

# **Atherstone Hunt Branch of the Pony Club**



## **ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO MOUNTED GAMES FOR MEMBERS AND PARENTS**

# **2015**

PLEASE READ THIS DOCUMENT FULLY even if you have been doing Mounted Games for sometime. The Guide is updated & amended every year.

Dedicated Website for information on mounted games  
with the Atherstone Prince Philip Cup Team:  
[www.ahppc.co.uk](http://www.ahppc.co.uk)

## **Introduction**

This guide sets out the basics you will need to know if you are interested in taking part in Mounted Games.

Full details can be found in the Mounted Games Rule Book priced at £3 and available in January from the mounted games secretary and you will need a copy if your child wants to try for the teams.

## **Competition & Pony Club Rally Rider Turnout**

A competitor must wear:

- cream/beige jodhpurs,
- White long sleeve shirt – sleeves not rolled up
- PC tie,
- Girls must wear a hairnet.
- Standard Jodhpur boots with a SMOOTH, fairly thin sole and well-defined square cut heel.
- Plain half chaps are allowed in black or brown
- A Pony Club 'tagged' riding hat
- White V neck sweatshirt

Not allowed:

- Jewellery and watches, earrings of any kind
- Whips & spurs
- Mobile phones or other electrical equipment
- Hoodies

## **Team Practice Turnout**

At practice Navy/Black jodhpurs are acceptable together with a branch sweatshirt or a long sleeved navy polo shirt which are available from the Branch. Please maintain the standard required for smart turnout at practices. The dark tops and saddle cloths area allowed for practicality but should not mean a drop in standard. We expect to see well fitted and clean tack at all times.

Please do not come to practices in any other colours or short sleeved tops.

Ponies

- Only these bits are allowed; Egg-butt snaffle, unjointed snaffle, rubber, plain or plastic snaffle, D ring snaffle, unjointed Wavy plastic or rubber snaffle, Snaffle with jointed mouthpiece, hanging cheek snaffle. They must not be too thin.
- Correctly fitting saddle with adequate clearance over the withers (otherwise you risk disqualification)
- Your pony should be sound and have feet that are well shod or trimmed
- Martingales allowed; Irish, Standing, Bib or Running
- Nosebands allowed; only one noseband is allowed. Cavesson, Drop, Grackle or Flash.
- Standing martingale may only be attached to the Cavesson portion of a 'flash' noseband and must be correctly fitted.

- Coloured boots are not allowed
- For competitions you must ride with a White Saddle cloth with an Atherstone A on each side.
- For practices you can wear plain Navy, Brown or Black saddle cloths with no embroidery

If you are unsure about any of the above, we are here to help you so please do ask.

Regular Tack checks and rider checks will be made at training and turnout rules will be enforced.

## **Measurements Rules**

Please note that there are rules in place for the welfare of the pony which are designed to ensure that ponies are not required to carry excessive weight. It means that riders should ride an appropriately sized pony. The rule book is a bit complicated so here is an explanation.

Firstly, ponies must be aged 4 and over and must not exceed 148cm/14.2hh

### **Rider weight**

Up to 54kg (8st 7lb)

54.1 kg to 60 kg (8st 8lb to 9st 4lb)

60.1 kg to 66 kg (9st 5lb to 10st 5lb)

66.1 kg and above

### **Pony Height**

no limit

129 cm or more (12.3 hh or more)

134 cm or more (13.1 hh or more)

139 cm or more (13.3 hh or more)

Parents and Riders are responsible for the height and weight rule being adhered to. Checks will be made of height and weights randomly if seen to be necessary and withdrawal from the team would be necessary of this rider /pony combination.

## **Practices**

Once we get started, practices are usually once a week. We will ride indoors until the ground is suitable or the clocks go forward whichever is later.

As you can imagine, training takes a lot of organisation. It is therefore really important that you arrive at least 15 minutes early and make sure you and your pony are warmed up and ready to start on time. This can sometimes be difficult for the Seniors - especially in the indoor sessions as they often follow the Juniors. It is our intention to start each practice with a flatwork session which all riders will be expected to take part in.

It is really important that parents contribute towards practices in a constructive way . One way in which they can do this is to help with equipment if requested at practices to ensure the smooth running of the session. It also teaches you how each race works and the rules involved. In the interest of Health & Safety we cannot allow all parents

into the field of play. Please do not enter the arena unless asked to help. Trainers will request help from parents if needed via the Games Manager.

There is a min charge of £5.00 per hour for indoor practices or where we need to hire a venue.

Once Team practices begin outside the charge will be £5 per rider.

Please be aware that when your child is not riding they are under your parental supervision at training and competitions for Health and Safety reasons as there are moving vehicles and ponies around most times of the day.

### **What happens next?**

Where the practices/rallies are indoors or in an arena, you need to make sure you 'book in' for the next session, so that we know how many of you are coming. In the interest of safety we may have to restrict numbers or decide if we need to run more than one session.

At first practices may seem a bit hectic because there is usually a lot of interest and we have to get children and ponies sorted into teams.

As we may not know every child beforehand it will be difficult to know which group to put you in. Please bear with us during the early weeks.

### **REMEMBER**

- Practise regularly
- Book in for next session
- Keep coming if you're keen, competition is stiff but keep at it – don't be put off if you don't get into the A or B Team straight away

### **Team Selection**

After a few weeks you may get shuffled around. Don't expect to get in to the A team straight away. It is much better to learn in a D C or B team without the pressure and 'get it right' and of course have fun!

Most riders will start in one of the lower teams and all of the riders in our teams at HOYS in recent years came through the teams. Some just may get there quicker than others.

In picking teams, trainers will be looking for

- Athletic/competitive riders
- Athletic/controllable ponies
- Ponies which are good with handovers and run straight
- How riders/ponies fit into the team

- Riders who can work within a team
- Riders who are available for the important competitions & qualifiers.

## **Trainers' Expectations**

Anyone can come to practices, but if you are **not** looking to compete you need to let the trainer know before the end of February.

## **Competitions**

Unfortunately, there are usually more riders available than spaces for competitions. The A & B teams will get priority for certain competitions and likewise we will try to enter more Novice type competitions for those gaining experience. Our weekend friendly and OBH are good competitions for new and novice riders. For those who miss out on the A or B teams please do go to local shows such as Ansty & Shilton & Atherstone Riding Club and compete as individuals and pairs in their Mounted Games competitions. These shows will really bring you on without the pressures of being in a team and will also give you invaluable ring experience

Riders putting themselves forward for selection should attend practices; listen to what is said to them by their trainer and be prepared to take training seriously – that doesn't mean it can't also be fun. They should then go home and practise particular skills so as to improve their performance.

**Riders seeking to be part of the A or B team will be expected to give PRIORITY to Pony Club competitions over other events. We will make allowances for unavoidable family commitments and unforeseen events e.g. pony lameness; however Senior A & B Teams & Junior A Teams riders are expected to be available for the Area, Zone, Pony Club Championships and the major friendlies, both day competitions and weekenders or indeed any other competitions considered necessary by the Trainer and Committee.**

**If it's your ambition to ride in the A Team, then the importance of attending all competitions cannot be stressed enough. Once you have committed to being available for all required competitions; if there is any reason why you cannot fulfil your commitment for being considered you are requested to inform the D.C, trainer or team manager before 31<sup>st</sup> March.**

## **Paperwork**

We will ask you to complete an availability sheet for forthcoming competitions. Senior A and Junior A teams are expected to attend competitions they are asked to by their trainers, the other teams we do not expect you to attend all competitions, but usually those who are really keen , do!

The Competition availability sheet needs to be updated **by 28<sup>th</sup> February** and returned to the Secretary. Any amendments / alterations to the availability will be dealt with as above, under 'Trainers expectations' section.

Once again we expect the A team Senior and Junior riders to prioritise Prince Phillip over and above any other riding discipline.

Please note that the availability sheets are just a tool for the trainers to know which competitions people would like to attend. It does not mean you will definitely be selected. Some branches will only allow us to enter one or two teams at their friendlies and A & B Teams will generally attend most competitions.

### **So you're in a Team!**

Well done! You are going to your first competition and it's really exciting but what's going to happen when you get there?

By now, we will have entered teams for several competitions and these will be listed on the availability sheet.

- You will be told the venue and how to get there at the practice before the competition.
- You will be asked at practice to pay your subs for the competition which is around £15 per rider for a day competition and £25 per rider for a weekend competition approx.
- You will be told when you need to arrive
- Upon arrival, look for a familiar lorry. Seniors are usually on first so there will nearly always be someone there when you get there.
- Make sure your pony is comfortable with a hay net, some water and someone to keep an eye on him
- Find your Team Trainer so that you know when and where you need to be for a run through session.
- Make sure you get given a bib (and that you return it afterwards!)
- Tack up and be ready to ride at the time the Team trainer has stated - you will go to a tack check and then have a quick practice
- Into the arena for the competition
- Afterwards your Team Trainer may have a de brief with you and then off you go home.

### ***So that's the kids but what about the parents?***

The majority of competitions rely on parental assistance. Without parents' help they wouldn't work. It is likely you will be asked to act as a 'Line Steward' at competitions, we all had to start somewhere so we will help you as much as we can. Being a Line Steward is not a judgemental position. It simply makes the job of the Official Steward easier as they cannot see all 35 riders and ponies at the same time.

**Please read your Rule Book carefully so that you understand the games that your child's team are doing. Keep it in your pocket so that you can refer to it.**

We tend to Line Steward on a rota system as we normally have to provide two from each team. Please check wipe boards at competitions for the rota !

Some basic Rules on Line Stewarding (but you must read your Rule Book!)

- The general rule is that you do not put your board up if you are not sure.
- Keep an eye on your corresponding line steward (there is one at each end of each lane).
- You are not responsible at all for the starting of the races
- You may be able to assist a Junior in some way but not a Senior. This will be made clear at the Briefing beforehand.
- If a child falls off in the ring, you are not allowed to go to them unless the Official allows it otherwise the Team will be eliminated.

## **Scoring**

If being a Line Steward really isn't your thing, there's also scoring to do. Marcus Palmer and Andrew James are good at it and I'm sure they would be willing to show you what to do.

## **Equipment**

Helping to set out equipment for the team and their trainer is vital at weekly practices. Please help as much as you can so that training runs smoothly and quickly. The Rule Book tells you everything you need to know but there are plenty of parents around who have gained experience and will be happy to pass it on to you. It's easier to learn now with experienced parents by your side.

We do also have to help with equipment at some friendly competitions, so again if line stewarding is not your thing maybe helping with equipment is?

**NB please confirm on the registration from you will fill in at first practise if you have not done any Line Stewarding or Equipment before so we can ensure that at the first couple of competitions you are given a mentor by an experienced steward.**

## **Team work**

We all work and play hard, so we normally have BBQ's and a chill out at some point! At weekend competitions we have a lot more free time and it is very sociable with games of rounders and the occasional attempt at the Mums doing Big Sack!

## Parents Guidelines

It's not only the riders who need to know what they may and may NOT do. Parents can also cause the team a problem. Firstly, if you are not actively assisting at practice or a competition we would remind you that you are not allowed into the arena or collecting ring unless requested to do so by the Team Manager. If you have any problems, please approach Janey, Matt or the relevant Team Trainer before or after the training/competition has started/ended.

Please do cheer the 'Atherstone' but DON'T shout out individual names as it can be very distracting for the rider. Vocal encouragement is fine but in moderation. Remember that comments made to riders while in the ring can be taken as outside assistance which can result in elimination. Bad language is definitely not acceptable. It will not be tolerated and can result in the elimination of a team. This applies to both the child or parent!

When you go to competitions particularly ones where you stay overnight - remember that you are (and are seen as) representing the Atherstone Branch and behave accordingly. Riders running around at night to the extent of damaging property or parents being rowdy only gives the Branch a bad name. Equally leave the site tidy. Do not skip your lorry/trailer out when you leave and don't leave mess behind!

Please remember that you ARE NOT ALLOWED into the Collecting Ring. You must also not go into the arena to catch a loose pony or assist a child unless the Chief Steward stops the proceedings by blowing his whistle.

Entering the ring will potentially result in the elimination of the team for that race.

Children are the responsibility of the trainers once they have begun warm up for training and/or competitions. Once they have left the collecting ring after the competition or training they are parents' responsibility. They should walk their ponies back to the trailers/boxes in a sensible manner.

We do expect children to help tack up their ponies for the training and competitions and expect to see them cool their ponies off, untack, turnout and rug /feed their ponies between heats and over the weekends before they release their energies playing/chilling/eating etc etc. with each other . Pony Club is all about having fun but looking after and caring for your ponies is a priority at all times and children should be helped by parents to do this!

Please remember that good behavior is expected at all times whilst representing the Pony Club & AHBPC.

## **Types of competitions**

### **Friendlies**

These are like warm up competitions to prepare us for the qualifiers. They are very useful because we get to meet and compete against some of the teams that we are likely to meet at the qualifiers. You need to compete in friendly competitions if you want to be in the teams at the AREA so that your trainer can monitor your progress and put you into the most suitable team for you and your pony.

We do go to some weekend friendlies which are generally very sociable for all the family. We also host two major friendly competitions, one indoor 11th March at Solihull and one outdoor at Ashby Magna, near Lutterworth. These events take a significant amount of organisation and it's essential that all parents involved assist directly with the set up, running and dismantling at both events. There are a variety of roles which require your involvement so please make yourself available and volunteer through the secretary. These competitions are vital fund raisers for the Pony Club and an eventual attendance at HOYS.

### **AREA**

Our branch, the Atherstone Hunt, is part of AREA 7 of The Pony Club. Below are the other branches in our AREA and these are the teams that we will meet at the Area 7 Mounted Games qualifier. This year the United Pack will be hosting and organising the Area competition. The first 3 or 4 ( depending on the number of teams entered) will qualify for the next qualifier called the ZONE.

### **Branches in Area 7**

Albrighton Hunt, Albrighton Woodland Hunt, Atherstone Hunt, Coventry & District, Heart of England, Ludlow Hunt, North Shropshire Hunt, North Staffordshire Hunt, North Warwickshire, Pytchley Hunt, South Shropshire Hunt, South Staffordshire Hunt, United Pack, Warwickshire Hunt, West Midlands, West Warwickshire and Wheatland Hunt.

### **ZONE**

The Zone Final is a qualifier for The Horse of The Year Show (HOYS) and The Pony Club Championships. This is where if we get through the Area you will meet and compete against teams that have qualified from other Area competitions. This means it is a much harder competition to win as you start to see the very best teams battling it out. There will usually be 18 teams competing at the Zone and only one of these qualifies for the Horse of the Year Show – although others go forward to the Pony Club Championships where they have a further chance to qualify. Our Zone this year is at Onley.

## **THE PONY CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS**

For Juniors this is the ultimate competition as the team who wins here are the Pony Club Junior Mounted Games Champions. The teams which finish in 1st, 2nd or 3rd places will stand on the podium to receive your rosettes. It's a fantastic competition for the juniors as this is where you will meet the best teams from England, Scotland, Wales & Northern Ireland.

In Seniors this is also very important as it gives the teams which finished 2nd to 7th at the Zone Final, one last chance to win one of the coveted places at the HOYS.

### **HOYS (PRINCE PHILIP CUP)**

Each year over 300 teams start the season trying to win one of just 6 places at HOYS to compete for the Prince Philip Cup. This is a massively prestigious competition which is televised live with the Final on Sunday night receiving star billing on SKY SPORTS. Atherstone has a terrific record in this competition - having qualified many times in the competition's 53 year history and winning the Cup five times (1970,1971,1984,1985 and 2007). Our recent record has been second to none with the team qualifying in 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2009.

The week that the team spends at HOYS is the most fantastic experience and something we are sure that many of you dream of achieving. It does not however come easily and to get there you will need to be 100% committed to your team and training. A bit of luck will help but dedication and commitment is how these teams earn their places.

The Team that is selected at each stage of qualifying will be chosen for their ability but also as Ambassadors for the Pony Club & of the Branch. Good Manners, politeness & respect for the Pony Club, Team Trainer, team mates & ponies are all essential qualities. If it is felt necessary, a team member may be substituted for a more suitable member after qualifying at the Area, Zone or Pony Club Championships. HOYS is an extremely Public competition and members are expected to behave impeccably. The 6th Man will be chosen to meet the above criteria and also someone who can substitute a member who does not adhere to good behavior.

### **ROYAL WINDSOR HORSE SHOW**

Each year teams from England, Eire, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales take part in a week long competition in front of HM The Queen at the Royal Windsor Horse Show. In the case of the England Team riders are chosen from a selection Trial held at Weston Lawns this year in early March. The DC of each Branch which qualified for the Zone Final the previous year is asked to nominate just ONE Member to take part in the trial.

The standard of riding at this trial is exceedingly high and current policy is to nominate

someone in their final year of Pony Club Mounted Games and only to nominate someone if it is felt that he or she will have a reasonable prospect of acquitting themselves well. It is often the case that more than one member will fall into this category. The choice then becomes very difficult but Andrew has made it known that in those circumstances in deciding between members he will be looking for a Member who is an all round Pony Club Member and at what the member has done in the Branch outside Mounted Games e.g. Tests taken , Camps attended, participation in other disciplines etc.

The Member chosen for the England Trial will be chosen for their ability but also as an ambassador for the Pony Club & the Branch. Good Manners, politeness & respect for the Pony Club, Team Trainer, Team mates & ponies are essential requirements. This applies to any parent who may accompanying a rider as much as it does to the child in question.

### **AHBPC ETHOS**

The Branch will continue to support all Branch members regardless of colour, race, creed, ethnic origin, disability, learning/behavioural difficulties or riding ability, so that they can participate in and enjoy Mounted Games as fully as possible. However we have to recognize that the Pony Club expects very high standards of behaviour especially at high profile , public events and whilst we will do whatever we can to support members with behavioural problems, it has to be appreciated that this will have to be taken into account when selecting people to ride in Branch teams and when nominating riders for England or Great Britain Teams.

### **Social Network Policy - FACEBOOK**

We do not wish for any negative comments, general information or discussion to take place about the AHBPC PPC teams or individuals on any social network site, for example FACEBOOK. Failure of members or parents to adhere to this will face disciplinary action which may include exclusion from teams at competitions. Disciplinary action will be at the discretion of the DC. Please make sure all members are aware of this policy and that they refrain from posting negative, derogative or inflammatory statements.

Keeping you informed.

Website - All information relating to training, teams, competitions and more will be posted to the Prince Philip Cup website. [www.ahppc.co.uk](http://www.ahppc.co.uk). For all competitions you will find detailed information about the venue, how to get there and times.

Please visit regularly for updates. Before each competition the information found on the website will be distributed at training.

Texts will only be sent for emergencies, last minute cancellations or for short notice changes in arrangements. Please ensure that your mobile number is registered with

the Mounted Games Secretary at the beginning of the season.

Email may be used as an alternative method of communicating information in regards to competitions, training and any other. Please ensure your email address is up to date with the Mounted games secretary at the beginning of the season.

## **REPRESENTATIVE HONOURS (LAST TEN YEARS )**

### **ENGLAND TEAM**

Sophie Golding (2000), Jean Smith (2002), Janey Surman (2004), Chloe Golding (2005), Jess Leeson (2006), Katie King (2007), Emma Weir (2009), Beth Palmer (2010) and Will Crawley (2011) Anna Meadows (2012) Harriet Watson (2013)

Lottie Watson (2014)

Jane Smith England Team Trainer 2007 - 2008

### **GREAT BRITAIN TEAM**

Jean Smith (2003), Chloe Golding (2006) and Florence Woodward (2009)

#### **Team Selection**

Senior A Team Trainer	Janey Surman	07791 167 656
DC	Andrew James	07737 877 697

#### **Mounted Games Committee**

Mounted Games Secretary	Stephanie Palmer	01455 828 543
Competition Entry & Organiser	<a href="mailto:Stephanie@palmerhouse.co.uk">Stephanie@palmerhouse.co.uk</a>	07872 824 200

Junior Novice Manager	Sue James	07791 736 828
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#### **Team Trainers**

Senior A Team	Janey Surman	07791 167 656
Senior B Team	Lucinda Weir	07813 018 394
Senior C Team		
Junior A Team	Matt Clingo	07979 687 851
Junior B Team	Andy Wass	07985 740 765
Assistant Trainers	Sheila Clingo	07876 144 985

Senior Games Team Manager	Marcus Palmer	01455 828 543
<a href="mailto:marcus@palmerhouse.co.uk">marcus@palmerhouse.co.uk</a>		

Junior Games Team Manager	Sheila Clingo	07876 114 985
<a href="mailto:mitaxis@btconnect.com">mitaxis@btconnect.com</a>		

Other Mounted Games Committee Members:

Alan Surman, Anne Goddard

Please contact any of the Team Trainers or Committee Member if there is anything you are not sure about.