



INTRODUCTION TO PONY CLUB EVENTING

What is Eventing?

Horse Trials, One Day Events and Eventing are all different names for the same type of competition. There are three disciplines within the competition: dressage, show jumping and cross country.

The challenge and fun of eventing is having a pony/ horse that is obedient, calm and balanced enough to do a good dressage test, steady and careful in the show jumping and bold and fast cross country all on the same day!

Most of the information below will be appropriate to all Horse Trials, BE and unaffiliated, but some of the rules will be different.

It is strongly recommended you buy a PC Eventing Rule book or download the rules from PC website

Selecting and entering a competition

Select your competition. Nearly all our local competitions are available on <https://www.horse-events.co.uk>, some on <https://www.ridingdiary.co.uk> and do look on the PC Area 9 website calendar - <https://branches.pcuk.org/area9/disciplines-and-dates/>

Start off with a competition with lower jumping heights than you would normally do, it's always better to do well and work upwards than start too big and have a disaster, lose confidence and have to start at the bottom again. It is cheaper to start with Pony Club events, rather than BE, and a better way to learn what to do; you can work up to BE.

Read the schedule very carefully and fill out the Entry Form completely, many require a DC's signature (this is for insurance purposes) so allow time to get this done before sending it in. If there is a Commentator's slip don't forget to complete it legibly as this is a great help for the Cross Country Commentators.

See when the closing date is and get your entry in on time. If you have any special requests such as you need an early time or you are travelling with someone so need to have similar times, put it politely on the entry form. It is much easier for a secretary to comply with requests if she knows about them early enough. Secretaries are hardworking volunteers so always be polite and only ring them within the hours stated on the schedule - many prefer emails nowadays. Check whether you need to supply your own number bib (nearly always now).

You will be given a time for each discipline, remember to look it up and note your number and section. If you are travelling with someone else look up both sets of times and work out your timings accordingly allowing extra time.

Pre competition Preparation and Checks

Before competing ensure your pony has got good shoes (including stud holes if you need them) and is fit enough for a busy day. Learn and practise your dressage test.



If you use studs clean the holes out the night before and put new cotton wool or plugs in the holes; this makes it much quicker at the competition when putting them in. Alternatively use travelling studs.

Riding-In: you may lunge in side reins, but may not ride-in with any other gadgets. Only the named rider may ride the horse/pony, though someone else may lunge it. The venue does not always allow this, so please check.

Tack and Turnout

The pony needs a bath or good rub over. Feathers and under their throats/chins need a good trim, tails need to be cut straight at the bottom and manes need to be plaited; pulled or plaited tails are optional.

Tack must be spotless, correct and in good condition, check stitching on stirrup leathers and for cracks. No 'bling' is allowed! Numnahs should be clean and plain, white squares are best for dressage, and the only writing allowed on any numnah is the name of your pony club. No martingales for dressage so remove the stoppers off the reins for this if possible. Breast plates may be worn if your saddle slips.

Riders must have their hats tagged. Hair must be tied back neatly, with no stray bits round your face. PC badges should be on the left hand jacket collar with your latest test felt under it. A PC stock is the only coloured stock permitted with a blue or black jacket. Stocks should be worn with a stock shirt, must be tied firmly and neatly with a good stock pin and some safety pins to hold the flaps down inside your jacket (pin to be taken out for XC). Number bibs need to fit well, sometimes you need some tape or safety pins for the straps. Gloves must be worn. Chaps have to be the same colour as your boots which must be clean and really shiny (well polished). Take pride in how you look, be immaculate and impress the judge as you come down the centre line!

The day before:

Load up the car/horse box. Double check everything is in, have a check list to help you and just add to it as you find other things you need. See below for ideas:

Work out your timings. Ask yourself...

How long will the journey take? Watch out for low bridges in lorries and it is a real pain having to turn a trailer round in a narrow lane!

How long will it take to walk the courses properly? How long do you need to get your number? (Usually a schedule will say whether there is a start fee and if you have to leave a deposit for the number; take the right money so they can keep it and hand it back to you on its return, many don't do change, ie if you hand in a £20 note they will keep it and return it later!). How long to tack up, do studs, get changed, walk over to dressage arenas, get tack checked and start riding-in?

It is easy to not have enough time, so allow extra, don't be late and ask the dressage steward if you can go later, you have a time so stick to it. Sometimes someone before you has withdrawn and you may be able to go earlier – but it is your choice and you can decide to stick to the time you were given.



Dressage:

You must learn your test as you cannot have it called (unless sometimes in Mini/Junior competitions)

Watch someone else ride it in your arena if you are worried about remembering it.

PC Dressage tests can be printed off the main PC website.

Carrying a whip? Check the rule book as it varies depending on the level

Your pony should be plaited and hooves oiled.

Bits/nosebands - check the Rule Book - most tests are to be ridden in a snaffle bit but a couple of tests may be ridden in any normal riding bit - it is written at the bottom of the test sheet when you learn it.

Make your riding-in count - don't spend it sitting around talking!

If your pony wears boots to ride-in remember to remove them and the tail bandage, before doing your dressage test.

When the dressage steward tells you to go in you should trot round the outside of your arena until the judge beeps.

Enter and leave at A - remember to smile!

Show Jumping:

Try and walk the course. This is not always possible if the competition has started by the time you arrive, so watch other riders carefully to see which lines are best and check the map of the course. Find out if there is a course walk.

Check with the steward if they are running on time.

No schooling whips for jumping - check rule book for length of whip allowed.

Remember to pass left shoulder to left shoulder in the warm-up area and not to gallop around. You will tire your pony out and annoy others in the arena.

Pay attention to those jumping the practice fence. Keep out of their way.

Leave red flag on the right so you jump the fence the correct way.

Never put the practice fence higher than those in the ring.

Don't start before the bell. Make sure you go through the start and the finish.

Thank the collecting ring steward as you go in.

If things don't go alright in the arena, don't take it out on your pony or parent, go back to your trailer and have your cry in private! It happens to everyone.



Cross Country:

Change bits and boots as required.

Put on your cross country colours with long sleeves.

Body protector.

Crash helmet – not fixed peak.

Warm up fences will be in cross country style ie not knock down and must be jumped with the red flag on the right for safety reasons.

Use warm-up area to wake your pony up into cross country speed - safely.

The speed you ride cross country must be correct for you and your pony's fitness and experience, at lower levels there are no time faults for going too slowly so take your time and ride the fences correctly. As you get more experienced you will speed up naturally.

Having a safe clear round is more important to begin with.

Sign in with the steward/tack checker and find out how long you have got.

At the start, find out from the starter how they are starting you, walk around until then.

Ride strongly away from the start many ponies are a little reluctant to go away from their friends and then stop at the first fence... remember to kick hard!

Always be polite and say thank you.

At the finish:

Don't pull up from gallop to halt as you go through the finish, let your pony gradually slow down, he is less likely to damage a tendon that way.

Immediately get off and loosen his girths, undo flash nosebands and then walk him around or back to the trailer while he stops puffing. Check him over for cuts and scrapes.

Back at the trailer take tack and boots off, head collar on, allow him a small drink, but NO grass, and wash off with cold water. When hot in the summer immediately scrape off the first wash, you'll be surprised how hot it is, and re-do, then walk him about for a good 10-20 minutes to allow his breathing to return to normal and to stop sweating. Only then should he be allowed to eat.

What rug you put on depends on the weather.

Remember to remove studs.

Some people use cooling agents like Ice Tight or Cool Gel on the tendons and bandage the horse's legs after a cross country round.



Make sure your horse is comfortable, has enough to drink and eat before you look after yourself.

Ponies are better and safer put back in the trailer to eat a haynet , rather than tied up outside which is dangerous as they can get caught up, damage your trailer and break free.

Before you leave:

Take your number back to the secretary and say a big thank you giving your name and Pony Club.

If you cannot stay until your dressage sheet is released, most secretaries will forward it to you if you give them a £1 to cover postage, or have a stamped addressed envelope with you which you can hand in.

If you win a prize you must make the effort to stay for prize giving, you need to wear proper riding kit including hat and jacket, tie etc. If you really can't stay try and find a friend to collect for you. It's fun to have your success acknowledged with a round of applause! Look cheerful and look at the person presenting prizes in the eye and say thank you!

Due to the cost of postage, rosettes and prizes are very rarely sent on to you.

Always go and say thank you the secretary/ organiser, even if you have had a bad day. They have been there all day, rain, wind, snow etc. and are volunteers.

They do appreciate it.

Tips!

Don't expect to do well every time out.

Learn by looking at other people, good and bad.

Next day, check your pony's legs have no unusual swellings or heat, and trot him out to see if he is sound. Give him the day off, he will appreciate the rest after a busy day.

Now plan your next one!!

Have fun and enjoy yourself!