
Suffolk Pony Club Team Selection Policy 2026

THIS POLICY APPLIES TO THE FOLLOWING COMPETITIONS:

- **All Pony Club Area qualifiers** at all levels (including but not limited to dressage, show jumping, eventing, tetrathlon, mounted games, horse and pony care, quiz and polocrosse)
- **Spring Festival qualifiers** at all levels
- **Inter-Branch team competitions at all levels** (including but not limited to Waveney SJ, Soham SJ, Wilkinson Sword/Gerry Webster Hunter Trial)
- **Other team competitions where entries are by invitation** (including Burghley SJ, Blenheim Eventer Challenge)

*NB In respect of the Blenheim Eventer Challenge, Burghley Pony Club Jumping and any similar event, priority will be given to those who have not competed in these competitions on two previous occasions. These events are **invitational** and, as a Branch, we wish to ensure that as many members as possible get the opportunity to experience them. However, this will also depend on having sufficient members with proven experience at the ability level required.*

SPC is keen to enter teams (and individuals) in as many competitions as we can at every level throughout the year. For all competitions, riders must be active members of the Branch and successfully competing on a regular basis at the height/level for which they wish to be considered.

As a Branch we can enter teams, individuals or a combination of both. Teams consist of three or four members for showjumping, eventing, hunter trials or dressage. This varies for other disciplines and is different for Spring Festival qualifiers. We aim to field our strongest team(s) available for selection, and our preference is teams of four members. Scores for all competitors usually automatically count for any individual competition, irrespective of whether they have been entered as part of a team or as an individual.

AREA ELIGIBILITY/AVAILABILITY FOR CONSIDERATION

- All competitors must be members of the Pony Club both at the closing date for entries and at the date of the relevant competition.
- The DC or Team Lead is required to certify the eligibility of the horse and rider. Any breach may result in disqualification.
- All horses and ponies must have genuinely participated in a minimum of three qualifying rallies or coaching/training sessions at SPC or their previous Branch or centre since 1 July of the previous year. One of these qualifying rallies/sessions must be in the current year (preferably at a training session at the level and discipline at which they are wanting to compete) with the current horse/rider combination.
Camp shall count as one rally or coaching/training session.

Although the requirement for three qualifying rallies or coaching/training sessions has been relaxed by PCHQ, as part of Area 8 it is strongly encouraged and can only be altered at the DC's discretion.

- Full eligibility rules should be referenced in the associated Pony Club Discipline Rule Book. Each Rider/Parent is responsible for ensuring that they understand and comply with the PC Discipline Rule Book and are eligible for selection.

LEVELS

Information is available in the respective discipline rulebooks regarding the different Area heights. These rule books can be accessed on the Pony Club website ([Link to Pony Club Rule Books](#)).

COMPETITION DATES

We expect those applying for consideration to be available for the relevant championship date for their respective discipline (considering possible overnight stays). Priority is given at team selection to those who can be available for both Area and Championship competitions. Wherever possible, if a member is still keen to compete at an Area competition (but is not available for the championships and would otherwise have been selected), we will try to secure an individual place for them.

Dates for Area and National events will be published on the Area 8 website and on the Branch calendar. SPC members applying for consideration for respective competitions and associated championship (should they qualify) should confirm availability.

SELECTORS AND SELECTION CRITERIA

For Area and Regional events, where the team is selected to represent SPC, the selection will be made by at least three people from the list below:

- District Commissioner(s)
- Lead Instructor
- Associated discipline/level Team Lead(s)
- Associated discipline/level Team Trainer where applicable (given team trainers can vary)
- Any other member of the Branch Committee co-opted for the purpose.

If any of the selectors are the parent/legal guardian, a relative or privately train on a regular basis any SPC member being considered for selection, they must not take part in the selection decision involving that individual or the team the individual is putting themselves forward for.

The selectors reserve the right not to send a team or individual to any competition. Should they choose to do this, the reason will be communicated to the member(s) involved.

The following criteria apply to those wishing to compete in a team or as an individual.

- Combinations should be actively, safely and successfully competing within the discipline at the associated level, with visible results.
- Results from the previous September up until the time of selection will be considered.
- Selectors will consider all results submitted to the Team Lead, Team Trainer and DC. Consideration will be given to consistency, soundness, results at or above the level being considered for selection, and engagement with SPC. Selectors have absolute discretion to select combinations they deem best placed to represent SPC.
- Combinations should have attended the required number of rallies or coaching/training sessions, as well as any organised team training sessions. Exceptions are at the discretion of the DC, where attendance may not be possible due to work or school commitments, illness or other reasons.
- Member riders must register their interest in being considered for teams by completing the appropriate steps requested by the Team Leads. Results must be submitted by the date requested or they cannot be taken into consideration.
- It is a condition of selection that members will nominate someone who is prepared to assist at Area competitions or on the competition day at other SPC or Area 8 events during the year on a minimum of two occasions. Assistance will be needed at various events during the current year.
- Competing horses/ponies must comply with the vaccination rules of the competition. It is the member's responsibility to ensure compliance. This includes ensuring that the primary vaccinations are all in place as per the Pony Club Vaccination Rule. The Branch will not subsidise any member found, at competition, to fail to meet these criteria.

RESERVES/REPLACEMENTS

Reserves/replacements for championships will be selected primarily on results from the current year's Area competitions. Where an individual has qualified, the reserve will, in the first instance, be chosen from an alternative SPC team entry to maintain the Individual qualification place. Should we need to consider SPC members who did not compete at Areas, this will be done as a last resort and only if the discipline rules permit, and the original selection criteria as above will be used.

Where a replacement team member is needed for an Area competition, the choice will be based primarily on those already selected. Choice of a replacement will be at the complete discretion of the Team Lead, Team Trainer and DC (subject to the conflict-of-interest criteria specified above) to enable SPC to be best placed to put forward SPC teams able to represent the Branch safely at the level. This may result in changes to previously advised team and/or individual entries. Replacement may be due to issues outside SPC's control, such as changes of circumstances affecting riders or horses. If this occurs, members may be moved between

teams to achieve the preferred number of four members in a team. If this results in another team no longer being feasible, those members will then compete as individuals. Such decisions will be made by the Team Lead, Lead Coach and DC.

Should an eligible member from another Area 8 Branch be looking to be part of an Area 8 team, this will be facilitated by the Area 8 rep.

CONFIDENTIALITY

It is vitally important for the integrity of the selection guidelines and those involved in their application that there is always a high degree of confidentiality relating to any information that may have a bearing on selection. This applies to riders, guardians, owners, selectors or other officials.

Any dissatisfaction should be brought to the attention of the DC immediately and should not be discussed with any other Pony Club member. It should be remembered that an invitation to represent the Branch is an honour, not a right. At all competitions, the Branch has the right to decide where the member best meets the Branch's needs.

TEAM SPIRIT

One of the great benefits and pleasures of Pony Club is the opportunity to be involved in a team. SPC expects riders and their supporters to have a good attitude towards other Branch members and competitors, and to participate in all the required activities within the Branch, either riding or helping at events.

Team members (and guardians) are expected to support and help each other, and to accept advice in a welcoming and constructive manner from Team Trainers, Team Leads and other Branch Officials.

All members are reminded to read the following code of conduct documents (members and parent/guardians). They are available on the PCUK Website ([Link to Pony Club Codes of Conduct](#)):

Part of the team spirit also includes attendance at prizegiving, whether participating as part of a team or as an individual. It is an expectation of SPC members that, whether successful or not at obtaining a placing, all SPC members competing in competitions attend and support those SPC members who have achieved a placing.

ATTIRE

When competing at Area level or other Pony Club events, SPC team attire for both rider and pony should be worn, including your Pony Club membership badge and felt on the left lapel

of your jacket (where a jacket is worn). Please contact the appropriate Team Lead in good time if this may not be possible. SPC will try to help if necessary.

If you are involved in prizegiving, please wear your riding attire, including your riding hat, unless directed otherwise by the organiser.

TRAINING

Appropriate discipline training sessions will be provided, and members should attend these as frequently as possible. Dressage/flatwork and showjumping sessions, for example, will also be applicable to those seeking selection for either a pure single discipline or eventing.

FITNESS

Horse and rider fitness is vitally important, not only for the success of the competitor, but also for the safety and welfare of both horse and rider. Riders must notify immediately the DC, Team Lead or Team Trainer of any change in their own health or fitness status, and/or that of their horse/pony, or any veterinary/medical management requirements, where such a change could have an impact on performance.

SUPPORT & FINANCE

Once selected and the place accepted by the member, no entry fees can be refunded without a veterinary or doctor's certificate. In addition, there is usually a cut-off date for a refund for each event.

SPC will provide a Team Trainer for the following competitions if we have a team competing.

- Pony Club Area qualifiers at all levels
- Inter-Branch team competitions at all levels (including but not limited to Waveney Harriers SJ, Soham SJ, Wilkinson Sword/Gerry Webster Hunter Trial, Burghley SJ, Blenheim Eventer Trial)

If a team trainer is provided, it is compulsory for all selected team and individual riders to take part in all course-walks with the trainer, and to show the trainer respect throughout this process. In addition, all combinations will be expected to warm up under the guidance of the Team Trainer. If, for any reason, a member wishes to not take up this opportunity for the warmup but instead use their own personal trainer, then this must be discussed and agreed with the DC prior to the event.

SPC may not provide a Team Trainer for events where we are sending only individuals. If this is the case, members are either responsible for making their own arrangements using a suitable trainer or may ask the DC to co-ordinate with another Area 8 Pony Club attending the event so that the SPC member(s) can utilise the Area 8 trainer and pay an equal share of the trainer costs, whatever they may be.

If a member withdraws from a competition because they are unwell or their horse is unwell, then they will be liable for the full entry fee unless they are able to provide a doctor's/veterinary note by the event cut-off date. Should we, as a Branch, be able to call up a reserve, then the member unable to compete will not then be liable to pay, except for any associated administration costs. If a member withdraws for any other reason, such as realising their horse's vaccination status isn't up to date, then they will be fully liable for the entry costs.

For information on entry subsidies please refer to the Branch Subsidy Policy for the current year.

If a member is unable to put themselves forward for selection due to financial constraints, they may discuss their position (in strictest confidence) with the DC to see if SPC can subsidise some of the costs.

RULES

All selected riders agree to abide by the rules of the competition. Should there be any query about the rules or the results on the day of the competition, the rules state that only the DC or the DC's representative can take the query to the officials.

ENQUIRIES

Any selection enquiries should be directed to the DC or Lead Coach. Any complaints should be directed to the DC.