**Dress and Tack**

**Introduction**

The dress code for each of the sports is given in the individual rule books. However, there are some items of dress that have safety implications. Members are expected to dress correctly and safely for all Pony Club activities.

**Clothing**

When mounted at Pony Club activities, Members should wear a riding jacket or Branch/Linked Centre sweatshirt, plain-coloured jodhpurs, a suitable plain-coloured shirt with a collar and The Pony Club tie. Polo shirts in Branch/Linked Centre colours are allowed to be worn at rallies and at camp. We strongly recommend against wearing hooded clothing when riding and taking part in activities on the yard.

New clothing is not expected, but what is worn must be clean, neat and tidy. Jeans should not be worn when mounted except when specifically allowed by certain sports.

**As a minimum. shoulders must be covered for all riding activities, except for Sports where long sleeves are compulsory.**

***Glasses and contact lens***are permitted whilst riding, the materials these items are made of should meet the necessary British Standards to reduce the risk of harm. To support security whilst riding members may wear a glasses safety strap, if they wish to.

**Footwear**

Only standard riding or jodhpur boots with a fairly smooth, thin sole and a well-defined square cut heel may be worn. Plain black or brown half chaps may be worn with jodhpur boots of the same colour. Tassels and fringes are not allowed. No other footwear will be permitted, including wellington boots, “muckers” or trainers. Boots with interlocking treads are not permitted, nor are the boots or treads individually.

Stirrups should be of the correct size to suit the Rider’s boots (see stirrup rule). Laces on boots must be taped for Mounted Games only.

**Jewellery**

The wearing of any sort of jewellery when handling or riding a horse/pony is not recommended and if done at any Pony Club activity, is done at the risk of the member/their parent/guardian. However, to stop any risk of injury, necklaces and bracelets (other than medical bracelets) must be removed, as must larger and more pendulous pieces of jewellery (including those attached to piercings) which create a risk of injury to the body part through which they are secured. For the avoidance of doubt a wristwatch, wedding ring, stock pin worn horizontally and/or a tie clip are permitted. It is recommended that stock pins are removed for cross country.

**Hair**

Must be tied back securely, in a safe manner to limit the risk to hair being caught and prevent scalp injuries. Sports may have additional rules.

**Medical Armbands**

Medical Armbands are advised if Members are not accompanied by a responsible adult, including hacking on roads, and are compulsory for Pony Racing and Endurance rides.

**Hats and Body Protectors**

These are to be in accordance with current guidance and meet recommended Safety Standards as detailed in the Rulebooks.

 **Electronic Devices**

Electronic devices (i.e. headphones, mobile phones, etc. enabling another person to communicate with the rider) are not allowed whilst the rider is competing. No recording device is permitted (e.g. hat / bridle cameras, etc.)

**Tack**

All tack must be clean, in a good state of repair, properly fitted and suitable for purpose. Tack inspections are routinely carried out at events and the organisers may prohibit participation in the event if they consider the tack to be inadequate or unsuitable. Individual sports do have further specific tack rules which are detailed in their individual sports rulebooks.

**Saddles**

It is important that saddles are in a good state of repair, properly fitted and suitable for the purpose of which they are intended. Regular checks for suitable fit can be carried out by professionals.

Treeless and total contact saddles are permitted to be used for general riding to support horse and pony welfare.

Tack inspections are routinely carried out at events and the organisers may prohibit participation in the event if they consider the tack to be inadequate or unsuitable. Specific sport rules are detailed in respective rulebooks.

**Stirrups**

Stirrups should be of the correct size to suit the rider’s boots. They must have 7mm (¼”) clearance on either side of the boot. Specific guidance per sport may be applicable, please see the rulebooks for additional information.

There are now many types of stirrups marketed as ‘safety stirrups’. All riders must ensure that their stirrups are suitable for the type of footwear they are wearing and the activities in which they are taking part and that the stirrup leathers are in good condition.

There are no prescribed weight limits on metal stirrups, however with the advent of stirrups of other materials, weight limits are frequently given by manufacturers. Any person buying these stirrups should comply with weight limits defined on the box or attached information leaflets. Neither the feet nor the stirrup leathers or irons may be attached to the girth, nor the feet attached to the stirrup irons.

It is strongly recommended that the design of the stirrup chosen allows the foot to be released easily in the event of a rider fall. Specific rules for individual sports can be found in the respective sports rulebooks.

Particular focus should be on ensuring that the boot and stirrup are the correct size for the rider taking part and used in line with the manufacturer's guidance.

For the avoidance of doubt, at Pony Club events:

* stirrups which connect the boot and the stirrup magnetically are not allowed.
* Interlocking boot soles and stirrup treads are not allowed.

**Humane Girths**

Humane girths are not permitted in any Sport, whether during training or competition.

Humane girths pose an increased risk as many common designs may have complete girth failure if a single strap was to break.

**Bridles and biting**

It is important that bridles are in a good state of repair, properly fitted and suitable for the purpose of which they are intended. Bitless bridles are permitted for training and rallies. Specific rules for bridles and biting for all sports can be found in the respective sports rulebooks.

**Use of the whip**

Specific sports have different rules for the size and type of whip permitted. These are detailed in respective rulebooks.

However, at all times, the whip must only be used:

* For a good reason, as an aid to encourage the horse forward.
* At an appropriate time, namely when the horse is reluctant to go forward under normal aids of seat and legs.
* In the right place, namely down the shoulder or behind the leg but never overarm.
* With appropriate severity.
* No more than twice for any one incident.

Excessive use of the whip anywhere at an event will result in disqualification:

* Use of the whip to vent a competitor’s anger is always excessive.
* Use of a whip which causes injury eg. Broken skin or a weal, is always excessive.
* Use after elimination or retirement is always excessive.
* Use on a horse’s head, neck etc. is always excessive.
* Using the whip from the ground after a rider fall or dismount is always excessive.
* If the rider’s arm comes above the shoulder when using the whip, this is always excessive.

**Spurs**

Spurs must only be used to enhance the normal leg aids and allow for better communication from rider to horse.

Spurs must never be used to vent a competitor’s anger or to reprimand the horse.

Use of the spurs which causes injury e.g. blood, broken skin or a weal, is always classed as misuse.

Misuse of the spurs anywhere at an event will result in disqualification.

Specific sport rules are detailed in respective rulebooks.

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