

Guide for Judges of Pony Club Classes

The purpose of this document is to provide a reference for judges in the Pony Club rings at gymkhanas. PCANT, as peak body, would like to establish consistency amongst judges. It is in no way meant to be prescriptive – these are guidelines only.

Please familiarise yourself with the current pony club syllabus, and in particular note the age requirements for each certificate. This can provide a guide for what to expect from each age class at a gymkhana. (ie, C Certificate has a minimum age of 12 years, and are expected to be able to rise on the correct diagonal, but not yet to check them by feel.) It is also a good idea to have a copy of the PCANT handbook on hand for clearing up any questions regarding rules.

CLASSES

Pony Club Mount

Unlike the open ring, the manners and rideability of the Pony Club horse are paramount. Conformation, presentation and paces are secondary. Ideally a Pony Club hack will be willing and forward-going, with a reasonable level of education, including cantering easily on each lead. Horses which nap or shy, or which show disobedience such as bucking or rearing should not be placed over more reliable horses. Suggestions for the workouts in this class include figures which require changes of lead, such as figures-of-eight and serpentines at canter, lengthening of the stride at trot and canter and transitions up and down through the paces, to test the horse's obedience. Take care to design workouts that are appropriate for the age of the riders – ponies under 14hh are often ridden by young riders with little experience in the show ring. Pony club mounts should also be versatile, so bending poles or obstacles, small jumps or other equipment can be used to test this.

Pony Club Rider

Pony Club encourages riders to be all-rounders, so try to encourage this when judging these classes. Including a small jump or some games equipment tests the versatility and tact of riders while giving them a definite goal. The riding position should show two clear straight lines, one bisecting the ear-shoulder-hip and heel and another from elbow to bit. Independent hands and a strong and secure lower leg with a deep heel, maintained through walk, trot and canter is ideal. As well as this correct, secure position, a good working relationship between horse and rider is desirable. The rider who pulls and kicks should not be placed over a rider who applies their aids correctly and subtly. Riders under 9 (D certificate) are not required to canter on a named leg or know their diagonals. The rider should be mounted on an appropriate-sized horse.

Best Presented/Smartest on Parade

In these classes, emphasis is placed on safe, clean gear, fitted correctly and showing signs of regular care. Expensive tack is not required, and all-purpose saddles are suitable and should not be penalised. The horse should be clean and in good condition, with a healthy coat and hooves. Manes and tails should be tidy and plaiting is preferred but not essential. The rider should wear their formal pony club uniform of

a long-sleeved white shirt and club tie, beige jodhpurs and short black or brown boots. Long boots or leather gaiters are permitted for riders over 17. Helmets must be current Australian standard or equivalent according to PCANT handbook. Horses should wear a pony club saddle blanket. For full details of gear rules and restrictions, check the gymkhana program and the PCANT handbook.

Handler

The purpose of these classes is to promote safe and effective handling of ponies and horses. Awareness and alertness are paramount, and horses must be turned by pushing them AWAY from the handler, never turning towards them. (ie, to turn to the left, the horse must perform a half-circle to the right.) Correct handling of reins and whip should be encouraged. Suggested workout includes walking, turning and trotting in hand, and older handlers can be asked to back their horses or lead from the off side.

Pleasure Mount

This class encourages horses that go kindly and appear to be a 'pleasure' to ride. Suggestions for workouts include working on a long rein or with the reins in one hand, and testing the reliability of the horse by having the rider pick up objects or move around or over obstacles. Check the program for gear restrictions in this class and enforce them - generally, drop nosebands, whips and spurs are not allowed.

Educated Mount

Appropriate education for a Pony Club mount includes direct transitions such as walk to canter and trot to halt, lengthening the trot and canter and performing turn on the forehand and rein-back willingly. Older riders can be asked to perform a free workout in these classes, to best show their horse's education.