remove stock pins. If a Member chooses to wear any other type of jewellery at a Pony Club event, it is at their own, or their parent/guardian's risk.

**i) Faceguards/Goggles/Gum Shields**

The wearing of faceguards or goggles and gum shields are strongly recommended. Gum shields should be properly fitted by a dentist.

**j) Body Protectors**

Body protectors may be worn, see Appendix A.

**k) Electronic Devices**

Headphones, mobile phones etc. enabling another person to communicate with the rider are not allowed whilst the rider is playing. No recording device is permitted.

## **2.3 EQUIPMENT FOR PONIES**

New equipment is not expected, but what is worn must be clean, neat, tidy and safe.

It is the player's, parents and/or guardians responsibility to ensure their tack and equipment is in accordance with the rules and safe. Contravention may incur disqualification. **Players must present themselves for inspection as required.**

**a) Boots and Bandages**

Ponies must be bandaged or wear protective boots on all four legs and tails must be put up. In the event of a bandage coming undone play will be stopped. It is at the discretion of the umpire whether play waits while the bandage is done up securely. Undue delay will not be accepted. It is therefore important that all players have the ability to do up bandages quickly and efficiently.

**b) Tack**

**Incorrectly or badly fitting tack or tack in a dangerous condition is not allowed. No clip on tack is permitted.**

## c) **Bridles**

Plain black or brown leather bridles only may be used.

**Noseband** - Only one noseband may be worn unless using a standing martingale with a combination, kinton, drop noseband or similar, in which case the addition of a cavesson is allowed. Nosebands must be correctly fitted and show not cause discomfort. A polo noseband made of rawhide may be used.

## **Bits and Reins**

**All bits should fit properly, be suitable for playing polo, comply with current HPA rules and be used in their manufactured condition without any addition to/on any part.**

**Two reins should be used. However, in JOPPS and JOR whilst two reins is recommended one may be used on bits where a single rein is their correct use or in the case of a pelham/curb bit if the single rein is attached to the bit via a "D" loop connecting to both rein rings.**

**A gag bit with a rope ring may only be used with 2 reins and if the bit is not designed to accommodate a second rein then the gag bit cannot be used.**

**Rope reins are not permitted. Bridge reins are not permitted.**

**Any misuse of a bit/bridle will be reported to the PC Polo Committee. A note of any reported players will be kept and the player will be monitored. Any abuse of the pony's mouth will be penalised and the player will not be allowed to play.**

## d) **Standing Martingales and Breast Plates**

Standing martingales are to be worn by all ponies and must be leather.

Breast plates must be worn by all ponies but they are not a requirement in JOR or HX.

## e) **Blinkers**

Blinkers are not allowed. Nor is any form of noseband or cheekpieces that obstructs the vision of the pony such as sheepskin.

## f) **Humane Girths**

Humane girths are not encouraged as they pose an increased risk to safety as many common designs may have complete girth failure if a single strap

was to break. However, humane girths are permitted in Pony Club Polo ONLY if they are worn with an overgirth.

## **g) Stirrups**

Stirrups should be of the correct size to suit the player's boots. They must have 7mm ( $\frac{1}{4}$ " ) clearance on either side of the boot. To find this measurement, tack checkers should move the foot across to one side of the stirrup, with the widest part of the foot on the tread. From the side of the boot to the edge of the stirrup should not be less than 14mm.

There are now many types of stirrups marketed as 'safety stirrups'. All player's must ensure that their stirrups are suitable for the footwear they are wearing and that the stirrup leathers are in good condition.

There are no prescribed weight limits on metal stirrups, however with the advent of stirrups of other materials, weight limits are frequently given by manufacturers. Any person buying these stirrups, should comply with weight limits defined on the box or attached information leaflets. Neither the feet nor the stirrup leathers or irons, may be attached to the girth, nor the feet attached to the stirrup irons.

It is strongly recommended that the design of the stirrup chosen allows the foot to be released easily in the event of a player fall.

Particular focus should be on ensuring that the boot and stirrup are the correct size for the player and used in line with the manufacturer's guidance.

For the avoidance of doubt:

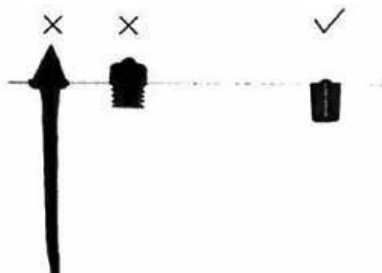
- ▶ stirrups which connect the boot and the stirrup magnetically are not allowed
- ▶ Interlocking boot soles and stirrup treads are not allowed

## **h) Studs**

Only one recognised polo stud without a hard centre of  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch (13mm) cubed can be fitted to the outside of each hind shoe within 1 inch (25mm) of the heel. The studs should not be placed at the widest part of the shoe. This is the recommended method.

Road nails with a hardened tip are allowed on the outside of each hind shoe.

Ponies found with the incorrect studs will not be allowed to play until the studs are removed.



## **2.4 ELIGIBILITY OF PLAYERS**

- a)** Ages are as at 1st January of the current year.
- b)** All players must complete and online Declaration A Form.
- c)** Players must be Members of The Pony Club both at the closing date for entries to the competition and at the date of the relevant competition to be eligible to compete at Qualifiers and at the Championships.
- d)** A player may only play in one Section and may not play in more than one team, except for HIP, ROCK (see rules 3.4 and 3.6), SUR and HX (see Rules 3.5 and 3.7). JOR and JOPPS; and JOR and HX may be permitted with the approval of both Section Managers.
- d)** A team that plays together in the autumn may apply to the Section Manager to carry the same team through to the Arena Championships in Spring.
- e)** Players must have sufficient ponies to play all the sections they have entered. After the schedule for LAN and GAN has been agreed, and the dates for the Qualifiers for other Sections have been fixed, The Pony Club Polo Committee will not alter times or venues on demand from players or teams but will allow substitutions within the rules if there is no alternative.
- f)** All players in GAN, LOR/REN, LAN, ROCK, SUR and HIP MUST have passed the HPA Rules test by the first Qualifier. Guidance on how to arrange a test is given in Guidance to Branch and Centre Managers (Section 7).
- g)** Novice players in their first year of Pony Club Polo may be allowed to play in a Section below their age group at the discretion of the Section Manager.
- h)** Please note: It is a requirement of the HPA that, to play at an



affiliated polo club, players must be registered with the HPA. As Pony Club Polo uses HPA affiliated clubs, Pony Club players not already registered with the HPA will need to do so if they wish to compete. This can be done as a free of charge "Introductory/Pony Club" membership on the HPA website – [hpa-polo.co.uk/membership/become-a-member](http://hpa-polo.co.uk/membership/become-a-member).

## **2.5 PONIES**

**a)** The welfare of ponies is given high priority. Ponies in overall poor condition, unsound or which have been tubed, or which are blind in one eye or showing blood from the mouth, flanks or any other part are not allowed to play.

### **b) Vaccinations**

A valid passport and vaccination record:

- ▶ must accompany the pony to all events
- ▶ must be available for inspection by the event officials
- ▶ must be produced on request at any other time during the event

All ponies must be compliant with the current Pony Club minimum vaccination requirements - please see the website for the current rule.

Note: Events that are held at other venues may be subject to additional specific rules.

**c)** All passports for polo ponies should be registered with the HPA.

**d)** All ponies must be fit and should have been regularly ridden before the season.

**e)** Ponies may not be ridden unbridled at any time.

**f)** Any pony which is considered by an umpire, or a member of The Pony Club Polo Committee, to be unsafe or out of control can be ordered off the ground and may not be permitted to be ridden in further Pony Club Polo events or tournaments for the rest of the season.

**g)** Stallions can only be ridden at Pony Club events with the written permission of the Pony Club Polo Chairman and the stallion must wear an identifying disc.

**h)** A pony in Pony Club Sections may only play a maximum of three 6-minute chukkas or four 4.5 minute chukkas (18 minutes) in one day. In GAN and LAN, HIP and ROCK a pony may not be played for more than two full non- consecutive chukkas or the equivalent time. A pony that has played

in more than half a chukka may not be played again for at least 10 minutes.

## **2.6 ELIGIBILITY EXCEPTIONS**

Following the Qualifiers, in the event of genuine hardship, injury or illness, the restrictions on players and ponies may be modified by the Section Manager whereby any player who has not qualified for the Championships can be used as a substitute provided the preferences in Rule 4.4 are taken into account. Such modifications will be advertised to Branch and Centre Managers.

## **2.7 TRAINING**

It is the absolute intent of The Pony Club that all players will engage with training at Branch/Centre, Area and National level to improve their game and their standard of horsemanship and pony welfare commensurate with the Section in which they are playing, their ability and age. It is expected that players in GAN, LOR/REN, LAN and ROCK will join in with Branch or Centre training activities and help less able players whenever it is appropriate and possible.

Training is a Branch and Centre based activity. The Pony Club Polo Handbook sets out the curriculum for all training events which include Branch-based working rallies, Centre training sessions, polo rallies, Area/regional courses, overseas training, development courses and dismounted lectures on pony management. Players of 0 goals and below in all Sections MUST attend at least three training events per year.

It is recommended that players 12 years and above should have passed their Pony Club C Test.

Players in GAN, LAN, LOR/REN, SUR, ROCK and HIP must have passed their HPA Rules Test.

A training event includes the following activities:

- ▶ Pony Club Branch/Centre instruction, including working rallies
- ▶ Pony Club polo rallies
- ▶ Pony Club/HPA/SUPA instructional chukkas
- ▶ Pony Club/HPA courses organised at Branch, Area or National level
- ▶ Pony Club/HPA overseas training
- ▶ Pony Club/HPA lectures on pony management
- ▶ Pony Club/HPA veterinary talks
- ▶ HPA Development Courses
- ▶ SUPA training/courses

## **2.8 ACCIDENT OR INJURY**

In Pony Club Polo if a pony falls, is injured or goes lame, or if a player falls off or is injured the umpire shall stop the game and will not restart it until the situation has been dealt with.

In the case of broken tack which is considered dangerous (such as a broken girth, broken bit or curb chain, a broken martingale if the end trails on the ground, a broken rein if single, or a loose bandage) the umpire will stop the game. If it can be rectified by the player immediately and quickly the umpire may allow the player to do so on the ground, otherwise the player must leave the ground and the umpire will restart the game immediately when the player has left the ground. A broken or lost stirrup leather is not considered dangerous but the game may be stopped at the umpires discretion.

If an injury occurs during a chukka and a player has to leave the ground, it is expected that one of the players of a similar standard or handicap from the opposing team will step down for the rest of that chukka.

## **2.9 ACTION AFTER A FALL**

Any player who has a fall or sustains a serious injury anywhere at the competition site MUST see the medical personnel on the day and be passed fit to ride before riding that pony in a further chukka or before riding any other pony.

## **2.10 HEAD INJURIES AND CONCUSSION**

If a person is diagnosed with a concussion, they must not ride or take part in any Pony Club organised activity that involves close contact/handling or riding of horses or ponies for 21 days. This may need to be extended if symptoms persist, on the advice of the treating doctor. All concussion must be reported to Head Office using the online accident report form or by email if it occurred outside of The Pony Club. Concussion advice should be followed without exception.

Head injuries and concussion can be very serious and life changing. Serious head injuries are usually obvious, but concussion can be very subtle. It may not be immediately apparent but should be taken very seriously. Recovery from concussion should be managed carefully.

This rule should be read in conjunction with:

- ▶ [The Pony Club Concussion Advice](#)
- ▶ [UK Government Concussion Guidelines](#)

Please contact [safety@pcuk.org](mailto:safety@pcuk.org) for further support and advice.

Please see Appendix B for the Head Injury and Concussion Flowchart.

## **2.11 MEDICAL SUSPENSION**

If a player has been suspended from taking part in any activity/competition/sport for medical reasons, this suspension must apply to all Pony Club activities until such time as the player is passed fit by a medical professional to take part. It is the player's and parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure adherence to this rule.

Medical letters are required, following a suspension for medical reasons, to allow a player to take part in any activity again. The letter should be issued by either the hospital or specialist(s) involved in treating the injury, where appropriate.

## **2.12 PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING DRUGS**

All performance-enhancing drugs are strictly forbidden and The Pony Club supports 100% clean sport.

### **a) Equine – Controlled Medication**

It is essential for the welfare of a horse/pony that appropriate veterinary treatment is given if and when required. Some medication, however, may mask an underlying health problem so horses and ponies should not take part in training or competition when taking such medication and any Therapeutic Use Exemptions (TUE) should be confirmed in writing by a Vet.

For more information, please refer to the Welfare of Horses and Ponies at Pony Club Activities Policy, available on The Pony Club website.

### **b) Human**

Performance-enhancing drugs are forbidden. The Pony Club supports the approach taken by the UK Anti-Doping Agency in providing clean sport. The Pony Club disciplinary procedures will be used where doping is suspected including reporting to the UK Anti-Doping Agency.

### **c) Testing**

All players should be aware that random samples may be taken for testing from both themselves and/or their pony. The protocol used will be that of the relevant adult discipline.

Players and their ponies at national or international level may be subject to

blood tests in line with the Sports Council Policy on illegal and prescribed substances. All young people competing at these levels should be aware of this.

#### **d) Reporting**

i. Anyone who has reasonable grounds for suspecting that a player is using or selling an illegal substance must report their concerns to the District Commissioner/Centre Proprietor as soon as practicable. If there is an immediate risk to the health, safety or welfare of one or more players then the Police must be informed as soon as possible. The person reporting their concerns must ensure that any material evidence is retained

ii. Upon receiving a report of suspected use or selling of an illegal substance, the District Commissioner/Centre Proprietor should carry out an immediate investigation of the incident and the circumstances in which it occurred, and then decide upon the appropriate action to be taken. This will include:

- ▶ Informing the player's parents/guardians
- ▶ Informing The Pony Club Area Representative who in turn will inform The Pony Club Office
- ▶ Informing the Police
- ▶ Suspending the player concerned while investigations are completed
- ▶ Awaiting the completion of Police investigations and actions

#### **e) Disciplinary Action**

The normal disciplinary procedure should be followed in cases relating to alcohol or drugs, which can be found in The Pony Club Handbook.

### **2.13 PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES FOR PLAYERS AND PONIES**

In accordance with The Pony Club policy, the framework for the adult sport shall apply. For Polo this means the HPA Blue Book regulations on prohibited substances for players and ponies shall apply, in addition to the laws of the country in which the competition is taking place. Players and parents are strongly advised to familiarise themselves with these rules, which are published on the HPA website and in the Blue Book. They are there for safety reasons, and lack of knowledge of these rules, or the law of the land, will NOT be accepted as an excuse in disciplinary proceedings, either by the HPA or by The Pony Club. Ponies and players are liable to random tests that will be carried out during the season in accordance with the above regulations. All players aged 18 and over on the day of the test will be required to participate in testing if requested to do so by an authorised official. Players under 18 will be requested to obtain consent of a parent or legal guardian to their participation in testing. Branch and Centre Managers

will be informed on the procedures for testing. In the event that a player or pony fails a HPA drug test, or any Committee Member or Tournament Organiser has grounds for suspicion that HPA regulations or the law have been infringed, a disciplinary hearing will be convened under rule 3. In addition, in the event of suspicion that the law of the land has been broken, the police will be informed immediately, together with a parent if the player is under 18 years.

## **2.14 SPONSORSHIP**

In the case of players and ponies, no form of advertising, and this includes a sponsor's name, may appear on the players or pony's clothing and equipment at any Pony Club competition. This does not preclude the wearing of clothing for ponies or players that has been presented by sponsors of the Championships in the current or previous years.

Sponsors at friendly and qualifier tournaments must not be business competitors of the main sponsors of the sport and must be approved by The Pony Club office. Any advertising material that is used by sponsors, whether it is in the form of display banners or programme material, must be tasteful and not inappropriate to the image of The Pony Club.

## **2.15 INSURANCE**

The Pony Club 'Public and Products Liability Insurance' Policy includes cover for all the official Area Competitions and the Championships. Details of this insurance are available on The Pony Club website.

In the event of any accident, loss or damage occurring to a third party or to the property of a third party (including the general public and players) no liability should be admitted, and full details should be sent at once to The Pony Club Office.

The following statements should be included in all event schedules:

### **Health & Safety**

Organisers of this event have taken reasonable precautions to ensure the health and safety of everyone present. For these measures to be effective, everyone must take all reasonable precautions to avoid and prevent accidents occurring and must obey the instructions of the organisers and all the officials and stewards.

### **Legal Liability**

Save for the death or personal injury caused by the negligence of the organisers, or anyone for whom they are in law responsible, neither the

organisers of this event or The Pony Club nor any agent, employee or representative of these bodies, nor the landlord or his tenant, accepts any liability for any accident, loss, damage, injury or illness to horses, owners, riders, spectators, land, cars, their contents and accessories, or any other person or property whatsoever. Entries are only accepted on this basis.

## **2.16 PARKING**

No cars or horseboxes may be parked in such a way as to block the access of ambulances, horse ambulances or other emergency vehicles. All cars and horseboxes must be parked with consideration for others and in compliance with Tournament Organisers instructions.

## **2.17 TREADING-IN**

All players are expected to tread-in when requested and particularly at the end of a tournament or day's play.

## **2.18 MEETINGS**

There are Committee and Branch and Centre Managers' meetings at the beginning and end of the season and as required. A meeting or email exchange for prospective Gannon and Langford teams is held pre-season to arrange dates and places of play.

## **2.19 INTERPRETATION OF THE RULES**

When a situation arises where these rules are not applicable or ambiguous, or if in the opinion of the Committee the circumstances are exceptional, the Committee's decision on a course of action will be final.

# **3. SECTION RULES**

## **3.1 GANNON (Under 21 on 1st January)**

**a) General** – For teams with a handicap of 0 – 4 goals. Teams with an aggregate handicap of less than 0 goals must play off 0 goals. The Section may be divided at the Championships; Gannon I will be played for the Daily Telegraph Trophy and Gannon II will be played for the Jaguar Trophy. Depending on the number and level of entries, the Section Manager may also decide to divide the qualifying tournament.

**b) Handicap** – For players with a handicap of -1 or above. -1 players under the age of 16 may play at the discretion of the Section Manager.

**c) Ties** – Pony Club Polo rule 4.7 b) applies where a result is required.

**d) Matches** – Each match shall be two or four chukkas and played under HPA rules. Matches will be played under handicap conditions (subject to 3.1a) above).

**e) Umpire** – The Tournament Committee will appoint the umpires, who shall be approved HPA Umpires. Players will be expected to act as second umpire for GAN and LAN on their own pony, and umpire other Pony Club Sections as required not necessarily on their own pony. Teams are expected to provide umpire ponies for either their match or, by direct arrangement with the other teams playing on the day, the match preceding or following.

**f) Venues** – GAN matches will usually take place on Qualifier tournament days. In case of severe congestion they may be scheduled on other days or grounds. Teams must attend a pre-season meeting or email exchange organised by the Section Manager which will confirm the draw and days and places of play. After this meeting, no requests by teams or players to alter dates or venues will be entertained. In the event of unavoidable unavailability, a substitute may be played according to the substitution rules.

**g)** Teams MUST have a nominated Branch or Centre Manager and it is strongly recommended that Gannon teams are advised by an HPA coach.

**h) Rules Test** – Gannon players must have passed the HPA Rules Test.

### **3.2 LANGFORD (Under 21 on 1st January)**

**a) General** – For teams with a handicap of -6 – 0 goals. Teams with an aggregate handicap of less than -6 goals must play off -6 goals. The Section may be divided at the Championships; Langford I will be played for the Jack Gannon Trophy and Langford II will be played for the Martin Trotter Trophy. Depending on the number and level of entries, the Section Manager may also decide to divide the qualifying tournament.

**b) Handicaps** – For players with a handicap of -2 goals or above (i.e. not S). -2 players under the age of 14 may play at the discretion of the Section Manager.

**c) Matches** – Each match shall be two or four chukkas of 6 minutes ending on the first bell. HPA rules regarding position of starting second and subsequent chukkas shall apply. Matches will be played under handicap conditions.

**d) Match Tie** – Pony Club Polo rule 4.7 b) applies where a result is required.

**e) Umpires and Umpire Ponies** – The Tournament Committee will appoint



the umpires, who shall be approved HPA Umpires. Players will be expected to act as second umpire for GAN and LAN on their own pony, and umpire other Pony Club sections as required not necessarily on their own pony. Teams are expected to provide umpire ponies for either their match or, by direct arrangement with the other teams playing on the day, the match preceding or following.

**f) Venues** – LAN matches will usually take place on Qualifier tournament days. In case of severe congestion they may be scheduled on other days or grounds. Teams must attend a pre-season meeting or email exchange organised by the Section Manager which will confirm the draw and days and places of play. After this meeting, no requests by teams or players to alter dates or venues will be entertained. In the event of unavoidable unavailability, a substitute may be played according to the substitution rules.

**g)** Teams **MUST** have a nominated Branch or Centre Manager and it is strongly recommended that Langford teams are advised by an HPA coach or senior player.

**h) Rules Test** – Langford players must have passed the HPA Rules Test.

### **3.3 LORINER/RENDELL (Under 21 on 1st January)**

**a) General** – One chukka matches for players of 14 and over and under 21 on 1st January of the current year. Players under the minimum age can play at the discretion of the Section Manager; they will be expected to have played at least two years of SUR or the equivalent schools competitions. Teams must play in three Qualifier tournaments with the members as entered for the Championships. League points will be awarded in all Friendly and Qualifier tournaments.

**b) Matches/Chukkas** – Matches will be one chukka of 6 minutes.

**c) Handicaps** – The maximum individual handicap is +1. Teams may only include one player with a +1 handicap and that player must play for their own Branch or Centre. Matches are played open except where a team includes a player with a +1 handicap in which case they will concede a 1/2 goal per chukka.

**d) Ties** – Pony Club Polo rule 4.7 b) applies where a result is required.

**e) Umpire** – Only one HPA-qualified umpire is required for friendly tournaments, but either two HPA C grade umpires or one B grade umpire or above is recommended for the Qualifiers and the Championships.

**f) Rules Test** – Rendell players must have passed the HPA Rules Test which can be obtained even if not a member of the HPA.

### **3.4 ROCKSAVAGE (Under 18 on 1st January)**

- a)** For teams with a handicap of -2 to 0 goals
- b)** As well as being members of the Pony Club, players must be members of the HPA with a registered handicap and have passed the HPA rules test
- c)** The recommended minimum age is 13, but younger players may apply to the Section Manager for exemption if of the required standard.
- d)** Players can also play in other Pony Club sections
- e)** Maximum individual handicap is 1 goals and only one 1 goal player per team.
- f)** Teams can be made up of players from different Branches or Centres
- g)** Teams must have a nominated Branch or Centre Manager
- h)** Teams must have a nominated Licensed HPA Coach
- i)** Matches will be played under HPA rules and are four consecutive chukkas.
- j)** Matches will be umpired by one HPA Professional umpire.
- k)** Matches will be played in early July before the Pony Club Qualifier tournament days.
- l)** Matches will be played at various clubs and private grounds as organised by the Section Manager in conjunction with the HPA.

### **3.5 SURTEES (Under 15 on 1st January)**

**a) General** – One chukka matches for players 11 and over and under 15 on 1st January of the current year. Teams must play in three Qualifier tournaments with the players as entered for the Championships.

League points will be awarded in all Friendly and Qualifier tournaments.

**b) Handicaps** – Matches are played open. Maximum individual handicap is -1 and -1 goal players must play for their own Branch or Centre.

**c) Ties** – Pony Club Polo rule 4.7b) applies where a result is required.

**d) Umpire** – Only one HPA qualified umpire is required.

**e)** May play HX on a HX pony (see Rule 3.5c)

**f) Rules Test** – Surtees players must have passed the HPA Rules Test which can be obtained even if not a member of the HPA.

### **3.6 HIPWOOD (Under 14 on 1st January)**

**a)** For teams with a handicap of -8 to -4 goals

**b)** As well as being members of the Pony Club, players must be members of the HPA with a registered handicap and have passed the HPA rules test.

**c)** The recommended minimum age is 11, but younger players may apply to the Section Manager for exemption if of the required standard.

**d)** Players can also play in other Pony Club sections.

**e)** Maximum individual handicap is 0 goals and only one 0 goal player per team.

**f)** Teams can be made up of players from different Branches or Centres.

**g)** Teams must have a nominated Branch or Centre Manager.

**h)** Teams must have a nominated licensed HPA Coach

**i)** Matches will be played under HPA rules and are three consecutive chukkas.

**j)** Matches will be umpired by one HPA Professional umpire

**k)** Matches will be played in early July before the Pony Club Qualifier tournament days.

**l)** Matches will be played at various clubs and private grounds as organised by the Section Manager in conjunction with the HPA.

### **3.7 HANDLEY CROSS (Under 14 on 1st January)**

**a) General** – One chukka matches for players 9 and over and under 14 on the 1st January of the current year. Teams must play in three Qualifier tournaments with the players as entered for the Championships. League points will be awarded in all Friendly and Qualifier tournaments.

**b) Handicaps** – Matches are open. Maximum individual handicap is -2 and -2 players must play for their own Branch or Centre.

### c) Pony Restrictions

- i. Ponies must be 148cm (14.2h) or under. **They may not have played competitive adult (over 18) polo in the last two years. They must have regularly attended non-polo Pony Club ridden activities, approved by the District Commissioner/Centre Proprietor in the previous twelve months.** In the event of doubt over the eligibility of a pony the onus is on the Branch or Centre Manager to clear the proposed pony with the Section Manager. The same pony must be played throughout the season, except in exceptional circumstances verified by the Section Manager. All ponies may be subject to measuring at tournaments in accordance with Joint Measurement Board rules.
- ii. A player and/or pony playing HX may only play in one team.

**d) Ties** – Pony Club Polo rule 4.7 b) applies where a result is required.

**e) Umpire** – Only one HPA-qualified umpire is required.

**f)** May play in addition EITHER SUR or JOPPS on a SUR/JOPPS pony OR JOR under the conditions listed in the JOR Section opposite.

### 3.8 JORROCKS (Under 11 on 1st January)

**a) General** – One-chukka matches for players 6 and over and under 11 on 1st January of the current year. JOR teams must play at least two Qualifiers; one of the Qualifiers must be with the team they intend to play at the Championships.

**b) Handicaps** – Matches are open. Maximum handicap is -2.

### c) Pony Restrictions

- i. Ponies must be 138cm (13.2h) or under and be genuine all round Pony Club ponies that have regularly attended non-polo Rallies in the previous twelve months. No polo ponies may be played. In the event of doubt over the eligibility of a pony the onus is on the Branch or Centre Manager to clear the proposed pony with the Section Manager. The same pony must be played throughout the season, except in exceptional circumstances verified by the Section Manager. All ponies may be subject to measuring at tournaments in accordance with Joint Measurement Board rules.
- ii. A player and/or pony playing JOR may only play in one team.

**d)** A player is allowed to play in both HX and JOR Sections if both JOR and HX Section Managers agree and the following conditions are met:

- i. The player is the correct age for JOR
- ii. The player has two ponies, one for each Section, which qualify under the pony restrictions for each Section.
- iii. The player can only play in a JOR team for their own Branch or Centre if they wish to play in HX and JOR Sections.
- iv. If there is more than one JOR team entered from the player's PC Branch or Centre, the player wishing to play in two sections must play for the least experienced team.

**e) Ties** – Pony Club Polo rule 4.7 b) applies where a result is required.

**f) Umpire** – Only one HPA-qualified umpire is required.

### **3.9 JORROCKS ON POLO PONIES (Under 11 on 1st January)**

**a) General** – One-chukka matches for players 6 and over and under 11 on 1st January of the current year. JOPP teams must play at least two Qualifiers; one of the Qualifiers must be with the team they intend to play at the Championships.

**b) Handicaps** – Matches are open. Maximum handicap is -2.

#### **c) Pony Restrictions**

- i. There are no height restrictions for ponies. The Section Manager must be satisfied that the combination is safe and may stand a player down if at any time the combination is judged to be unsafe by any member of the committee, umpire or coach.
- ii. A player and/or pony playing JOPP may only play in one team.

**d)** A player is allowed to play in both HX and JOPP Sections if both JOPP and HX Section Managers agree and the following conditions are met:

- i. The player is the correct age for JOPP
- ii. The player has two ponies, one for each Section, which qualify under the pony restrictions for each Section.
- iii. The player can only play in a JOPP team for their own Branch or Centre if they wish to play in HX and JOPP Sections.
- iv. If there is more than one JOPP team entered from the player's PC Branch or Centre, the player wishing to play in two sections must play for the least experienced team.

**e) Ties** – Pony Club Polo rule 4.7 b) applies where a result is required.

**f) Umpire** – Only one HPA qualified umpire is required.

## 4. TOURNAMENT RULES

### 4.1 ENTRIES

**a) Preliminary Declaration (Form A)** – The names of all players and provisional team numbers are to be submitted to The Pony Club office by the end of Spring. Form A must be completed on behalf of each player. The Form A must be signed by the player's parent/guardian, or by the player if they are aged 18 or over, to confirm acceptance of the rules, code of conduct and photographic consent. Any player who does not have a team from their own Branch/Centre will be put in the pool. Pools will be discussed at the Spring Branch and Centre Managers' meeting. Pool players allocated to a Branch or Centre for a Section will be removed if players who are Members of that Branch or Centre are subsequently declared for that Section.

**b) Declaration of Entry (Form B)** – Form B must be completed by Branch/Centre Managers for each team on the online entry site following approval by the DC or Centre Manager. The Team Name will be used for Tournament Entry. Positions should be kept up to date on the online form and only team changes or substitutions approved by the Section Manager may be made.

District Commissioners/Centre Managers will receive a full list of players from their Branch or Centre to approve. For HX and JOR teams the size of each pony must be stated. If there is any doubt as to the size of a pony, e.g. it is near to the maximum height, it may be subject to measuring at tournaments in accordance with Joint Measurement Board rules (see [thejmbonline.co.uk](http://thejmbonline.co.uk)). Final team lists will be issued by Section Managers.

**c) Tournament Entry (Form C)** – This should be completed online with the entry fee paid in full as a single amount. The closing date for each tournament will be stated on the online schedule.

**d) Championships** – Entries should be completed online with the entry fee paid in full as a single amount. The closing date for entries for the Championships is the last day of the first qualifier tournament. If a team does not qualify for the Championships the entry can be refunded.

**e) Entry Fees** – Entry fees for pre-qualifying and qualifying tournaments and the championships will be advised via the online schedules.

**f) Withdrawals** – In the event of a team entering a tournament and subsequently withdrawing, the expectation must be that the entry fee will not be refunded. However, in some situations some refund may be made at the discretion of the Chairman.

**g) Abandonment** – In the event of a competition being abandoned, for whatever reason, a refund of 50% of the entry fee will be given. In such an instance the refund process will be communicated and must be followed.

## **4.2 SELECTION OF TEAMS FOR THE FINALS**

In order to be eligible to qualify for the championships teams **in all sections** must compete in three qualifying tournaments with the players as entered for the championships.

Selection for the Championship finals will be based on the placings achieved after the qualifying tournaments and as required. Gannon and Langford are based on the placings at the end of the league competitions.

## **4.3 MIXED BRANCH OR CENTRE TEAMS – THE POOL SYSTEM**

In JOR, JOPPS, HX, SUR and LOR/REN:

**a)** Section Managers have the sole authority to sanction players joining teams from other Branches or Centres, even if a player has played for another Branch or Centre previously, or if players from different Branches or Centres train together.

**b)** When Branches or Centres are unable to raise a team from amongst their own Members, or have excess players, the Branch or Centre Manager should apply to the relevant Section Manager(s) who will, where possible, arrange a mixed team. Only Section Managers have the authority to arrange mixed teams and in doing so they will take into account the location of the Branches or Centres. Under no circumstances may Managers place any player outside their own Branch or Centre nor may they accept a player from another Branch or Centre.

**c)** If there is more than one team in any one Section from the same Branch, the A team must consist entirely of Members from the same Branch.

In LAN and GAN, Section Managers will operate a pool of players available and give advice if requested. Branch Managers may arrange teams, but Section Managers will check that teams comply with eligibility rules and will approve team entries.

While umpires are responsible for the safety of play during a match, Section Managers have overall responsibility for all safety of play in their Sections and have the authority to place players in teams on the basis of safety, ability and experience. This allows Section Managers to override the Branch rules, and exceptionally the age rule, where they judge it appropriate on

the grounds of safety. The authority to override the Branch rule on safety grounds rests solely with the Section Manager. Where such an exception is made, all Branch Managers in Sections affected will be informed.

## **4.4 SUBSTITUTION**

### **a) Players**

There are no restrictions on substitutions or replacements during Friendly Tournaments except that the player be qualified to play in the section concerned.

From the first qualifier, or in the case of Gannon and Langford the first qualifying match, the substitution of an entered player will only be allowed in the event of injury or other unavoidable circumstances. The substitute must be a Member of The Pony Club and of no better standard than the player they are replacing. Priority will be given to pool players who did not obtain a team. Players with a higher handicap (-2 being higher than S), or players who have played in qualifiers in this or previous years in a higher section than the player being substituted, will be deemed better players. The same substitute will normally be expected to play through the qualifiers into the Championships as long as the injured player continues to be unavailable or unfit. The original player will be expected to play if available and fit.

Subject to the above, the preferences for substitutions, in order of priority, are:

- ▶ A player who is eligible to play in the Section but has not played in any tournament (e.g. a pool player with no team).
- ▶ A player who has not played in the tournament but who is eligible, over one who has played in the tournament.
- ▶ A player who has been knocked out of the same tournament over one who is still involved.
- ▶ A player from the same Branch or Centre over one from a different Branch or Centre.
- ▶ A player from the same Section over one from a different Section.

The Section Manager or, if not available, a Committee Member or Tournament Organiser, must approve all substitutions and ensure that no pony would be played more than the rules allowed. If the substituting player is from a different Section, that Section Manager, or, if not available, a second Committee Member, must also approve the substitution.

Matches may be delayed until a suitable substitute can be found.



In Hipwood and Rocksavage, HPA substitution rules will apply but substitute must be members of the Pony Club.

## **b) Ponies**

If a pony goes lame during a chukka or is otherwise unable to continue, it may be replaced by another qualified pony. The chukka may be delayed until after the next chukka to allow the replacement pony to be tacked up and warmed up.

If there is no qualified pony available within one or two chukkas, each team will nominate any one of their players to stand down so that the chukka can be completed, starting from the point at which play was stopped, with three players on each team. Teams may resume with four players as soon as a qualified pony is available.

## **4.5 INSPECTIONS**

Ponies and equipment will be inspected, individually or in teams, at tournaments. The decision of The Pony Club Polo Committee, if necessary, in consultation with a veterinary surgeon, is final.

## **4.6 VETERINARY**

**a) Branch/Centre Activities and Competitions** – If a vet is required the player's parent/guardian will normally call their own vet and arrange treatment.

**b) Friendly Tournaments** – Arrangements should be made for a Veterinary Surgeon to be on call and able to attend the site in a reasonable time. The telephone number should be noted at the commentary point.

**c) Qualifier Tournaments** – Arrangements should be made for a Veterinary Surgeon to be on site.

A tarpaulin should be available to cover a pony should one be killed, and the telephone number of the local pony disposal noted at the commentary point. See the Health and Safety Rule Book for further information.

## **4.7 RULES OF POLO**

The rules of the HPA shall be observed, subject to alterations for Pony Club Polo as detailed below. NB: Coaching from the sidelines is not allowed.

**a) Matches/Chukkas** – In LOR/REN, SUR, HX, JOPPS and JOR chukkas are 6-minute duration ending on the bell. If it is necessary to play four chukkas in a day they will be 4.5 minutes instead of 6 minutes. GAN and

LAN are played under HPA rules.

**b) Tie Break Rules** – In the event of a tie in a LOR/REN, SUR, HX, JOPPS or JOR match, where a result is required, a Pony Club Polo run down will take place:

- ▶ The umpire shall place a ball for each team at the same end of the ground on the back line between the goal posts and the corner, one team each side of the goal posts. The team that succeeds first in putting the ball over the back line at the other end wins.
- ▶ The goal area for each team will be opposite where it started, between the goal posts and the corner flag, but not including the normal goal area.
- ▶ If a team knocks a ball out of play the run down is over and the other team wins.
- ▶ On a boarded ground the ball may hit the boards but not go over them.
- ▶ No player may impede another player or hit the ball of the opposition. If a team knocks the ball onto the opposite side of the ground from which it started, it may continue to hit the ball provided it does not impede the play of the opposition, which shall have priority on its own side.
- ▶ The side of the ground each team plays will be decided by the umpire.
- ▶ Play will commence when the umpire calls 'play', both teams being behind the back line and the captains having declared themselves to be ready.
- ▶ The umpire will ride down the centre lines of the ground. A tournament official, who must be on the goal line, will judge the winner.

In the event of a tie in a GAN, LAN, ROCK or HIP match where a result is required, a tie breaker will take place as follows: A 'sudden death' extra chukka will be played with the whole of the back line being the goal, including between the posts. All players must change ponies. Teams will change ends and the chukka will start from the middle with a 'throw in'. The first team to score will be the winner. In the event of there being no goal scored at the end of the chukka, there will be a Pony Club Polo 'run down'.

**c)** Players given a yellow card will leave the ground for two minutes.

## **4.8 LEAGUES**

League competitions will be run for some Sections during all the tournaments up to but not including the Championships. Some Sections have League Trophies.

## **4.9 THE LEDNER TROPHY**

The Ledner trophy is specifically to encourage Branches and Centres to recruit players who will play together all through The Pony Club. It will be awarded for the team from Gannon, Loriner and Langford, in that order, which is not a mixed Branch or Centre team (i.e. a team which comprises players all from one Branch or Centre) which finishes the Championships highest ranked in its Section. In the event of a tie, the team finishing higher at the final qualifier will be awarded the trophy and in the event that there is still a tie, the team finishing higher in the previous qualifier. Additionally, mementos will be awarded in each Section to the Manager of the highest placed complete Branch or Centre team.

## **4.10 JURY OF APPEAL**

The Chairman, or their nomination, one other Member of the Committee who has not previously been involved in the matter at hand, and any relevant Tournament Organiser, or their nomination, always to be three people, shall act as a jury of appeal in cases of any dispute, protest or objection over eligibility of players or ponies. Their decision shall be final. For disputes on the ground, the umpire's decision is final. HPA rules regarding the appointment and authority of umpires will apply.

## **4.11 COMPLAINTS, PROTESTS AND OBJECTIONS**

No complaint may be raised directly with an opposing team, player or official.

Only Branch Managers, or their appointed representative notified to a Member of the Committee, are entitled to lodge objections or protests. These must be made to The Pony Club Polo Chairman or the Tournament Organiser on the same day and as soon as possible after the incident and they will be heard by a Jury of Appeal. Protests should be in writing accompanied by a deposit of £50 which will be refunded if the objection is upheld. Players, team managers or parents who approach any official with a protest or objection will be referred to their Branch Manager. No photographic evidence will be accepted in support of a complaint, protest or objection.

Any complaints about umpiring must be made to Branch Managers and not directly to the umpire or Pony Club Polo Committee. Branch Managers may then take up complaints with The Pony Club Polo Committee and appropriate Section Managers, but as per the HPA rules of Polo, the umpires' decision is final, and results of matches cannot be altered after the match has completed.

## **4.12 PHOTOGRAPHY AND DRONES**

The Pony Club rules governing photography by parents, Branches and official photographers will apply to Pony Club Polo – please refer to The Pony Club website. NO DRONES MAY BE FLOWN OVER LAND ON WHICH PONY CLUB POLO EVENTS TAKE PLACE.

## **5. DISCIPLINE AND BEHAVIOUR**

### **5.1 UNSEEMLY BEHAVIOUR**

Unseemly behaviour on the part of players, team officials or team supporters, whether to each other or to tournament officials or umpires, or any suspicion or complaint that these rules, or the laws of the land, have been broken, will be referred in the first instance to The Pony Club Polo Committee Disciplinary Panel which will comprise the Chairman, or their nominee, one other member of The Pony Club Polo Committee not previously involved in the matter at hand, and the Tournament Organiser or their nominee, if the incident was at a tournament, otherwise a second Committee Member, always to be three people. The Disciplinary Panel will consider the matter in the context of these rules, and may call witnesses who, if under the age of 18, will be accompanied by an appropriate adult. Failure of a Pony Club Member to attend when requested to do so will be taken into consideration.

The Disciplinary Panel has the power to suspend players from competition while further investigation takes place. In the event of the suspension of a single player in a team, a substitute will be allowed. If more than one player in a team is suspended concurrently, the team will automatically be suspended. The incident may then be reported to the DC of the Branch of the player or supporter for disposition. The Disciplinary Panel shall decide whether the player will be suspended until the DC concerned can deal with the matter.

Where team officials, supporters or parents are found by the Disciplinary Panel to have broken these rules or abused officials or umpires, the Disciplinary Panel has the power to suspend or disqualify teams or ban individuals from attending tournaments. The Disciplinary Panel will report these circumstances to the HPA.

### **5.2 DISQUALIFICATION**

The Disciplinary Panel may disqualify a player at any stage of the competition:

- i. for dangerous riding, or

- ii. if, in their opinion, the pony is lame, sick or exhausted, or
- iii. for misuse of whip, spur or bit, or ill-treatment of the pony, or
- iv. for any breach of the rules, or
- v. for unseemly behaviour, including bad language.

### **5.3 CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Any player, team official, visitor or supporter who is ordered to leave the ground at the Championships may also be banned from the campsite and the venue for the duration of the Championships.

## **6. GUIDANCE TO PARENTS**

**6.1** These notes are designed to help parents of Pony Club Polo players and prospective players.

**6.2** The Pony Club is a largely voluntary activity and Pony Club Polo is a sport. It is by the enormous goodwill and work of volunteers and the polo clubs that host our tournaments that we play at all. Pony Club Polo is great fun, not only for the child but the whole family. But it is also hard work. Although very competitive Pony Club Polo aims to inculcate good team spirit and good sportsmanship, insisting on high standards of turnout and behaviour both on and off the ground. Parents are responsible for the behaviour of their children, both on and off the ground and should set an example to their children of how to respect those who organise their polo.

**6.3** Polo is a contact sport. It can be dangerous and there is an inherent risk. Please take note of the disclaimer on page 4 of these rules.

**6.4** Branch Managers are key to the whole process of organising Pony Club Polo and are the primary point of contact for parents – see separate section, Guidance for Branch and Centre Managers. Please support your Branch or Centre Manager

**6.5 Ponies** – Many enjoy the whole of Pony Club Polo with one pony. However, when committed to GAN, LAN, ROCK and HIP players need to be adequately mounted. GAN, LAN, ROCK and HIP players also have to supply umpire ponies on the day of their matches.

**6.6 Rules of Polo** – It is important that all players know and understand the rules. The HPA rules test is recommended for all players and compulsory for certain sections. It can be taken even if the player is not a member of the HPA. Contact your Branch Manager for details.

**6.7 Umpiring** – Good umpiring raises the quality of the game and all Pony Club Polo players are encouraged to take the umpire test at about the

age of 15 or with a handicap of -1 or above. Those playing GAN and LAN are encouraged to take the HPA umpiring test.

**6.8 Safety** – The wearing of face guards/goggles and gum shields (which should be fitted by a dentist) are recommended.

**6.9 Treading-In and Litter** – It is most important that all players and if possible their parents and supporters tread-in when required especially at the end of each tournament. Do not leave any litter from picnics or sticky tape at the polo grounds. Remember, Pony Club Polo is invited to these grounds and we wish to be asked back. Please make sure you leave the place clean and tidy when you leave.

## **7. GUIDANCE TO BRANCH AND CENTRE MANAGERS**

**7.1** The Branch or Centre Manager will be the person appointed by The Pony Club Committee of the Branch, or by the Centre. A close relationship with the Branch Committee should be maintained, particularly when the Branch Manager is not a member of that committee.

**7.2** Whilst recognising that Branch and Centre Managers are valued volunteers, there are certain activities which Branch Managers are responsible for to ensure the smooth running of Pony Club Polo:

- ▶ Encouraging new players by, for example, staging demonstrations at rallies, camps etc, and encouraging Members to come and watch tournaments and matches.
- ▶ Ensuring that hats have been tagged before tournaments start.
- ▶ Organising appropriate training and courses for players, and making sure players and parents are aware of any appropriate polo courses, as well as suitable Pony Club rallies.
- ▶ Ensuring players are eligible to play in the Section for which they are entered, and have completed the relevant training, rallies, tests, HPA rules and umpiring test etc. for the section in which they intend to play and are Members of The Pony Club by the appropriate date. Guidance on taking HPA tests when not a member of the HPA can be obtained from the HPA liaison committee member.
- ▶ Submitting entry forms and stables requirements, including relevant fees, by the due dates with accurate position numbers and ages; submitting changes in positions in time for the Championship programme publication. This year late entries will NOT be accepted – teams and individuals will not be permitted to play.
- ▶ Requesting Section Managers to recommend and approve substitutions, when required.
- ▶ Appointing Team Managers, if required.

- ▶ Acting as the channel of communication between players and parents (or Team Managers if appointed) and the relevant Section Manager – you are encouraged to open up the channel of communication with the relevant Section Managers prior to submission of entry forms.
- ▶ Representing the Branch/Centre at Branch and Centre Managers meetings.
- ▶ Promoting a positive attitude by players and parents to Pony Club Polo.
- ▶ Ensuring players and parents have a copy of these rules and are aware of their obligations under these rules.
- ▶ Appoint HPA qualified and Pony Club registered coaches for teams where applicable.
- ▶ Ensure that ponies are vaccinated and passports are available at all times.
- ▶ Informing the player's DC/Proprietor in the event of any disciplinary question
- ▶ Maintaining a register of players and other people camping at the Championships and informing Security of the register and changes to it.
- ▶ Ensuring parents carry out the duties assigned to the Branch/Centre at the Championships.
- ▶ Ensuring that there is a nominated adult camping with those players camping at the Championships.
- ▶ Dealing with complaints from their teams and players and contacting Section Managers if appropriate.

You must be aware fully of the duties that you must carry out as a Branch/Centre Manager and your obligations to: individuals, teams, your DC/Centre Proprietor and The Pony Club, under these rules.

**7.3** Players who are Members of a Pony Club Branch or Centre without an appointed Manager are encouraged to train with a neighbouring Branch/ Centre, but must be entered into the pool system with the relevant Section Manager.

**7.4** Branches/Centres must enter competitions online and the fee must be paid as a single amount.

## **8. CHAMPIONSHIPS**

### **8.1 GENERAL**

The Pony Club Polo Championships are usually held at Cowdray Park Polo Club where a large temporary campsite, washing facilities and tented stables are established to accommodate ponies, players and supporters.

It is important that all visitors to the Championships are aware of the campsite rules, especially those concerning fire and health and safety. Branch, Centre and Team Managers are required to bring the rules to the attention of the players, accompanying family members, friends and supporters attached to their Branch/Centre.

## **8.2 PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Parents (or those acting in place of parents) are responsible for the conduct, behaviour and whereabouts of their children at all times during the Championship weekend, both on and off the polo ground. Parents must not expect Branch/Centre Managers or other adults to know of the whereabouts or the behaviour of their children.

## **8.3 CAMPSITE RULES**

**a) Branch, Centre and Team Responsibility** – Each Branch or Centre must have one nominated adult over 30 years old sleeping on site (2300-0700 hours) and present at all other times; if a Branch or Centre has more than one team, one person must be in overall charge of the Branch or Centre. In the absence of a Manager a substitute must be appointed and notified to security.

**b) Register** – Branch and Centre Managers will be forwarded a camp registration form which should be completed by them or their appointed substitute and submitted along with the entry forms. These lists enable us to maintain an accurate list of everyone attached to individual Branches, Centres or teams who are on the site between 2300 and 0700 hours. This list should include players, accompanying family members, supporters, friends and grooms. In addition to the original lists any alterations should be submitted to the commentary point prior to the end of play each day. This is a major health and safety point as we must be aware of all people resident on site during the night.

**c) Contact Numbers** – Branch and Centre Managers or appointed substitutes must have 24-hour contact numbers of those parents who are not staying on the campsite.

**d) Lights Out** – No music or other noise throughout the campsite from 11pm on Thursday and Friday night and midnight on Saturday night.

**e) Vehicles** – All access for vehicles from 0900 hours on Thursday to 1800 hours on Sunday will be via the Priory entrance. The track through the stables is to be kept clear of vehicles at all times and no cars, lorries or trailers are to be parked on the track or on the stables side of the track. There is to be no movement of vehicles on the campsite from 1800 hours



on Friday to 1400 hours on Sunday. If vehicles are likely to be needed during this period they must be parked outside the campsite.

No one without a full driving license may drive any vehicle either in the campsite, around the polo grounds or anywhere at the venue. Motorcycles, ATVs, 3-wheelers and scooters are not allowed.

**f) Parking** – No cars or horseboxes must be parked in such a way as to block the access of the ambulances, horse ambulances or other emergency vehicles.

**g) Bicycles/E-Wheels** – No bicycles are to be ridden near the polo grounds during the hours of play. Bicycles must not be left lying on the ground near the polo grounds, in the campsite or in the stables area. Any bicycles found in the safety zones will be removed to an area where they will need to be collected once play has ceased, The Pony Club and HPA do not accept responsibility for the loss or damage of the property of any player or visitor to the Championships. No E-Wheels are allowed anywhere on the campsite or the site.

**h) Designated Paths** – Do not block the public right of way that runs through the campsite, or the access paths laid to ensure emergency services can have swift access. Designated driveways and paths must be kept clear at all times and any stakes removed to gain access must be replaced immediately.

**i) Stables** – Temporary stable blocks are erected for the Championships and The Pony Club, through Branch or Centre Managers, controls allocation. Stables must be labelled with the name of the player, Branch/Centre and the name of the pony. At the end of the Championships stables must be left completely clear of all rubbish and straw; any team not doing this will not be allowed to use the stables the following year. Straw is provided for each stable and the use of shavings and paper bedding is strongly discouraged. Stables are booked online in advance of the Championships.

NO SMOKING IN THE STABLES AREA

**j) Pony Care** – Players are responsible for the care of their ponies at all times, ensuring they are regularly fed, watered and have dry bedding. Dehydration is a real risk and playing over three days means that ponies require plenty of fresh water at all times. No pony may be ridden without a bridle and all riders (Pony Club Members and all others) must wear approved riding hats.

**k) Showers and Washing** – Washing areas are to be left as you would

like to find them. The mobile shower unit will be closed for cleaning for a period each morning.

**l) Fires** – Bonfires, campfires or open fires of any type are not allowed anywhere on the campsite. Raised BBQs may only be used in the campsite area and they must be under adult supervision. Barbecues to be enclosed and not with an open flame.

**m) Dogs/Pets** – No dogs or any other pets are permitted at the Championships unless registered and paid for online. Anyone found bringing a dog to the Championships without a registration will be instructed to remove it either home or to a local kennels. There will be a fine of £100 to the owner of any unregistered dog found on the campsite.

**n) Property** – Players and visitors must take care of their property and not leave wallets, clothing, tack, cameras or other valuables in the open or in unlocked vehicles; and are responsible for bicycles and other valuables which are left around unattended on the campsite. The Pony Club does not accept responsibility for the loss or damage of the property of any player or visitor to the Championships.

**o) Alcohol and Drugs** – Laws governing the sale, purchase and consumption of alcohol must be obeyed at all times. Any unauthorised alcoholic drink in the possession of minors will be confiscated and the child taken back to either their parent or Branch/Centre Manager in order that they are aware of what has happened. In the event of any illegal drugs being found at the Championships the police will be informed and the person or persons involved, or thought to be involved, will be referred to the Disciplinary Panel (see 5.1) who may order the person or persons to be removed from the site and, if applicable, suspended from play while further investigation takes place under Section 14 of The Pony Club Health and Safety Policy.

**p) Polo Grounds** – The polo grounds may not be used for stick and ball practise. Certain areas will be declared out of bounds at all times and these exclusions must be adhered to.

**q) Emergencies** – In the event of an emergency during the hours of play please contact the commentary point. At all other times contact the nominated security company.

## **8.4 BEHAVIOUR**

High spirits apart, any anti-social or unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with severely, and may lead to individuals and/or teams being disqualified from the Championships. Older players are expected to set an example and

to behave responsibly. Players, families and supporters must remember that they represent The Pony Club and must always be courteous and respect local feelings.

## **FIRE DRILL CHAMPIONSHIPS (if applicable)**

### **PLEASE READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS**

1. If you discover a fire, however small, alert an adult immediately and alert all those in the area of the fire. Shout FIRE, FIRE, FIRE!
2. Report the fire immediately to the commentary point.
3. Where possible use the fire extinguishers on site. Do not put yourself or others in danger.
4. The official on duty in the commentary box will call the fire brigade on 999 and sound the alarm. After playing hours a Pony Club Polo Committee Member or fire warden or the Tournament Manager will call the fire brigade.
5. When the alarm goes off all those on site must go immediately to Ground 3 and gather in Branches/Centres. Do not attempt to collect your pony or possessions.
6. Branch and Centre Managers will check that their teams and supporters are present. At night (2300 hours to 0700 hours) names will be checked against the campsite register.
7. All players, visitors and supporters must remain on Ground 3 until the "all clear" is sounded.
8. No one may enter the campsite or stables area once the fire alarm has been sounded until after the "all clear".
9. Fire wardens, who will wear official armbands, and Pony Club Polo officials must be obeyed immediately in the event of a fire or fire alarm.
10. The fire wardens will release ponies in the event of a fire threatening the stables area. All players, visitors and supporters must vacate the stable area immediately on hearing the fire alarm. Only fire wardens may release ponies from the stables.

**NO SMOKING IN THE STABLES AREA**

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A – PONY CLUB BODY PROTECTOR RULE

A body protector is compulsory for all Pony Club Cross Country riding (including Arena Eventing) and Pony Racing activities whether it be training or competition. A body protector for these activities must meet BETA 2018 Level 3 Standard (blue and black label).

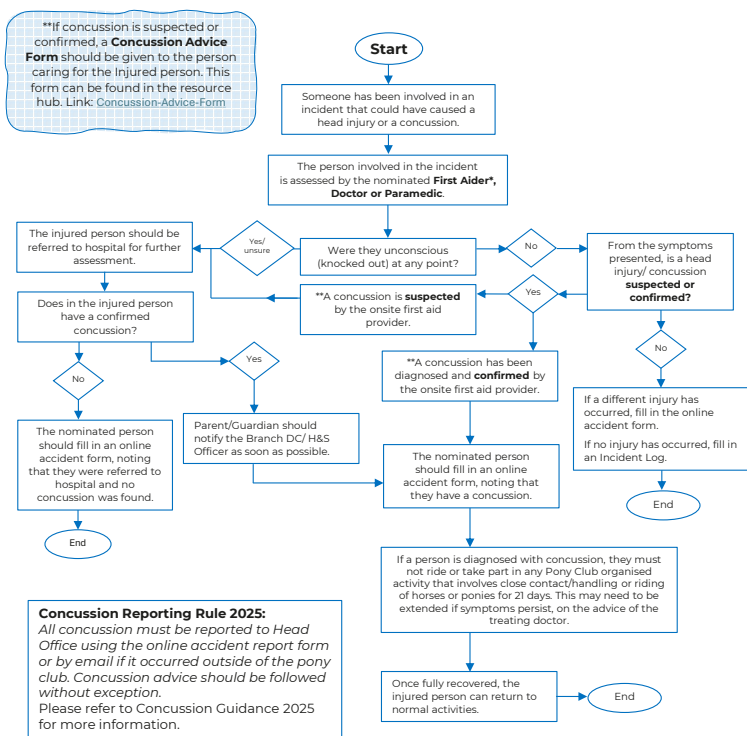
For general use, the responsibility for choosing body protectors and the decision as to their use must rest with players and their parents. It is recommended that a rider's body protector should not be more than 2% of their body weight. When worn, body protectors must fit correctly, be comfortable and must not restrict movement. BETA recommends body protectors are replaced at least every three to five years, after which the impact absorption properties of the foam may have started to decline.



### Air Jackets

If a player chooses to wear an air jacket in Cross country or Pony Racing, it must only be used in addition with a normal body protector which meets BETA 2018 Level 3 standard (blue and black label). Parents and Members must be aware that riders may be permitted to continue after a fall in both competitions and training rides for Cross Country and / or Pony Racing if the First Aid provider has no concerns about their welfare. In the event of a fall, an air jacket must be fully deflated or removed before continuing, the conventional body protector must continue to be worn. Air jackets must not be worn under a jacket. Number bibs should be fitted over the air jacket loosely or with elasticised fastenings.

## APPENDIX B – HEAD INJURY AND CONCUSSION FLOWCHART



\* If concussion is diagnosed by a first aider, this diagnosis can only be overruled by a doctor and letter evidence will be required.

If you need any advice or support, please contact the Safety Team [Safety@PCUK.org](mailto:Safety@PCUK.org)







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