

# NATIONAL PONY RACING SERIES

## PONY RACING RULES & SELECTION GUIDELINES 2024/2025 SEASON



# PONY RACING

— AUSTRALIA —

Riders must comply with Pony Club Australia® National Gear Rules and Guidelines, which can be found at [NATIONAL GEAR RULES - Pony Club Australia®](#)

The National Pony Racing Series is a joint initiative of Thoroughbred Industry Careers and Pony Club Australia®

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*Riders, parents or guardians are to carefully read, sign and date below.*

**Acknowledgment of Pony Racing Rules**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (rider) and \_\_\_\_\_  
(parent/guardian), have read and understand the rules and selection guidelines of Pony  
Racing. I will abide by these rules and the Pony Club Australia® rules and regulations  
during my participation in Pony Racing.

Name of rider (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of rider: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent or legal guardian (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent or legal guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

# STAGES TO PONY RACING

## Stage 1 – Jumpstart Weekend

Jumpstart Weekend consists of two days where Pony Club Members of all ages and all pony and horse sizes are welcome to attend and learn new skills.

- **Day 1:** Designed to educate riders on Pony Racing, horse health and careers in the thoroughbred industry.
- **Day 2:** Riders will have the opportunity to take their mount to a local racetrack and participate in various gymkhana-style activities.

Selectors will be present to identify riders for further training. Selection criteria for Pony Racing are in the final section of this document. Both days must be attended to be considered for the Training Day. Feedback on progression will be provided in writing via email.

## Stage 2 – Training Days

Training Days are invitation-only and prepare riders for a State Qualifying Race Day. Each state will have two qualifying races in two pony height categories. Feedback on progression will be provided in writing via email.

## Stage 3 – State Qualifying Races

Final fields (up to 10 riders per race) will be selected at the training days. The two categories are:

1. Ponies not exceeding 12.2hh
2. Ponies not exceeding 14hh

Riders must be aged between 9 and 15 years old and comply with the weight ratio as stated in the PCA Horse Welfare Policy. Riders and their tack may be weighed at the Jumpstart Weekend.

## Stage 4 – The Finals

The finals will be held for the top riders from the State Qualifying Races. Specific details will be provided closer to the event date. The top 2 placegetters from each category will qualify for the National Pony Race final. Riders are responsible for their own transport and racing uniforms. If

qualifiers are unable to attend, slots will be allocated to riders from the host state at the officials' discretion.

## **GENERAL RULES FOR PONY RACING**

### **Riders Insurance**

Riders are covered under their Pony Club membership insurance. More details can be found at: [ponyclub.gowgatessport.com.au](http://ponyclub.gowgatessport.com.au).

### **General Rules for Riders, Parents/Guardians**

- 1) Courteous and respectful behaviour is expected from all riders, parents, and guardians at all times. Any rude behaviour will not be tolerated and may result in being asked to leave the venue immediately.
- 2) Behaviour exhibited by riders and parents/guardians is one of the key selection criteria for Pony Racing.
- 3) These rules and regulations cannot cover every possible event or situation. Pony Club Officials have the authority to make decisions based on the safety of participants and ponies, as well as the overall sportsmanship of the event.
- 4) It is the responsibility of riders and their parents/guardians to read, understand, and comply with Pony Racing Rules. Officials have the right to disqualify a rider at any stage for rule violations, dangerous riding, failure to follow instructions, poor behaviour/language, and animal welfare concerns.
- 5) Officials reserve the right to refuse any entry for any reason.
- 6) The decision of the Officials regarding selection is final. No complaints or appeals will be entertained.
- 7) All feedback and communication between Officials and parents/guardians must be conducted in writing via email. Selection decisions will not be discussed on the day of the event.
- 8) Officials reserve the right to record (via videos/photos) all stages of the Pony Racing selection process.

## **Safety**

- 1) Officials will conduct a safety briefing with parents and riders at the start of each day.
- 2) Gear will be checked at the beginning of each practical session by an approved Pony Club Australia® (PCA) Official.
- 3) Handlers, strappers, and riders must wear covered footwear at all times.
- 4) Activities may be adjusted based on risk assessments conducted by Officials.
- 5) To ensure everyone's safety, parents must stay out of the designated areas.

## **After a Fall**

- 1) Riders must be checked by a first aid officer or paramedic and follow the advice of the first aid official.
- 2) If there are any signs of a head injury or concussion, Refer to the PCA Concussion Policy (Appendix A).
- 3) After any rider falls or near-misses, a PCA incident form must be completed and submitted.
- 4) Officials reserve the rights to stop riders from remounting after a fall.
- 5) The pony/horse may also be subject to a welfare check and be examined by officials/vet.

# RULES FOR RIDERS

## Rules for Riders

- 1) Riders must be current financial members of a Pony Club.
- 2) Riders must have attended at least two rally days in the preceding 12 months and have the approval of the club's head coach or instructor, who must have observed the rider on the nominated pony.
- 3) Riders must complete the online application process and be accepted by Pony Club Australia® (PCA).
- 4) Riders must attend the Jumpstart Weekend on the pony specified in their application.
- 5) If selected, riders must attend the Training Day on the same pony that was listed in the application and ridden at the Jumpstart Weekend.
- 6) All gear must comply with PCA National Gear Rules and Pony Racing Discipline Rules, refer to section *Pony Racing Gear*.
- 7) Riders are encouraged to review the Pony Racing Selection Guidelines to understand the criteria that Officials will be looking for.
- 8) No jewellery is to be worn while riding or participating in pony racing.
- 9) If a rider has any health, fitness, or injury issues, it is the responsibility of the rider's parent/guardian to inform Officials. Officials have the right to request a medical or doctor's certificate before the rider can return to riding.

## Rider Attire

- 1) Pony Club uniforms must be worn for Jumpstart Weekends and Training Days.
- 2) White jodhpurs (or equivalent) with short/long boots or gaiters (black or tan) are required for Race Day.
- 3) Silks, saddle cloth numbers, and strapper bibs will be provided by Officials on Race Day. These items must be returned at the end of the day. Riders are required to provide a saddle cloth to be used under the number cloth.
- 4) All attire must comply with the PCA National Gear Rules.
- 5) No unauthorised advertising is allowed on rider attire (e.g., EA clothing, MGA clothing).

- 6) Approved safety vests must be worn for Day 2 of Jumpstart Weekend, Training and Race Day, refer to section *Pony Racing Gear*.
- 7) Helmets must be properly fitted, and it is the responsibility of the rider and parent/guardian to ensure the helmet fits correctly and complies with PCA National Gear Rules (see Appendix B, Picture 7). Approved helmets within the racing industry, such as New Derby Helmets or GPA, are recommended.

## **Age of Riders**

Pony Racing Jumpstart Weekends are educational days open to riders of all ages. However, riders must be able to ride independently.

To be eligible for selection for a State Qualifying Race Day, riders must be between 9 and 15 years old, based on their age as of January 1st, 2025.

**Note:** Rider and pony combinations must be appropriately matched in size and ability. The combined weight of the rider and their tack must not exceed approximately 20% of the pony's weight as stated in the PCA Horse Welfare Policy (page 11). Riders and their tack may be weighed at the Jumpstart Weekends.



# RULES FOR PONIES

## Size of Ponies

- 1) Pony Racing Jumpstart Weekends: Ponies and horses of all sizes are welcome.
- 2) State Qualifying Pony Races: To be considered for the State Qualifying Pony Races, ponies must either:
  - **Not exceed 12.2 hands high (hh)**
  - **Not exceed 14 hands high (hh).**

## Pony Requirements

- 1) General health and wellness assessments may be conducted at any time to ensure the health and fitness of each pony. Please refer to the PCA Horse Welfare Policy, <https://ponyclubaustralia.com.au/horse-welfare/>
- 2) Ponies must be at least 5 years old. Ponies over the age of 18 will only be considered for Race Day after a thorough health check and approval by officials. A vet certificate may be required.
- 3) All ponies eligible for Race Day must not exceed 14 hands high (hh). Ponies may be measured at any time.
- 4) Stallions and pregnant mares are not permitted to participate.
- 5) Ponies' temperatures will be taken by an Official at the start of Race Day. Riders are required to take and record their pony's temperature on each of the three days leading up to the State Qualifying Race Day.
- 6) Ponies may be examined on Race Day by the Regulatory Veterinarian if required or at the discretion of the Officials.
- 7) Ponies must have well-maintained hooves.
- 8) Ponies must be free of prohibited substances in accordance with Racing Rules. Pony Club Australia® reserves the right to request a sample from any horse or pony at any time.
- 9) Officials will advise if any vaccinations are required.

- 10) If a pony trips, shows an abnormal gait, or has a slow recovery, Officials have the right to refuse its participation in the event.
- 11) All ponies must pass fitness checks, including lameness, heart rate, and temperature, to be eligible for Race Day. This determination is at the discretion of the Official.
- 12) Health checklist forms must be completed and submitted on Race Day.

# Pony Racing Gear

## Gear for Jumpstart Weekend

- 1) Any gear used on Jumpstart Weekend must comply with PCA National Gear Rules.
- 2) All gear must be clean, tidy, and in safe working order on all days.
- 3) Body Protectors must be worn when on a racetrack including Day 2 Jumpstart weekend.

## Gear for Training and Race Day

- 1) **Leg Protection:** No bandages are allowed. Approved protective boots may be worn at the discretion of Officials (see Appendix B, Picture 1).
- 2) **Saddles:** Only all-purpose saddles, jumping saddles, or track pads are permitted for Training and Race Day. Stock saddles, dressage saddles, and race day saddles are not allowed (see Picture 2).
- 3) **Reins:** For Training Day and Race Day, riders must use rubber grip or webbing reins, which must be securely attached to the bit (see Picture 3).
- 4) **Bridles:** Preferred bridles should be black, brown, or in sponsor colours, subject to official approval.
- 5) **Bits:** Only bits approved under PCA National Gear Rules are allowed (see Picture 4).
- 6) **Aids:** No spurs, whips, or artificial aids are permitted.
- 7) **Bonnets:** Approved bonnets may be used at the discretion of Officials in accordance with PCA National Gear Rules (see Picture 5).
- 8) **Stirrup Irons:** Riders must use approved safety irons that correctly fit the foot and are not too small (see Picture 6).
- 9) **Body Protectors:** Body protectors must be worn on any racetrack (see Picture 8). They must be equestrian-specific and meet one of the following standards:

BETA:2009 or BETA:2018 - Level 3

EN13158:2009 and EN13158:2018 - Level 3

It is recommended that body protectors be replaced every five years. The 2009 Level 3 models (produced until 2018) are permitted until the end of 2024 if in good condition. After a fall, inspect the body protector for damage. If the foam is dented and does not return to its natural shape within 30 minutes, it is recommended to replace it as the impact absorption qualities may have decreased.

10) **Leads:** Double clip leads must be used on Race Day when leading the pony.

## **Race Day Rules**

- 1) All handlers and strappers on Race Day must be at least 16 years of age and a PCA member.
- 2) Riders must remain in their designated lanes during the race and avoid crossing in front of other riders. This will be covered in the safety briefing.
- 3) Any rider using their reins in a whip-like fashion will be disqualified.
- 4) Officials have the final authority on placings and rulings.
- 5) Adhere to the rules of the racecourse, Race Club requests, and instructions from Pony Club Officials on the day.
- 6) If Pony Club Officials have concerns for the safety of a rider or pony, they reserve the right to stop that combination from participating.
- 7) Ponies must be secured and supervised at all times while on racecourse grounds.
- 8) Ponies must not be led to the start; riders need to ride their ponies to the start independently.
- 9) Once all riders arrive at the start, they are under the instruction of the Pony Club Officials and PCA gear check officials.
- 10) Start rules will be provided on the day; these rules must be followed, or the pony and rider combination may be disqualified from the race.
- 11) Saluting before or at the finish line is prohibited in the race.

## Pony Racing Selection Guidelines

The National Pony Racing Series is a showcase event with safety as the highest priority. Organisers reserve the right to stop any pony and rider combination from participating if deemed unsafe at any stage of the event.

To qualify as a starter in a Pony Race, the rider and pony combination must consistently demonstrate the following key factors, within reason:

### Courteous and Respectful Behaviour

- The decision regarding the participation of a rider/pony combination is solely at the discretion of the Officials and is final.
- Only participants (both parents and riders) who display polite and respectful behaviour will be permitted to continue.
- Parents who provide inaccurate information about their pony's height will be immediately disqualified.

### Control

- **Stopping:** The rider must be able to stop their mount at any time, including performing an emergency stop if required.
- **Steering:** The rider must demonstrate the ability to steer their mount effectively and ensure it is tractable.
- **Straightness and Tracking:** The rider must be able to maintain a straight line and track correctly around bends in their lane during practice and on race day, with no veering or drifting.
- Ponies exhibiting uncontrollable behaviour, such as bolting, bucking, or veering, will not be permitted on the racecourse.

### Confidence

- **Speed:** The rider must show confidence at all gaits and speeds.
- **Group Environment:** The rider should be confident in a group setting, with awareness of both their own pony and the other ponies and riders around them.
- **Position:** The rider must demonstrate confidence in their riding position, whether in a two-point or three-point stance. If the rider lacks confidence and Officials are not comfortable, they may be asked not to proceed.

### Balance

- **Mount:** The pony must be well-balanced at trot and canter, with no signs of lameness or tripping.

- **Rider:** The rider must maintain reasonable balance in all riding positions and effectively manage any unexpected situations.

## **Presentation**

- **Riders:** Must be dressed appropriately, looking neat and tidy.
- **Gear:** Should be clean, correctly fitted and well-maintained.
- **Ponies:** Must be washed, clean, with long coats clipped. To ensure safety Manes should be neatly braided or plaited, and tails well-groomed and braided if possible.

**Note:** These guidelines provide a general overview of the key factors considered for rider and pony safety during practice and race day. They are not exhaustive but serve as examples of what will be evaluated. We encourage kindness and courtesy throughout the process, as our goal is to ensure a fun and safe experience for all participants.

# Appendix A

**PCA Concussion Policy:**

[Concussion | Pony Club Australia®](#)



# Appendix B

Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3



Picture 4

**Permitted cheekpieces - Groups A, B, D, F, G**  
 \* Pelhams can be used in Group F Showing only (not pictured)

Loose ring (ring rotates through mouth-piece end)		Baucher, drop cheek, hanging cheek, and DC Dressage		Half cheek, half spoon		DC Morgan	
Eggbutt		Loose ring eggbutt		Full cheek		FM Fulmer; use with keepers	
Eggbutt 2.5 ring		D-ring		Kimberley DEE		Tom Thumb	
Wilkie		Universal		Winged		T Bar 3-ring	
Universal Wilkie		Pessoa /Dutch 3 ring		Williams 4-ring		Williams Universal	
Williams Wilkie		Pessoa / Dutch 4 ring		Bomber Kimberwick (no curb chain)			

Picture 5

Picture 6



Picture 7

<p><b>1.14 Helmet standards</b></p> <p>For helmet fitting, use by dates and condition, see <b>Appendix 1</b></p>	<p>Australia New Zealand standard AS/NZS 3838 Marked SAI Global</p>	
	<p>Australia New Zealand standard ARB H5 2012 (racing helmets) Marked SAI Global</p>	
	<p>American standard ASTM F1163 Marked SEI or SNELL E2001</p>	
	<p>British standard PAS 015 (1998 or 2011) BSI Kitemarked</p>	
	<p>European standard (new, interim) VG01.040 (2014-12) This may be abbreviated as 'VG1' on the helmet label</p>	<p>Note that new helmets may carry both the EN1384 &amp; VG01.040 marks</p>

Picture 8

