

The Pony Club Riders Test 2004 Judging Guidelines



1. THE SEAT (10 Marks)

- Elasticity – Use and control of the seat without stiffening
- Relaxation
- Suppleness
- Lower back and hips going with the movement

Only if the rider is sufficiently relaxed in the mind and body can suppleness be established. The shoulders, elbows, wrists, hips, knees and ankles must be free from stiffness. The pelvis and thighs should swing forward with the movement of the horse's back allowing the seat to maintain a supple contact with the saddle. Therefore the movement is absorbed in the pelvis and thighs while the upper body remains straight and free from stiffness.

2. STRAIGHTNESS/BALANCE (10 Marks)

- Stirrups same length
- Central in saddle
- Poise/uprightness
- Feel in movements and harmony with rhythm

The stirrups should be a suitable length for the stage of riding that has been reached. Neither so long the heel cannot be lowered and the ankle remains flexible nor so short that the rider cannot achieve the depth of seat required.

The rider at all times should sit central to the horse.

The rider should be able to pick up the rhythm from the horse and adjust the balance and tempo accordingly.

3. CORRECTNESS OF POSITION (10 Marks)

The Pony Club Manual states the rider should be;

- Well balanced
- The hips supple
- The thighs and legs steady
- The upper part of the body easy, free and erect.
- The hands in harmony without touching either each other or the horse with the thumb as the highest point.
- The elbows and arms close to the body.
- Follows the movement of the horse smoothly and freely
- Applies aids correctly

4. INFLUENCE OF THE RIDER (10 Marks x 2)

Use of weight, leg and rein aids to influence the horse's way of going

Horse's 'way of going' – Basic training check list

Rhythm – This should be correct for each pace – 4 time in walk, 2 time in trot and 3 time with a moment of suspension in canter. The rhythm should be regular, so that the horse/pony keeps the same tempo (speed of the rhythm) at all times.

Suppleness – The horse/pony should have a swinging back and relaxed paces, showing an equal bend on both sides.

Contact – There should be a steady, light and elastic contact between the rider's hands and the horse's mouth. The horse should have a steady, relaxed and closed mouth. The poll should always be the highest point with the nose line in front of the vertical.

Impulsion – Impulsion is balanced energy. With the correct amount of impulsion the horse is willing to go forward actively. His hind legs should be more engaged and show more ability to step under the centre of gravity of the horse. Impulsion should not be confused with speed.

Straightness – When moving forward the horse should go as if on railway track. The hind foot on one side directly following the forefoot on the same side, both on a straight line and on a circle.

Self Carriage – As the training of the horse/pony progresses he should be able to step under behind with more active hindlegs to enable the forehand to be lighter. In most Pony Club tests this will be illustrated by the horse/pony maintaining a good balance through the transitions.

5. Movements and figures in the Test

The use of the arena, accuracy and properly executed figures are the main objectives in this section.