



PONY CLUB
AUSTRALIA



**MOUNTED GAMES
RULE BOOK
2023**

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by Pony Club Australia Ltd

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HISTORY AND OBJECTIVES

Mounted Games was the inspiration of H.R.H. Prince Philip. For the Horse of the Year Show, Prince Philip asked if he could devise a competition for children who could not afford an expensive, well-bred horse, and in 1957 the Horse of the Year Show staged the first Mounted Games Championship for the Prince Philip Cup – it was an immediate success.

It was in 1985 that the Australian Pony Club Council sought permission from Prince Philip to use the name 'Prince Philip Mounted Games' for the conduct of official National Mounted Games Championships within Australia. This request was granted in 1986 and an elegantly engraved silver cup was presented on behalf of Prince Philip to the Australian Pony Club Council for perpetual competition.

The aim was to increase the popularity of Mounted Games in Australia and to encourage active, happy riders whose success does not necessarily depend on expensive horses – just careful, systematic training and determination. With practice and patience, mounted games help to develop skills, horsemanship and a fabulous team spirit, which complements all equestrian disciplines.

The Australian National competition consists of around 21 different games over 1-3 days. Every second year when Pony Club Nationals is run, the junior and senior teams compete on their own horses. For the juniors, during the years in between, the riders borrow horses provided by Pony Club members from the Host State.

The Prince Philip Cup provides a team competition requiring courage, determination, teamwork and horsemanship, with horses that have been well-trained to not only cope with the many distractions that occur on the field, but also to be extremely obedient and agile.



GENERAL RULES

Age Groups

A rider's age is taken at 1st January in the year of competition.

For ages of riders at a National competition which has Juniors and Seniors only, it is (at 1st January):

- Juniors – under 16 years
- Seniors – 16 years and under 26 years

Teams

- See Appendix 1 for team make up at different competitions.

Riders

- The combined weight of rider and saddlery should not be more than 20% of the horse's weight. For example, a 13.2hh pony weighing 400kg should not be ridden by a rider weighing more than 80kg with gear..

Dress

- Riders are to wear their Club or State approved uniform, depending on the level of competition. It is recommended that a tie not be worn for mounted games due to safety issues.
- Each rider must wear a PCA approved helmet and boots whilst participating in each race and at any time they are on a horse at the event. Failure to wear protective headgear correctly, will result in elimination from the race concerned.
- When a volunteer is involved in a race, such as in the place of Rider 5 in the Nine Ring race, they must also wear PCA approved boots and helmet.
- Should a helmet come off, it must be replaced immediately before resuming the race or the team will be eliminated from that race. Number five riders, when taking part in a race unmounted, must also wear protective headgear.
- A coloured hat cover or hat band is worn by the last rider in the team. The hat cover must be worn on the helmet and not changed from one rider to another once a race has started. Any infringement incurs elimination. If the hat cover comes off the helmet during the race, the rider must return to the place it became dislodged and only continue once it has been put back on the helmet.

Horses

- There is no height restriction for horses to be used in mounted games, however consideration should be taken in matching up appropriate horses to the size and experience of the riders and in accordance with the weight rule under 2.1.

Saddlery - as per PCA National Gear Rules

- Clips must be taped at all times.
- No whips or spurs may be used; use of the baton, reins or other equipment as a whip shall incur elimination of the team from the race.
- Neck straps are allowed and should be fitted snugly.
- Bonnets and mufflers permitted.
- If the reins are knotted, they must be undone at the buckle end.
- Gaiters are permitted.
- Lace up boot eyelets to be taped up or under gaiters.

Games

- Games selected should be taken from the Games Section of the 2023 Mounted Games Handbook and include a balance of those requiring a variation of skills, degree of difficulty and equipment. This helps to ensure a fair and exciting competition.
- If, for any reason a game cannot be run, it may either be replaced by the Spare Game or be declared void at the discretion of the Official Steward.
- Any new game that is proposed to be added to the list of possible games must be first presented at an PCA Mounted Games Committee Meeting. The rules for any proposed new game must have been circulated to all the States. It is recommended that proposed games are trialled before being adopted into the list of games. Such proposed new games are not to be added to the list until States have provided feedback to the PCA Mounted Games Committee and the Committee has approved the game.
- The rules for each game in the accompanying 2023 Mounted Games Handbook contain a Team, Pairs and Novice description. Novice rules can be used at lower level events (not National or State events) at the discretion of the Official Steward and the Host. Teams competing against each other must have the same rules applied. e.g. Novice teams must not compete against non-novice teams.

Equipment

- Refer to the Specifications of Equipment section of the 2023 Mounted Games Handbook.

Briefing

- It is essential that all Coaches meet with the Official Steward and the Organisers on the day of or before the competition, to inspect equipment and discuss any matters relevant to the competition

Competition Officials

- Officials to be appointed by the competition Host.
- The following are considered Officials for the duration of the competition and a description of their roles is provided for clarification:

Officials

A Starter

Official Steward

A minimum of two Judges and one scorer

Two gear check inspectors

Assistant Referees, 6-8 depending on the number of teams

Equipment Steward

Arena Party, approximately one person per lane

Other Stewards as required (e.g. gate steward)

Other required personnel:

Commentator/announcer

Medical/First Aid services as per National/State rules

Officials' Duties

Starter

- It is generally appropriate for the Official Steward to also be the Starter.
- The Starter's position is in line with the first line of bending posts and on the same side as the Judges/Scorers. They must ensure they can be clearly seen by all the competitors on the start line.
- The Starter may order an unruly horse to stand behind the six metre line. The Starter may also order a rider to start behind the six metre line if their horse has crossed the line before the flag has been dropped.
- The Starter should receive a signal from the Equipment Steward that the arena is ready before calling the riders forward.
- As soon as the teams and equipment are ready, the Starter should call the riders to the six metre line by whistle.
- Once the riders are lined up, raise the flag and hold it upright whilst the riders move to the start line and settle.
- When they are satisfied all the riders are settled and stationary, the flag is lowered AWAY FROM THE RIDERS (There is no need to bring the flag down with a great flourish as this will invariably unsettle the horse in the nearest lane).
- The Starter alone is responsible for the start being fair so if, after dropping the flag, they consider the start was unfair, they must immediately recall the riders by whistle.
- If at any time during the race the Official Steward deems it necessary to stop the race, it shall be signaled by blowing a whistle (this may be done by the Starter).
- Should the Starter have any doubts they should consult the Official Steward for guidance.

Official (Chief) Steward:

- Ensures that the whole competition is run in accordance with the rules. His/her authority is final and binding.
- Is responsible for inspecting and approving the lay-out of the arena and all the equipment.
- Conducts the Briefing (after calling the roll).
- Supervises the Assistant Referees and may replace an Assistant Referee if they consider it necessary.
- Receives reports on infringements and inform the Judges of their decisions.
- Liaises with the First Aid personnel to arrange for adequate reserve cover should the Ambulance have to leave the ground during the competition.
- Adjudicates on objections.
- Adjudicates on any unforeseen eventualities.
- Has available a height measuring stick and scales (bathroom scales are adequate).
- Has a whistle immediately available in case it is necessary to stop a race.
- Discusses Assistant Referees' fault calls before making a decision. If rejecting a fault call, the Official Steward must give their reason for doing this to the Assistant Referee concerned.
- Can inspect any rider, horse or tack at any time.
- The Official Steward, in consultation with the competition organiser, may substitute a race if it is deemed necessary for any reason.
- Has to send a report to the PCA Mounted Games Committee promptly after the competition about the general organisation of the competition and any incidents or difficulties that arose.

If, because of any serious breach of the rules, the Official Steward considers disqualification from the whole or any subsequent competition may be necessary, they can consult with the organisers before making their decision.

In the event of there being a matter upon which the Official Steward feels unable to adjudicate at a National level, each state shall provide a representative to form a consultation panel to assist the Official Steward in making their final decision. At the lower levels a representative from each zone or club may be more appropriate.

Judges/Scorers:

- Judges are positioned on the start/finish line.
- Judges are not responsible for infringements and must not overrule the Assistant Referees.
- Judges decide on and record the placings for each race. The Official Steward may help to decide close finishes.
- Judges receive reports of eliminations/disqualifications from the Official Steward and adjust the places and scores accordingly.
- Scorers receive the placings from the Judges and tally up the points on the scoresheet.
- Scorers communicate the placings of each race to the Commentator to announce.
- Scorers should position themselves near the Commentator for easy liaison.

Gear Check Inspectors

- Inspect all riders and horses gear for faults, and to check that they adhere to the National Gear Rules and those outlined in this document.
- Any gear that is unsafe or does not adhere to the rules must be removed and may be replaced with a suitable alternative.
- All riders and horses should be checked before each session of riding.

Assistant Referees:

Positioning: It is recommended that there be a minimum of eight assistant referees distributed evenly across the Start/Finish, centre and changeover lines. This may be varied at the discretion of the referee, taking into account the number of riders in each heat.

Requirements

- They should wear coloured vests, enclosed footwear and carry a flag whilst officiating.
- They should be at least 18 years of age on the date of the competition.
- Assistant Referees must have a thorough knowledge of the rules and have studied carefully the details of each race in the competition.
- Close concentration is necessary throughout each race. Assistant Referees should not be distracted by anything - even a bad upset in another lane.

Duties

- They may assist with the equipment in between races and should check that it is set out in accordance to the rules and signal to the equipment marshal if this is not the case.
- Start/Finish and Changeover Assistant Referees should check to ensure that changeovers happen behind the line and that all relevant rules are obeyed.
- They should also check that riders who are sent back to the six metre line remain behind the line when the race is started as well as watching for rule infringements behind the Start/Finish and changeover lines during the race.
- Centre line Assistant Referees should check mid field procedures and watch the linkup in pairs games.
- Assistant Referees must not call back or call instructions to any competitor, but they must answer a competitor's questions (as briefly as possible).
- Assistant Referees at the change-over line should ensure that competitors do not ride back down the arena until the race is over.
- If one team's equipment is upset by another team, the nearest Assistant Referee should quickly set this up again, if this is possible.
- If a horse runs loose, an Assistant Referee MAY endeavor to catch it if possible.
- They should raise their flag at any time during a race if they see the race should be stopped due to injury, broken equipment or displaced equipment due to weather conditions.

- In the event of an infringement of the rules that is not corrected, they raise their flag at the end of the race to attract the attention of the Official Steward. They then convey the error of the relevant rider(s) and the Official Steward then decides what action should be taken.
- After each race, the stewards rotate to a different position on the arena

Equipment Steward

- Ensure that all equipment and arena markings meet the specifications outlined in this rule book.
- That the equipment is set out the same for all lanes and in accordance to the rules.
- To advise the Arena Party of the set out of equipment.
- They should indicate to the Official Steward/Starter that the arena is ready for the next game.

Arena Party

- The Arena Party puts up and issues equipment and ensures that everything is ready for each event, removing the equipment when it is no longer required.
- Arena Party members must not be in the arena when races are in progress.
- At the end of a race the Arena Party should alert the Chief Steward if any equipment is broken or is not touching the required mark.

Results / Finish

- An official video camera should be used on the start/finish line to confirm finish places when needed and for possible infringements. The Host may also decide to have an official video camera on the changeover line. Any other unofficial camera footage will not be considered.
- The result of a race will be decided by the order in which the **horses' noses cross the finishing line** when ridden or the **riders cross the line when dismounted**, as in the Sack Race. When horses finish in pairs, it is the **nose of the second horse** which counts.
- If, for any reason the Judges cannot decide one or more of the placings in an event, the official video camera should be used to decide the placings. If the Judge(s) still cannot decide, the teams will tie and split the points for the two placings.
- The Official Steward/Starter must blow the whistle to signal the end of each race. Riders must not re-enter the Play Area until this has happened. (e.g. if they are returning to the start area from the changeover line).

Scoring

- Points will be awarded on the basis of one in excess of the number of teams competing e.g. in a four team competition, points will be 5, 4, 3 and 2. One point for elimination, 0 points for disqualification.
- In the event a team fails to complete the race, OR the last team on the field cannot finish in a timely manner, then the Official Steward may elect to blow the whistle to finish the race in the interests of saving time. That team would then take (2) points for last place.
- At the end of each race, the Commentator should announce the official placings of the race.
- In the event of equality for the final placings a 'Tie Breaker' game will be played to decide the result. This game will be selected from one of those being used in the Competition. The Team Coach of the teams that are tied will each select a game. These will then go into a draw - the one drawn being the 'Tie Breaker'.

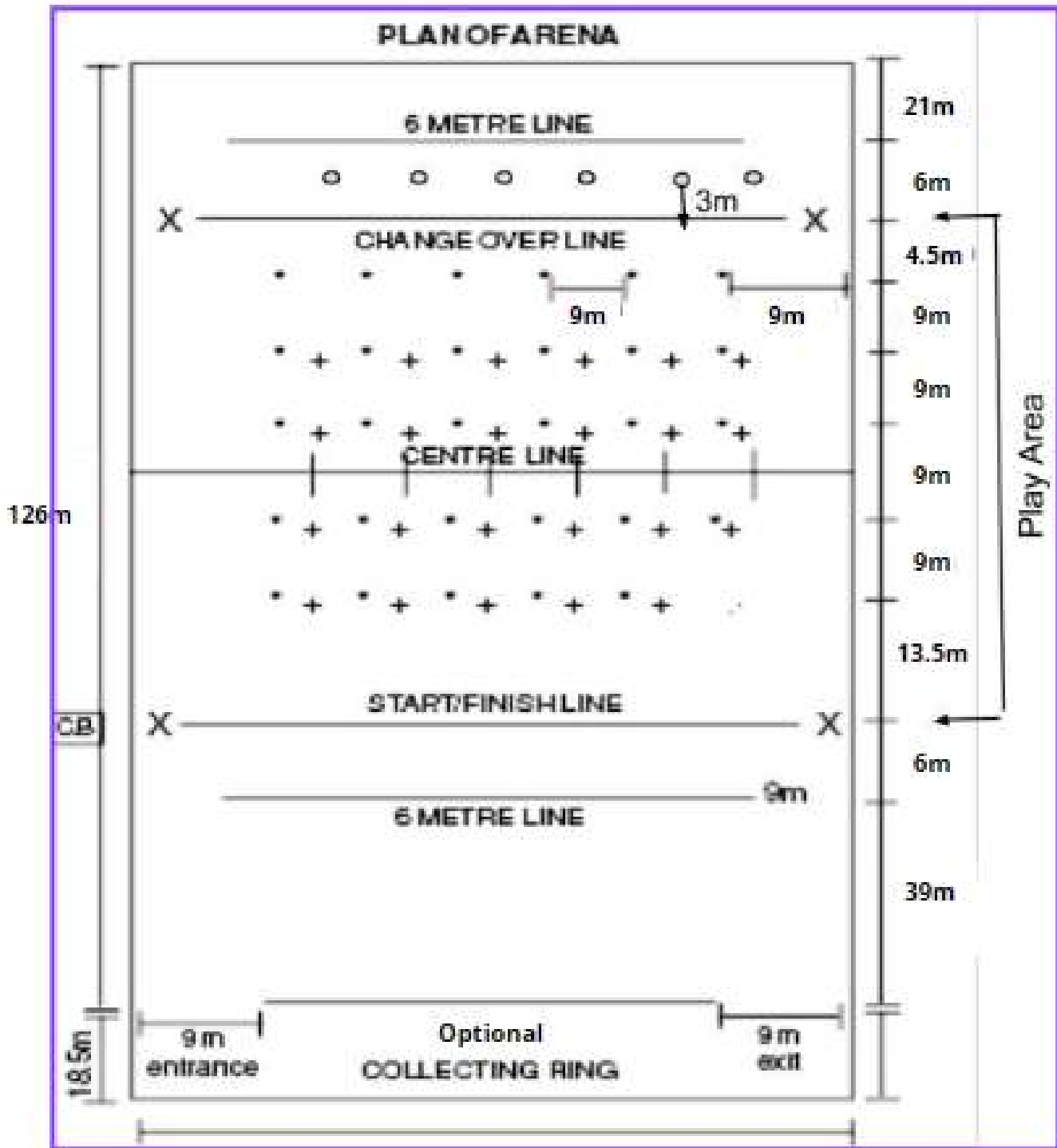
COMPETITION RULES

Race Distance

- All riders and ponies must cross the changeover line in all races except Bending, Canadian, Three Mug, Potato Picking Scramble, Sharpshooters and the 3rd rider in Wizard's Castle.

Arena and Markings

- The Play Area is that area between the start line, change over line and the defined width of the area.
- The Arena is the Play Area plus the areas behind the start and changeover lines which should be enclosed by a fence.
- The arena must be marked out in accordance with the measurements and diagram shown on Page 11 (also in the 2023 Mounted Games Handbook) or as near as possible. Slight variations may be necessary due to the size of the arena available or the number of teams competing. Any variations to this or to the games equipment must be announced by the Chief Steward at the Briefing. Organisers should work within the size specifications to suit their available space.
- Bending poles have a 15cm diameter circle mark, other equipment a 40cm diamond mark. Marks may be made with spray paint or similar.
- Any equipment knocked over or moved beyond its mark by a rider or a pony, which needs to be replaced, needs to be done so inside or touching the marking. Any infringement incurs elimination.
- Should markings become obliterated, then the Chief Steward's decision on the position of equipment is final.



Where the arena width is limited the width of the lane can be reduced to 8.5m or 8m

- ◻ Bending pole position
- ◻ Other equipment position
- Changeover line equipment

Remaining Mounted

Except when the rules allow riders to dismount, they must remain mounted. A rider is deemed to be mounted if they are facing forward on or above the saddle with each knee on either side of the pony and below the level of the saddle skirt. Feet do not need to be in the stirrups. Should a rider fall off and lose their horse, they must remount and resume the race from the point where they fell off.

Changeovers

- Handovers must be attempted mounted and hand to hand. Failure to do this will incur elimination.
- At a changeover, only the next rider to start is allowed to take up position behind the start/changeover line. They must go next and may not be replaced by another rider for any reason. The remainder of the team should be at least six meters back.
- Handovers or changeovers from one rider to the next must take place behind the line: i.e. all eight hooves of both horses and the whole of each rider must be behind the line. Should the next rider cross the line too soon, their team will be eliminated unless they return to correct the error.
- The incoming rider ONLY can pick up an item dropped behind the changeover line and hand it to the next rider, this may be done mounted or dismounted.
- During an attempt at a handover, if the equipment is knocked into the field of play, the incoming rider must retrieve the dropped equipment, mounted or dismounted, then they must cross the start/finish line and complete the changeover hand-to-hand again.

Completion of Equipment

Equipment must be completed mounted unless specified in the game rules

OR

unless they have made a **genuine attempt** to put the equipment in/on its holder already and in doing so, the equipment has fallen to the ground. The rider may then place the equipment in/on the holder from the ground.

A **genuine attempt** is defined to be one in which:

1. If a piece of equipment is to be placed on to a container, holder or pole then there must be contact between the equipment in the rider's hand and where it is to be placed whilst the container, holder or pole is in the correct position
 2. If a piece of equipment is to be collected from a container, holder or pole then there must be contact between the equipment and the rider's hand whilst it is in/on the container, holder or pole in the correct position
 3. Equipment that is to be dropped into a container or holder may be released from the rider's hand without contact being made between the equipment and the container or holder
- If during a genuine attempt, a rider knocks over a container, table, post etc., they must immediately set it up again and replace all the articles that should be in or on it, except the one being collected which need not be replaced. They can dismount and do this by hand OR remain mounted if they wish. When correcting an error, dismounted, the rider must continue to hold the horse by the rein throughout.
 - When an error is committed, the rider must go back and fix the error before continuing. If subsequent riders have entered the field after a mistake has been made, the rider who made the mistake must go back and correct it, and then they continue from that point. i.e. each subsequent rider needn't go out to unwind their parts.
 - A rider who commits an error during an event may return to correct it, even after crossing the handover or finishing line, provided they have not left the arena or the Official Steward has not declared the race to be over. Should they go back, the rider may not "hand-over" or "finish" until they again cross the line after correcting the error.

Broken Equipment

- If equipment is broken during a race that allows the rider to continue the race and poses no threat to safety, no action is taken.
- If equipment is broken during a race which prevents the successful completion of the race as a result of deliberate intent of the rider OR through misuse of the equipment outside the range for which it was constructed, the team will be eliminated or disqualified at the Official Steward's discretion.
- If equipment is broken during a race due to a fault in its construction and NOT from deliberate intent, then the Official Steward may choose to rerun the race for all teams who had not finished when the race was stopped. Teams who had already committed an eliminable offence before the whistle will not take part in any reruns.
- The Official Steward alone, decides whether the equipment has been broken with deliberate intent or was used outside the range for which it was constructed. They also decide whether the broken equipment still allows the successful completion of the race or not.

Loose Horse

- If a horse leaves the arena the team will be eliminated. No person may enter the arena to catch a loose horse; anyone inside the ring can catch a horse if safe to do so, but should then hand it over to the rider and not assist them in mounting. The team may then continue with the race.
- If a horse runs loose away from its rider, the team may be eliminated from the event at the discretion of the Official Steward if they believe the horse has interfered with another team (see Interference/Obstruction below).

Weaving and Post Races

- In all races in which the riders weave around bending posts the following will apply:
 - A. The riders may pass the first post on either the right or the left. Thereafter they weave alternatively to the right and left of successive posts.
 - B. The following faults will incur elimination of the team from the event:
 - a. Passing the wrong side of a post unless corrected
 - b. Failure by the rider concerned to replace a post they have knocked down
 - c. Breaking a post
 - C. If a post is knocked over, then the rider(s) must replace the post and then resume the race by being mounted before the front legs of the pony pass the post that they knocked over. The rider may change the pattern of their weave through the posts before passing the post that had been knocked over.
- A post is considered 'knocked down' if it is lying flat on the ground.

Interference

- Interference is deemed to have occurred when the intended progress of a rider or pony is inhibited (e.g. the horse/rider veers off course or slows down).
- Riders must make a reasonable attempt to stay within their lanes. This includes the areas behind the start and changeover lines. If they cross over into another lane and they interfere with another team's horse or rider that is in their own lane and active in the race then the team will be eliminated.
- Races may be rerun when a team upsets the equipment of another team at the Official (Chief) Steward's discretion, but the offending team will be eliminated from that race and will not get to rerun.

Coaches and Number Five Riders

- Coaches ONLY are allowed in the Arena with their teams between races. Coaches must stand outside the Arena during the running of the race but may come into the Arena after each race is complete. Coaches may talk to their team, but aggressive and inappropriate shouting may be penalised by the Official Steward.
- Number five riders are viewed as part of the team and CAN talk to their teammates (including when holding equipment eg: Pony Club stand, postman).
- Number five riders who are mounted can remain in the ring with their team but must stay in line with their lane. They can wait in the collecting ring if needed. Unmounted number five riders who are not involved in the race must stay in the collecting ring.

Disqualification and Elimination

- A team will be disqualified for serious breaches of the rules. Rough or dangerous riding, deliberate interference, or unseemly behaviour may be penalised by disqualification of the rider or the team from the event concerned or from the whole competition, at the discretion of the Official Steward.
- A team will be eliminated for not correcting mistakes made during an event or for not following any of the rules outlined in this rule book at the discretion of the Official Steward.
- Items of equipment must not be held in the mouth. Penalty for infringement is elimination.

Objections

- Each Coach is attributed the right to make an appeal against a refereeing or judging decision. An appeal can only be made about an incident in which the Team or their Coach were physically involved.
- Each Team/Coach has one (1) appeal for every eight races. Appeals **do not** carry over into the next set of eight races. Appeals are considered to have been used if the original decision is **not** overturned. In the event a Coach makes an appeal and they are successful (i.e. the original decision is overturned), then they keep their right to one appeal until the end of that set of eight races.
- In order to make an appeal the Coach should stand behind the start line in their lane and raise their hand. This can only be done after the Official Steward has signalled the end of the relevant race and the official result has been given by the commentator. It must also be done before the flag has dropped to signal the start of the race following the official announcement of the result. The appeal must be lodged before the Team or Coach has left the arena.
- Once an appeal has been made, the Official Steward approaches the Coach making the appeal who explains the decision against which they are appealing and the reasons for doing so. The Official Steward reviews the decision which may be done by reviewing official video footage or consulting with Assistant Referees. If the Official Steward overturns the decision, the scores are amended.
- In the event of any dispute or objection, the OFFICIAL STEWARD'S RULING shall be final and binding.

Assistance

- No person may physically help a rider during their part of the race unless both riders are in the same team and are both involved in that part of the race or it is in an attempt to recapture a loose pony.

APPENDIX 1 - Rules Applicable to Only National Competitions

Team makeup

- All riders must hold a C certificate.
- Each **junior** team shall consist of no fewer than four, or more than five riders who must be under 16 years of age on the 1st January in the year of competition.
- Each **senior** team shall consist of no fewer than four, or more than five riders who must be 16-25 years of age on the 1st January in the year of competition.
- If a state is unable to field five riders, then it is at the discretion of PCA, in consultation with the PCA Mounted Games Committee, to allow a composite team or additional local rider to make up a team.

Pool horses

The following rules about horses apply **only** during the years that they ride pool horses:

- In the main Competition, competitors will NOT be allowed to ride their own horses or any that they have ridden regularly in official Pony Club Competitions. The horses will be provided by the Host State and pooled prior to the competition.
- The Host State organisers will then divide the horses into groups of five (5 for each team), each group as far as possible having comparable abilities. All horses should be familiar with the equipment and games to be played.
- For ease of identification, the Host State organiser(s) should label each horse with a number, colour code the groups and provide a detailed list of the horses to the Coaches, prior to the Competition.
- At least five extra horses should be presented to attend the pooling and be available at the Competition. These may be used to replace any found to be lame or unsuitable up to the commencement of the Competition. Any horse that is lame or becomes lame, will be excluded from taking part in the event.
- Ponies under 12.2hh and over 15hh should be excluded. If this is not possible, only one of each is allowed per team.

Games

- The main Competition will consist of no fewer than 12 games per day (if the competition is being run over multiple days) and a maximum of 21 games per day.
- During the years that juniors ride pool horses, the Competition should consist of between 16-21 races in total to balance the number of races on each group of pool horses.
- The Host State should propose a list of games, including a Spare Event for the Competition by January of that year that the PCA Mounted Games Committee must approve the list.
- Each rider in the team must ride a minimum of five races across the competition unless:
 - A 5th person has been provided by the Host State to make up a team, in which case only the four riders must ride five races and the 5th person must only assist in the unmounted races
 - OR
 - A rider or their horse sustains an injury or illness that prevents them from participating.



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