

TRAINING BULLETIN

NOVEMBER 2014



Welcome to The Pony Club's Autumn Training Bulletin. Please pass it on to anyone you think may be interested.

The Pony Club website

As you will have seen, The Pony Club's website has a new look! 'Training & Tests' is now under the same tab, making it even easier to access useful information and resources. The 'Training & Tests' pages are constantly updated and improved. Please check regularly to catch any updates on Training of Members and coaches, ideas for rallies, Efficiency Tests, Achievement Badges & Competition Badges.

Click on the tab on the top right hand side of the Home page, or use this link to take you straight to 'Training & Tests' on The Pony Club website: www.pcuk.org/training

To find CPD (Continuing Professional Development) courses in your Area use the following link: www.pcuk.org/training/training_area_instructors_courses

A Test

Congratulations to the nine Members (listed below) who have achieved the A Test this year, a particular mention to Emma Brown from the East Antrim Branch who passed with Honours this autumn. The introduction of A Test retakes for Members who failed one of the four sections of the A Test has proved a success, with both Members who retook their riding modules passing. This has had a positive effect on the pass rate for the A Test, which this year is 53%. The dates for next year's A Tests and training days will be on the website in the coming weeks. If you have any questions about the A Test, please email training@pcuk.org

Louise Chamberlain	Craven Hunt
Emma Brown	East Antrim
Kate Mills	Golden Valley Hunt
Alice Walker	North Shropshire
Amy Barlow	Portman Hunt
Laura Brown	Tullylagen
Elizabeth Spencer	Warwickshire Hunt
Annabel Kishor	Warwickshire Hunt
Jennifer Galuszka	Wokingham

Don't forget that the Training Committee are hosting a celebratory event next year open to anyone who has passed The Pony Club A Test. There will be a gala dinner at the Best Western Buckingham hotel on the evening of Monday 22nd June 2015, followed by a full day of activities and demonstrations at Addington Manor E.C. on Tuesday 23rd June. Tickets will be available for the Tuesday only, or a package deal for both days. Please help us get the message out there to everyone with their A Test, and ask them to send their contact details to training@pcuk.org.

Test Feedback

Assessment feedback sheets for the AH and B+ Tests are available to download from the website. These are useful for training purposes as well as for understanding the outcome of Assessments. These forms will be available for B Test next year, along with the updated syllabus for the Test. www.pcuk.org/dcs_information/dc_guides_handbooks/dcs_training

NEW! Assessor Training Workshops

The Training and Centre Membership Committees have identified the need for some assessor training workshops, to help those interested in beginning to assess and as a refresher for those who are already actively assessing. A workshop focusing on the assessment of the D and D+ Tests has been formulated, and a C Test workshop will be added in 2016. The workshops last three hours, and include the following topics:

- The Pony Club Test Structure
- Discussion on and demonstration of the D and D+ standards
- Questioning technique
- Practical observation and questioning
- Giving appropriate feedback

Attendees will receive a written feedback to take from the workshop, with clear guidance on how to progress, which they can share with their Branch/Centre. Attendees will then be encouraged to shadow more experienced assessors at D and D+ Tests before assessing independently.

These workshops cost £20 per person to attend, and are limited to twelve attendees so that everyone is able to participate. The workshops will count as a CPD refresher for those who also coach/instruct for The Pony Club. Full details, including dates are on the website: www.pcuk.org/training/training_standardised_training_courses/assessor_training

A point to note - In order to keep in line with other equestrian organisations, examiners will now be referred to as 'assessors' from now on within The Pony Club.

Rider Development Pathway

www.pcuk.org/training/riderdevelopmentpathway

The application criteria for the 2015 RDP were released last month and are available on the website so that Members can get a head start and ensure that they have achieved the minimum application criteria in plenty of time. The application criteria have been slightly amended for 2015 based on feedback from this year to include tests results from unaffiliated Dressage competitions with listed BD judges, Pony Club Test achievements, and taking an average of dressage and show jumping penalties from Eventers' results. Read the full criteria online: www.pcuk.org/uploads/training/Rider_Development_Pathway_Application_Criteria_2015.pdf

For Members interested in applying for the RDP in 2015, there will be some non-compulsory winter training in flat work and/or jumping running over the winter. Full details will be available on the website in the coming few weeks.

Visiting Coaches

Don't forget our Visiting Coaches are here to be used! The Pony Club office will pay the travel expenses of these coaches to travel to any Branch or Centre in the country (VCs on the Recommended Area list can claim up to £50 per visit for short visits or their full travel costs for summer camps). You can use as many VCs as you like, although you can only use the same person once every holiday period.

Benefits of using Visiting Coaches

- They are recommended by the Training Committee so are all excellent coaches, whose references have been checked.
- They can bring in new and fresh ideas – great for camps and Members enjoy having a variety of coaches
- Using people from different areas helps to keep the Test and coaching standards the same throughout the whole country

- Pony Club Specialist VCs can help with your coach development if required – they can spend a day working with and mentoring your instructors, which will count as a CPD refresher.
- They are recommended at any level so will take the lead rein up to B+/A Test groups.

For more information on Visiting Coaches and to view the lists, visit the website: www.pcuk.org/training/training_visiting_coaches or for information on how to become a Visiting Coach, email training@pcuk.org.

There are several new Visiting Coaches who have recently joined the panel:

Carol Hill BHSII – Pony Club Specialist

Cara Haywood UKCC Level 3 – **Discipline Specific (Dressage)**

Sally Thurloway UKCC Level 3 - **Discipline Specific (Show Jumping)**

Jonathan Rogers UKCC Level 3 – **Recommended Area (12)**

Katie Williams UKCC Level 3 – **Recommended Area (10)**

Posy Knapp UKCC Level 3, BHSII SM - **Recommended Area (12)**

Jennifer Burnett BHSII – **Recommended Area (1)**

Contact details for all Visiting Coaches are on the website – follow the link above.

UKCC

www.pcuk.org/training/training_ukcc

The first Pony Club UKCC Level 3 coaches are now out and about, coaching throughout the UK, having been successfully assessed in June – congratulations to Jonathan Rogers, Amelia Payne, Kirsty Hardstaff and Katie Williams! Some of you may have met them whilst they were part of the Mentoring Team at The Pony Club Championships, and they are now on the Visiting Coaches list.

This year's Level 3 course started on 6th October 2014. Training runs over eight days from early October to March, with assessments taking place in June. This is a fantastic chance to progress coaching practice, in all three disciplines. Training on Days 3 – 8 is done alongside the British Showjumping UKCC Level 3 course. Amalgamation of the courses worked really well last year and all the coaches found the cross discipline discussions invaluable.

Would you like to be a demo rider for the UKCC Level 3 training days? Apart from receiving good training, these days are invaluable for coaches who are keen to work up the Coaching ladder, particularly from Level 2 to Level 3. Riders should preferably be riding at Pony Club Open level or the equivalent, if you are no longer a Member. There are opportunities for Dressage, Show Jumping and Cross Country sessions, dates and venues are listed below. Please contact Jenny Cowen to register your interest and receive an application form.

- 1st & 2nd December – Solihull Riding Club, West Midlands
- 19th & 20th January – Addington Manor EC – Buckinghamshire
- 25th & 26th March – Aston le Walls, Northamptonshire

Please look on the website or contact Jenny Cowen (training@pcuk.org) or Pat Crann (pat.crann@hotmail.com) for further information, dates, application forms and information about the screening process for UKCC Level 3 or for information about being a demo rider.

The link above will take you to the information about UKCC Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 courses that continue to run regularly throughout the country. If there are no courses running in your Area, please send the UKCC registration form to Jenny to register your interest and you will be informed of the next available course near you.

The Pony Club Coaching Certificate

This is a great Test for the older Members to work towards. The first step is to attend the Introduction to Pony Club Coaching course. To take the Coaching Certificate, Members need to be 18 years or over, hold the B Test, a First Aid certificate and have attended a Safeguarding and Protecting Children course. Successful Members who have achieved this test are listed on the website, along with more information:

www.pcuk.org/tests_and_achievements/efficiency_tests/coaching_certificate

Funding for Coaching Courses

There are a number of funding opportunities available for candidates completing coaching courses, through a variety of local organisations, such as County Sports Partnerships. These are detailed on the Sports Coach UK website (www.sportscoachuk.org/resource/funding-coaching-guide), so please do have a look or pass this information on to anyone interested in completing a coaching course.

For those in Scotland, there is also funding information on the Sport Scotland website (www.sportscotland.org.uk/funding)

Coaching Experience Log Books

The Pony Club Coaching Experience Log Books are hardwearing loose leaf A5 ring binders containing sheets for Pony Club Coaches to record their coaching practice and development. Continuous development, in between the required instructor CPD courses, is essential for maintaining and improving the standard of coaching in The Pony Club, and completing a Coaching Experience Log Book is encouraged after Introduction to Coaching Courses, and is a requirement for The Pony Club Coaching Certificate. Each folder contains a front page to record the coach's details and further pages to record coaching session evaluations, feedback and mentor advice. The Log Books can be purchased online via [The Pony Club online shop](#) at £3.50 each. Further coaching session pages can be printed from The Pony Club website [Coaching Resources](#) page, or ordered from the Training department free of charge.

Instructors Database

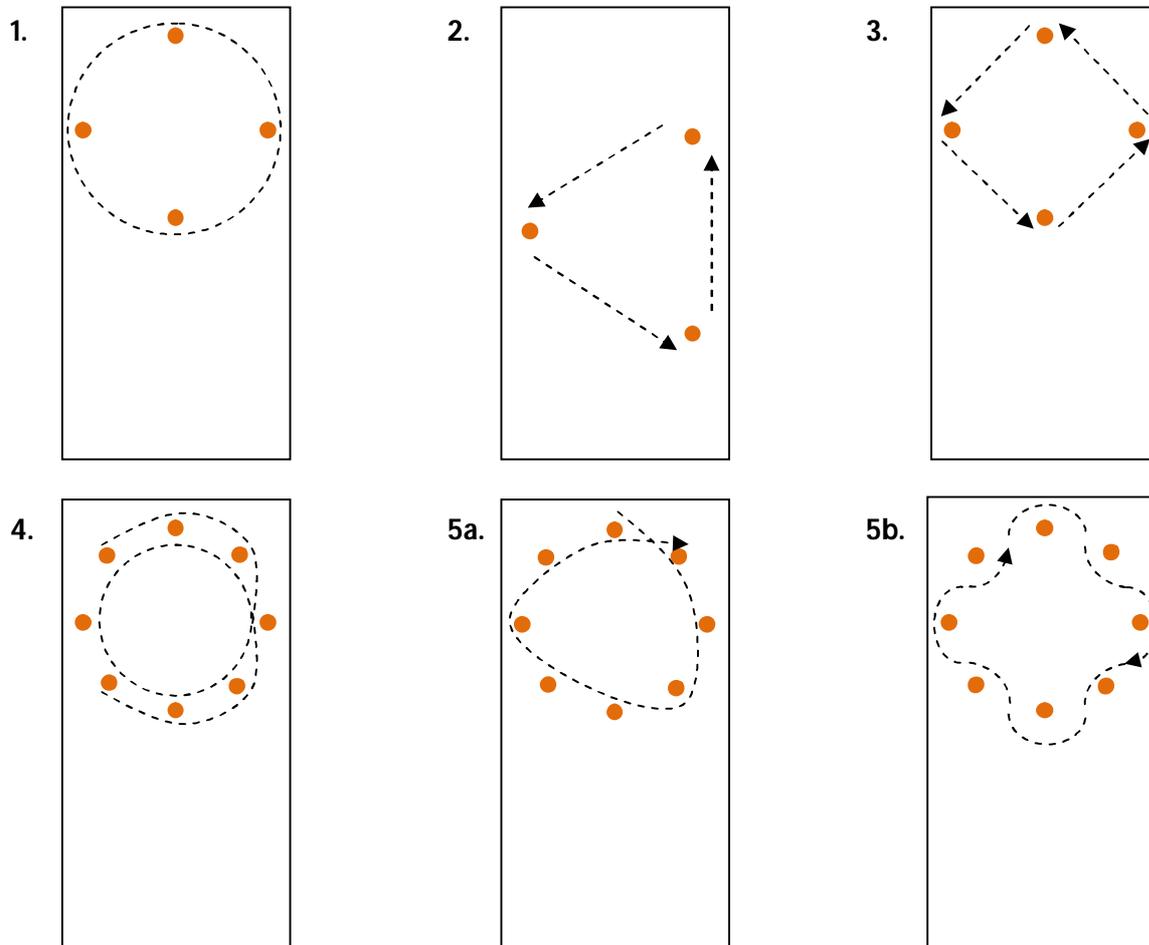
All Branches will shortly be receiving an email regarding the Instructors Database and a change in the process for uploading Instructor information onto the database. In order to reduce the admin demands for Branches, it has been agreed that The Pony Club Office will upload the data for all instructors/coaches if it is received by Friday 27th February 2015 onto the Instructors Database, in order to achieve a complete list of Instructors used by The Pony Club. This inputting of data will be done free of charge but if information is received regarding existing instructors after 27th February The Pony Club may charge to input this data. Once all of the data supplied has been added to the Instructors Database, only those people listed, and who fulfil the necessary requirements, will be deemed competent instructors and so permitted to coach or instruct at Pony Club activities.

Please look out for the email from your Branch, which will follow soon with full details of the process and forms for you to supply your details with. There will be a variety of ways for the data to be submitted, to cater for all coaches, but everyone will be required to supply an email address in order to be listed. Thank you in advance for your assistance with this.

Some new exercise ideas

We are continuing to share exercises through this Bulletin, as new ideas or reminders of exercises we have forgotten are always welcome! If you have a favourite exercise, or one that is invaluable, please share it! Email your exercises to training@pcuk.org for inclusion in future Bulletins.

Here is a set of exercises sent in by one of Pony Club Specialist Visiting Coaches. These exercises will help riders improve the suppleness of their horse or pony:



Following on from the exercise in the last Training Bulletin that worked on maintaining rhythm and balance on well shaped circles, the following progressive exercises work on improving suppleness, the next step in the Scale of Training.

When the horse is supple, he will find his work easier as his muscles will be well toned and his joints mobile. He needs to be supple over the 'top line' from the hind legs over his hind quarters all the way along his back to the withers and up to the poll. As he progresses through the exercises, he should not tense or tighten, or resist the rider.

With all the exercises, ensure you work on maintaining the rhythm, counting it out if it helps, or saying "Remember the rhythm, remember the rhythm, remember the rhythm...." in time with a tempo that suits the pony.

Ask:

- "What feels good?" Or more specifically 'What feels good about the rhythm/shape of the circle' etc?
- What do you notice about your riding / left hand / your pony's ears that stays the same / changes when you change the rein?

- Is it easier or harder to maintain the rhythm on one rein or the other or the same on both reins?
- Why do you think the rhythm / suppleness / length of step / balance / tempo / outline / contact changes?

1. Circle

- Ensure the rider is clear on the aids for riding a turn /circle and knows that the pony should follow the line of the circle. The Pony – his body should bend uniformly from poll to tail along the line of the circle, so on a 10 metre circle he will bend more than on a 20 metre circle. His hind feet should be placed where his front foot have been. The Aids – the inside hand indicates direction, the outside hand controls the pace and although allowing the pony's head and neck to follow the line of the circle, ensures that it does not bend too much and helps to control the outside shoulder so it does not 'fall out', and go outside the line of the circle. The inside leg remains in its usual position on the girth and continues to maintain energy and the outside leg remains in its usual position behind the girth to help with its normal job of guiding the hind quarters.
- Remember the rider's hips follow the pony's hips and his shoulders the pony's shoulders.
- Remember the rhythm and tempo.
- Remember to watch the rider from the inside, outside, front and back, on both reins.
- Work in walk, trot and canter and ask the rider the questions above, then work on what you observe and the rider feels.

2. Triangle

- Ensure the riders are clear about riding a turn followed by a straight line. They will need to plan ahead much more with this exercise than the first.
- Start off in walk, and gauge how easy/difficult the pony and rider find the exercise on each rein before progressing.
- Remember the rhythm and tempo – if the turns are too sharp, the pony may lose balance and will then lose the rhythm and become tense so the exercise will not work as the tension will cause resistance, and if he is resistant he will not be able to be supple.

3. Diamond

- Again this is turns and straight lines, but four instead of three, so follow the advice above and ensure the rider is focussed and planning ahead.

4. Large and small circles

- With this exercise, the extra cones give direction when riding inside them on a smaller circle, but be sure not to allow the rider and pony to use them for support. The rider should use their outside aids to stop the pony falling out towards the cones.
- Changing the size of circle will show the rider is aware of the amount of bend necessary for each size.
- Observe from the inside, outside, front and back so you are aware of the rider slipping to the inside or outside, particularly on the smaller circle. Remind the rider to keep looking round the circle, and that as the pony has more bend in his body the rider's shoulders and hips should turn more to stay in line with the pony's shoulders and hips and back again on the larger circle
- Some riders may find it easier to have a cone in the middle of the circle too, to help stop them relying on the cones supporting them when they are on the small circle

5. Weaving

5a - Initially, go outside the first cone and inside the next two and so on.

- Remind the rider to keep looking ahead to where they are going to ride rather than down and to the inside
- Both ponies and riders may be confused by this exercise when it is explained, so this is a perfect time for a demonstration, so put on your trotting shoes, and show them exactly where to go, running through the aids they will be using and the main thing they need to be focussing on – this may be the rhythm, their outside leg remaining behind the girth, their contact remaining consistent and elastic etc
- At first both pony and rider may become tense when riding this exercise as it is quite difficult, so remember if they do, stop the exercise, repair the walk/trot/canter, ride another exercise well and return to the more difficult exercise with confidence.

5b – Weaving in and out of all the markers

- Initially, ensure this exercise is ridden really well in walk. Once established, introduce trot.

With all of these exercises remember:

- It is a good idea, if possible, to have ridden the exercises yourself before coaching them so you appreciate how difficult they are to execute well. Do this as part of your preparation before the sessions in which you plan to use them.
- If the pony loses rhythm/balance, repair the walk/trot/canter and start again.
- It is better to do a simple exercise well than a difficult one badly.
- Above all, read the Manual and have fun!