

Rockwood Harriers Branch of the Pony Club



ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO MOUNTED GAMES FOR MEMBERS AND PARENTS

2025

This guide sets out the basics you will need to know if you are interested in taking part in Mounted Games (MG) with our branch the Rockwood Harriers (RH).

Full details can be found in the Mounted Games Rule Book, available for download from the PC website (www.resources.pcuk.org), or in hard copy to buy. You should have a 2025 copy if your child wants to try for the teams.

*PLEASE READ THIS DOCUMENT FULLY
Even if you have been doing Mounted Games for sometime.*

Rider Turnout

At competitions:

- Cream/beige jodhpurs with jodhpur clips
- White long sleeve shirt – sleeves not rolled up
- PC tie
- Girls must wear a hairnet & hair tied up/plaited
- Blue RH Games hair ribbon (available from Lizz)
- Standard black or brown Jodhpur boots (clean and polished)
- A Pony Club ‘tagged’ riding hat (see Cally or Lizz for hat tagging)
- RH logo hat silk (available from Cally to order)
- White V neck sweatshirt (provided by PC)
- Body protectors are optional, but are rarely worn for MG

Not allowed (for competitions or practices):

- Jewellery and watches, earrings of any kind
- Nail varnish, false or acrylic nails etc
- Whips & spurs
- Hat pompoms (allowed at practices)
- Mobile phones or other electrical equipment
- Hoodies

At Practices:

At practice Navy/Black jodhpurs are acceptable together with a PC poloshirt and sweatshirt (or a long sleeved plain navy/black sweatshirt), and/or PC jacket or MG softshell jacket. Please maintain the standard required for smart turnout at practices. The dark clothes and saddle cloths are allowed for practicality, but should not mean a drop in standard. Hairnets should be worn.

- All RHPC riding wear is available from GG Gear www.gggear.co.uk

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

WE EXPECT TO SEE WELL FITTED AND CLEAN TACK AT ALL TIMES.

Ponies

- Only these bits are allowed; loose ring snaffle, Snaffle with double-jointed mouthpiece (including French link & lozenge), Egg-butt snaffle, Racing snaffle D-ring, Hanging cheek snaffle (standard type only), Straight bar snaffle (Permitted also with Mullen mouth and egg butt rings.), Snaffle with rotating mouthpiece, Snaffle with rotating middle piece, Un-jointed wavy snaffle (plastic or rubber only) . 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
- Nosebands Only one noseband is permitted – Cavesson, Drop, Grackle or Flash unless using a Standing martingale with a drop or grackle noseband in which case the addition of a cavesson is allowed. Nosebands must not incorporate chain or rope. Note: Sheepskin nosebands/blinkers or any attachments to the pony or bridle which may affect the animal's field of vision are NOT permitted.
- Martingales: Irish, Bib, Running, Standing (with or without elastic), only one of which may be worn at any time. Standing Martingales may be attached only to a Cavesson Noseband or the Cavesson portion of a 'Flash' noseband fitted above the bit. Five-point breast plates are allowed. Vaulting, balance, neck straps/collars are NOT permitted.
- Stirrups should be of the correct size for the riders boots, with a 7mm (1/4") clearance on either side of the boot. Stirrups with metal treads/spikes are NOT allowed.
- For competitions you should ride with a RH Saddle cloth provided by the club (see Karrie, Lizz or Cally).
- For practices you can wear plain Navy, Brown or Black saddle cloths. **Please DO NOT wear the competition saddle cloths for practices.**

**** *** SEE THE MG RULE BOOK FOR FULL TACK RULES *******

If you are unsure about anything please 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. Please refer to the Official PC Rule Book for full details.

Parents and Riders are responsible for the height and weight rule being adhered to, however random checks may be made at any time.

Please note ponies must be aged 4 and over and must not exceed 148cm/14.2hh.

Practices

Once we get started, practices are usually once a week on Friday evenings at Woodnook Arena. We will ride indoors until the clocks go forward when the practices will move outside on Thursday evenings.

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 follow the Juniors. 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.

There is a charge of £5.00 per rider for practices, please pay on Horse Events for each week.

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?

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 appropriate groups.

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

REMEMBER:

- Practise regularly
- 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 into the A team straight away. It is much better to learn in a 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 who have made it to HOYS came through the teams. Some just may get there quicker than others.

Be aware that in the past there has been team changes for various reasons, allowing us to enter a stronger A or B team in qualifying competitions.

In picking teams, trainers will be looking for

- Athletic/competitive riders
- Athletic/controllable ponies who listen to their rider
- Ponies which are good with handovers, run straight & have brakes
- How riders/ponies fit into the team
- Riders who can work within a team
- Riders who are available & keen for the majority of competitions, including the all important qualifiers

- Riders who in the previous season have shown commitment, along with the ability to perform well under pressure

Please note: Anyone can come to practices, but if you are NOT wanting to compete you need to let Cally know. MG is great for developing riding skills, you don't have to go to competitions, competing is optional.

Competitions

Unfortunately, there can sometimes be 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 is a good competition for new and novice riders. There are also pairs Mounted Games competitions which 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 and maintain their place in the team.

Please use Spond to accept or decline your interest in competitions and training sessions.

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.

If it is your ambition to ride in the A Team, then the importance of attending practices & 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 Cally ASAP.

We expect the A Team Senior and Junior riders to prioritise Prince Phillip Cup over and above non PC mounted games competitions or any other riding discipline (with the exception of RH Area qualifiers in other disciplines).

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 Spond.

- You will be told the venue and how to get there at the practice before the competition or via WhatsApp/email.
- You will be asked to pay your entry fee for the competition prior to the day/weekend. This is calculated on number of riders in the team.
- You will be told when you need to arrive.
- Upon arrival, look for a familiar lorry.
- Make sure your pony is comfortable with a hay net, some water and someone to keep an eye on them.
- 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.
- Go 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 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. Provisional list of games for the Area and Zone competitions can be found on the Mounted Games page at pcuk.org.

We tend to Line Steward on a rota system as we normally have to provide two from each team. Some basic Rules on Line Stewarding (but you must read your Rule Book!)

- The general rule is '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 for starting 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
- **You MUST watch your lane, NOT your child!**

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 friendly competitions, so if line stewarding is not your thing maybe helping with equipment is?

Team work

We all work and play hard, so we normally have a few drinks and a chill out at some point. At weekend competitions we have a lot more free time and it is very sociable with games, and maybe a silent disco!

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 Trainer. If you have any problems, please approach Eleanor or the relevant Team Trainer before or after the training/competition has started/ended.

Please do cheer for 'Rockwood' 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!

REMEMBER: good behaviour is expected at all times whilst representing the Pony Club & Rockwood Harriers. Please refer to the Pony Club 'Code of Conduct for Parents', available to view or download from the PC Website.

When you go to competitions particularly ones where you stay overnight - remember that you are (and are seen as) representing the Rockwood Harriers Branch so please 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. At weekend competitions you **MUST** clear your ponies pen of all poo and hay, and take your rubbish home with you.

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. 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!

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 major friendly competitions, two indoor pairs in March & November at The Northern Racing College, and one outdoor at Factory Farm, Emley, in June. 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. These competitions are vital fund raisers for RHPC.

AREA (May – Frickley Hall, DN5 7BU)

Our branch, the Rockwood Harriers, is part of Area 3 of The Pony Club. The other branches in Area 3 are who we will compete against at the Mounted Games Area Qualifier. This year the Badsworth will be hosting and organising the Area competition, and the first 3 or 4 (depending on the number of teams entered) will qualify for Zone Final.

ZONE (July)

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 14 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.

THE PONY CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS (8th to 16th Aug – Cholmondely Castle)

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 their 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.

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

HOYS (PRINCE PHILIP CUP) (8th to 12th October – Birmingham NEC)

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 all mounted games teams aspire to. Rockwood has a good record in this competition - having attended several times in the competition's history. 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 Trainers, 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 as someone who can substitute a member who does not adhere to good behaviour.

ROYAL WINDSOR HORSE SHOW *(15th to 18th May – Windsor Castle)*

Each year teams from England, Eire, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales take part in a week long competition in front of HM The King at the Royal Windsor Horse Show. In the case of the England Team riders are chosen from a selection Trial held in early March. The DC of each Branch is asked to nominate just ONE Member to take part in the trial. If in their final year, and riding at the expected standard 2 members may be nominated, however only one may be selected.

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. In those circumstances in deciding between members it has been noted that they 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 (minimum C Test is required), 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 Trainers, Team mates & ponies are essential requirements. (This applies to any parent who may accompany a rider as much as it does to the child).

SHOWS & DEMONSTRATIONS

Occasionally RH are requested to put on a MG demonstration, for example at Emley Show. This is very important to promote The Pony Club, our Branch, and MG generally. Please try and make yourself available for such events if requested.

Other important dates:

28th June Rockwood Games Day – Factory Farm, Emley

2nd November Rockwood Indoor Pairs Comp – NRC, Doncaster

Rockwood 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

We do not wish for any negative comments, general information or discussion to take place about the RHPC teams or individuals on any social network site, for example Facebook, Snapchat or Instagram. Failure of members or parents to adhere to this will result in 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.

Please make sure you have parental permission before posting photos of other peoples children.

Fundraising

Our training costs are considered low compared to many other branches and disciplines. In order to subsidise training, to provide saddle cloths and white sweatshirts, and also to maintain and replace equipment, the mounted games section has to fundraise at various events. PLEASE contribute, help, bake, buy and support these events.

Keeping you informed

WhatsApp and Email will be used as a method of communicating all information in regards to competitions, training and any other business. Please ensure your email address is up to date with Cally at the beginning of the season.

We have a RH MG **WhatsApp** group chat, please ask Cally or Lizz if you wish to be added.

We have a 'Rockwood Harriers Pony Club' **FB page**, and also a 'Rockwood Harriers Pony Club Mounted Games' **FB page**. Please note members must be aged 13 to be added to FB Groups.

Other useful FB pages include: 'Pony Club Mounted Games' and 'Pony Club Mounted Games Competition Updates'.

Texts may be sent for emergencies, last minute cancellations or for short notice changes to arrangements. Please ensure that your mobile number is registered with Cally and Lizz at the beginning of the season.

CONTACTS

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Please contact Cally, or any of the above if there is anything at all you are not sure about.