



Introduction to

Pony Club[®]



Pony Club®

Where it all begins



The United States Pony Clubs, Inc.

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Pony Club Mission Statement

The United States Pony Clubs, Inc. is an educational organization which builds the foundations of teamwork and sportsmanship through riding, mounted sports, care of horses and ponies, while developing and enhancing leadership, confidence, responsibility, and a sense of community in its youth and adult members.

Pony Club Core Values

Horsemanship with respect to healthcare, nutrition, stable management, handling and riding a mount safely, correctly and with confidence.

Organized teamwork including cooperation, communication, responsibility, leadership, mentoring, teaching and fostering a supportive yet competitive environment.

Respect for the horse and self through horsemanship; for land through land conservation; and for others through service and teamwork.

Service by providing an opportunity for members, parents, and others to support the Pony Club program locally, regionally and nationally through volunteerism.

Education at an individual pace to achieve personal goals and expand knowledge through teaching others.

The Pony Club Pledge

"As a member of the United States Pony Clubs, I stand for the best in sportsmanship as well as in horsemanship. I shall compete for the enjoyment of the game well played and take winning or losing in stride, remembering that without good manners and good temper, sport loses its cause for being. I shall endeavor to maintain the best tradition of the ancient and noble skill of horsemanship, always treating my horse with consideration due a partner."

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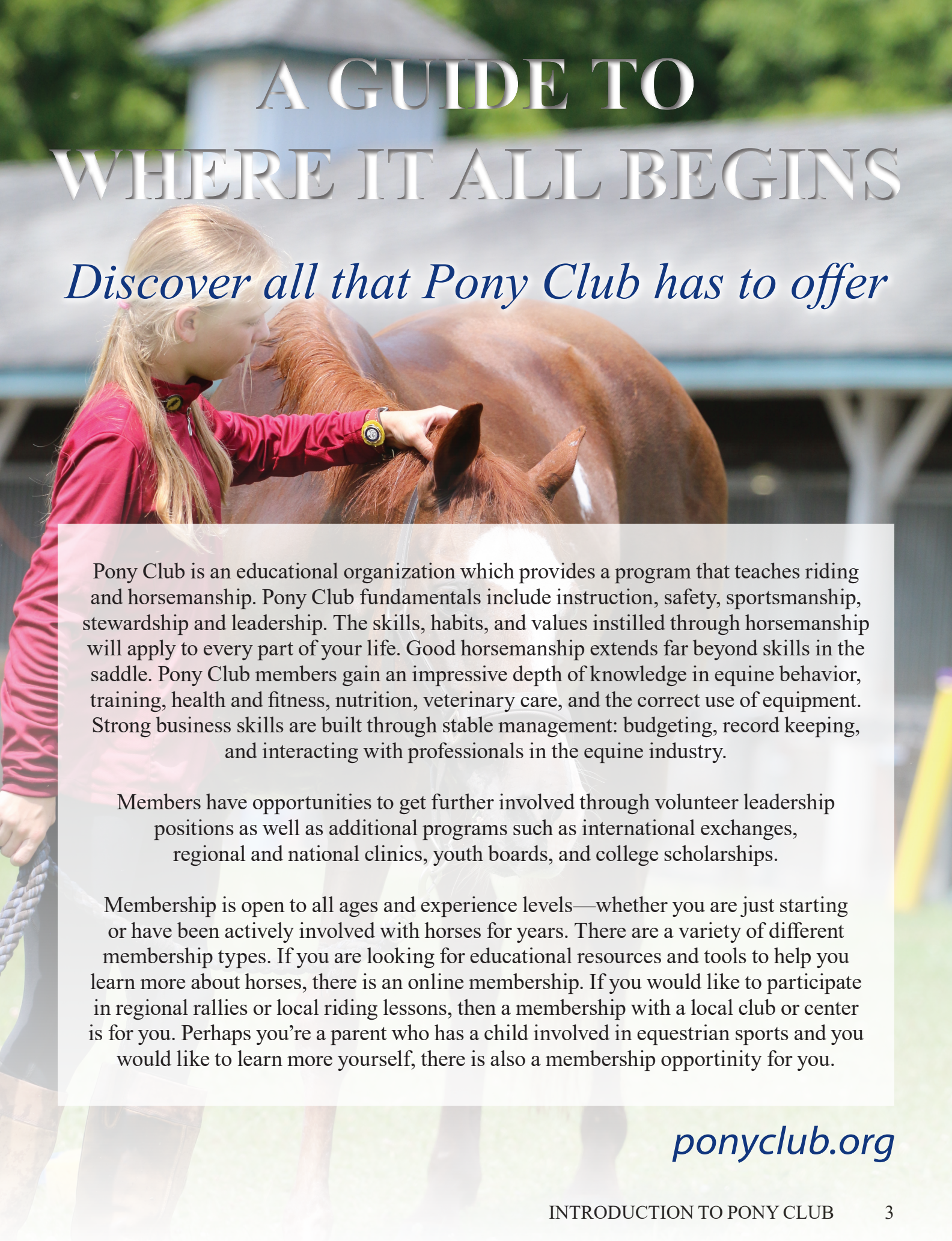
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A GUIDE TO WHERE IT ALL BEGINS

Discover all that Pony Club has to offer



Pony Club is an educational organization which provides a program that teaches riding and horsemanship. Pony Club fundamentals include instruction, safety, sportsmanship, stewardship and leadership. The skills, habits, and values instilled through horsemanship will apply to every part of your life. Good horsemanship extends far beyond skills in the saddle. Pony Club members gain an impressive depth of knowledge in equine behavior, training, health and fitness, nutrition, veterinary care, and the correct use of equipment. Strong business skills are built through stable management: budgeting, record keeping, and interacting with professionals in the equine industry.

Members have opportunities to get further involved through volunteer leadership positions as well as additional programs such as international exchanges, regional and national clinics, youth boards, and college scholarships.

Membership is open to all ages and experience levels—whether you are just starting or have been actively involved with horses for years. There are a variety of different membership types. If you are looking for educational resources and tools to help you learn more about horses, there is an online membership. If you would like to participate in regional rallies or local riding lessons, then a membership with a local club or center is for you. Perhaps you're a parent who has a child involved in equestrian sports and you would like to learn more yourself, there is also a membership opportunity for you.

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Participating Memberships

A Participating Membership is an option for individuals who would like to ride and take part in the fun and educational offerings of USPC clubs and centers. National dues are outlined on the membership form, which may be found on the USPC website. Regional and local dues vary, be sure to ask the District Commissioner or Center Administrator for details.

Club/Center Membership

Individuals who wish to participate in mounted and unmounted meetings, clinics, rallies, certifications, exchanges, or other special opportunities do so by becoming a member through a local Pony Club or Pony Club Riding Center.

National Membership

Pony Club National Membership is an option for members 18 and older with a C-2 Horse Management certification level or above who are not able to participate with an individual club or center on a regular basis. The National Membership will offer individuals the opportunity to be a member of Pony Club on a national level without a specific region, club, or riding center affiliation. These members will have the opportunity to share their passion of Pony Club with others and will have the chance to ride with other clubs/centers, rally in other regions, compete at championships and pursue national level certifications. National Members pay dues directly to USPC, instead of at the local and regional levels. To participate in club, center or regional activities, they must pay-as-they-go.

Professional Memberships

A Professional Membership is an option for individuals such as instructors, professors, teachers, and other educators interested in ready-to-teach educational materials for their students.

Professional Membership

Professional Membership is a membership for instructors, professors, teachers, and other educators interested in ready-to-teach educational materials for their students. This membership option has a 365-day term based on the anniversary of the join date. Member benefits include: an online profile, organized and easy-to-understand lesson plans, access to Pony Club IQ with articles relevant to your teaching, bi-monthly E-News, and Pony Club webinars. Professional Members may purchase additional educational packages providing access to comprehensive materials to help teach basic horse care and riding skills to students. Add-on packages include Achievement Badge workbooks and guides, introductory level certification materials, and complimentary Pony Club IQ E-Memberships for your students.



Supporting Memberships

Corporate Memberships

A Corporate Membership is a membership option for individuals 18 years or older and is required for Pony Club leaders. This membership connects local leaders/volunteers to Pony Club's national administration by enabling them to vote at Pony Club's annual Meeting of the Corporation. As a Corporate Member you will also receive a subscription to the print magazine, special notices and updates throughout the year, and access to an online directory.

There are two types of Corporate Memberships: Annual Corporate Membership and Life Corporate Membership.

Annual Corporate Membership

Annual Corporate Memberships may be purchased online on a yearly basis.

Life Corporate Membership

Life Corporate Membership is a one time purchase of membership that lasts for the life of an individual. Many graduates and long-time volunteers stay involved in Pony Club through the benefits of Life Corporate Membership. Life Corporate Members receive a Life Member pin and certificate. All Life Corporate Membership dues go directly to the Pony Club Endowment Fund to support future generations of Pony Club members.

Online Memberships

Online Membership is an option for members of all ages to have access to an interactive online experience and access to Pony Club resources. There are four types of Online Memberships: Introductory E-Membership, Pony Club IQ E-Membership, Alumni Membership, and Friend Membership.

Pony Club IQ E-Membership

Pony Club IQ E-Membership is an interactive online membership. It allows the member electronic access to Pony Club publications, Pony Club IQ, and special sponsor offers. Pony Club IQ is a microsite developed for our members to enhance their equine knowledge with current and reputable information. Pony Club IQ E-Membership is a yearly renewable membership. Pony Club IQ E-Membership dues cannot be applied towards any other Pony Club membership.

Alumni Membership

Alumni Membership is an annual membership for former participating members of all ages to maintain a connection with Pony Club while supporting the organization at a level below the Corporate Membership. With this membership, you will receive an Alumni Membership pin and online access to Pony Club publications. Most importantly you can continue to be a proud member of Pony Club.

Friend Membership

Friend Membership is an annual membership, open to anyone over the age of 18. This membership option is a way for individuals with an interest in Pony Club to proudly support the organization as a member and is ideal for volunteers, instructors, or family members. With this membership you will receive a Friend Membership pin and online access to Pony Club publications.

Pony Club Offers a Chance to Learn and Compete in Various Disciplines

Competitive Disciplines

Dressage – The French term for “training”, Dressage, is the harmonious development of the horse and rider in both mind and body, making the horse more supple in his movements, a joy to ride and beautiful to watch. Every horse, regardless of type or intended use, can benefit from this training. Competitions begin at the walk-trot level and continue through nine levels to Grand Prix.



Eventing – Eventing is known as the equine triathlon because it includes three phases: Dressage, Cross-Country, and Show Jumping. Originally developed in the cavalries of Europe as a test of the ideal military charger, Eventing has now evolved into an exciting sport attracting interest from all levels of enthusiasts.



Games – Mounted Games is a fun mounted sport that teaches basic natural aids, physical coordination, self-confidence, and teamwork skills. Games encourages enthusiasm, participation and training in riders. It also fosters sportsmanship and the proper care of mounts in members.



Gymkhana – Gymkhana is a mounted competition in which riders display their horsemanship and teamwork through precise, controlled actions at high speeds. Each race is designed to allow the rider/horse team to demonstrate their skill, control, and partnership through variations of speed, turning and navigating obstacles, hand eye-coordination, and safely completing the race. Gymkhana provides a fun sport that teaches sportsmanship.



Horse Management – Horse Management encompasses all things in horse care including health, maintenance, nutrition, and handling. The ultimate goal of Horse Management is to create a safe, knowledgeable, well-rounded horse person. It has helped shape the core values of Pony Club.



Polocrosse – Like Lacrosse on horseback, Polocrosse improves hand-eye coordination while developing a sense of strong self-confidence in riding ability. This sport requires practice of ball handling skills such as bouncing, pick up, throwing and catching the ball in the net of the racket.



Quiz – Quiz promotes a deep understanding and familiarity with the material presented at each testing level. Essentially a “question and answer” competition, Quiz is a fundamental and creative learning tool where members learn horsemanship and good horse care. It provides them with opportunities to display and learn good sportsmanship, leadership, stewardship and teamwork.



Show Jumping – Show Jumping focuses on the agility and attention of the horse and rider as they navigate brightly colored fences. The jumps vary in height and width and may include water that a horse must leap over, but not touch. Each course is intended to demonstrate energy, training and obedience. The goal of the horse and rider is to negotiate the course without errors or disobedience.



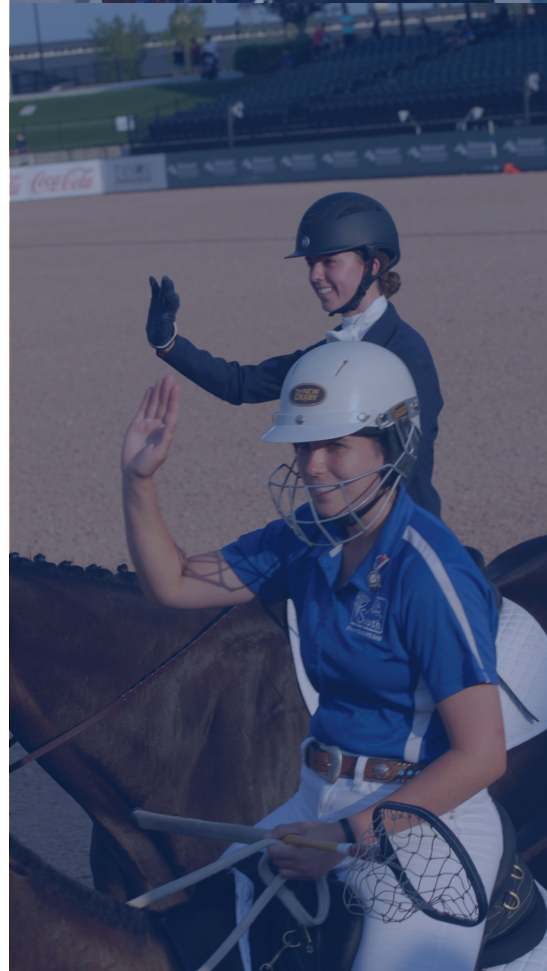
Tetrathlon – Tetrathlon is an exciting four-phase sport comprised of running, swimming, riding and shooting. Competitors must show good riding abilities as well as general athletic abilities. The development of Tetrathlon in Pony Club was encouraged by the US Modern Pentathlon and Olympic committees to develop multi-talented athletes.



Western Dressage – Western Dressage promotes balance, rhythm, and carriage while using the training techniques from both classical dressage and western horsemanship. Western Dressage is taught with an emphasis on good Horse Management, knowledge of western equitation, turnout, and tack.



Western Trail - In Western Trail, riders challenge their mounts through a series of obstacles that demonstrates their competence in a variety of settings.



Resource Disciplines

Distance Riding - Distance Riding includes competition styles over marked trails where speed or accurate pacing wins the day. Competition styles include Competitive Trail Riding, Endurance, Limited Distance, and Ride and Tie. Distances vary from 25 miles to over 100 miles ridden in one day. Terrain is varied in locations all over the country. Riders are required to pass a veterinary check periodically in the course that assures the horses are fit to continue safely. Many competitions include divisions with shorter distances for newcomers.



Driving - The sport of Driving includes several different variations: Combined Driving which is similar to Eventing, Carriage Pleasure Driving which has several different types (including turnout and obstacle classes), and Recreational Driving which does not have a competition component.



Foxhunting - Pony Club was founded in 1954 by a group of foxhunters. Foxhunting is a mounted sport that dates back hundreds of years. Mounted riders chase wild game with a pack of hounds across the countryside. Riders navigate through open terrain, across creeks and streams, over logs and other natural obstacles, and even through woods and thickets. Foxhunting can be enjoyed by all ages and levels of riding.



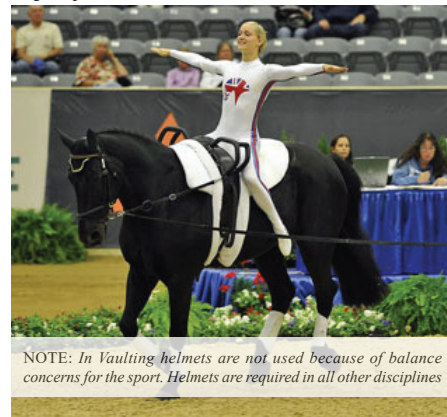
Hunter Seat Equitation - Hunter Seat Equitation demands conscientious training, diligent practice, and attention to detail. Riders practice correct form both on the flat and over fences. The ultimate goal is to produce a picturesque clear round while making it look effortless.



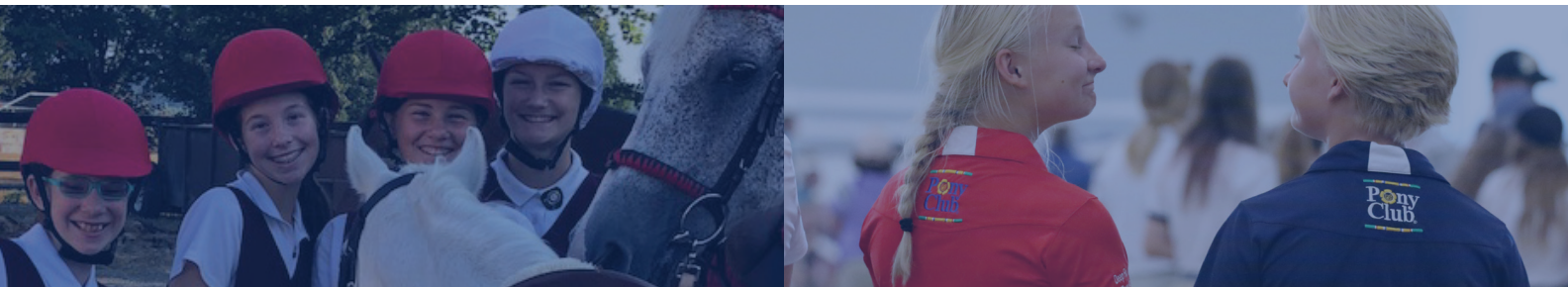
Polo - Polo teaches skills such as hand-eye coordination, communication skills, diplomacy, and teamwork through a fast-paced and fun environment. Teammates work together to move the ball down the field and navigate through the opposing team's players. Good sportsmanship is always emphasized, with team members penalized for rough play, and handshakes are always exchanged at the end of the match.



Vaulting - Vaulting as an activity gives riders the opportunity to improve their confidence, suppleness, balance and rhythm. Learning how to vault off the horse from any position, as well as good landings, decreases chances of injury from a fall.



NOTE: In Vaulting helmets are not used because of balance concerns for the sport. Helmets are required in all other disciplines



How to Learn and Grow in Pony Club

Standards of Proficiency & Certifications

The United States Pony Clubs, Inc, Standards of Proficiency provide a core curriculum for individualized instruction. The Standards describe a clear progression of skills in riding and Horse Management. They also provide opportunities for goal setting, as members are encouraged to proceed through those skills at a pace that is comfortable for them.

Clubs and centers use the standards as a plan for instruction programs. Certifications are rewarded to recognize achievements and encourage members to gain confidence, independence and good safety habits while working with horses and ponies. Practicing, teaching and testing are good ways to accomplish this purpose.

A Pony Club member is ready to test at the next level when he or she is able to perform the requirements for that level in a supervised testing situation. After passing one test, a member continues to receive instruction until a greater degree of proficiency is achieved. The first five levels of Horse Management and riding for members are achieved through evaluations organized and administered by the local club or center. These levels are D-1 (beginner) through C-2 (intermediate). At the upper certification levels, members must have an increase in maturity, knowledge, and riding skills. Members must be eligible for these Certifications and apply through the National Office. Certifications are organized at the regional level, and administered by the National Examiners. These levels include H-B (advanced-intermediate) through A (advanced).



Horse Management

Pony Club is unique because its educational programs place equal emphasis on the teaching of horse care fundamentals, riding skills, and team participation with sportsmanship. Pony Club is dedicated to developing knowledgeable, competent, responsible and caring horse people.

All clubs and centers have a Horse Management program designed to teach and provide knowledge as members progress through the certifications in accordance with the Pony Club Standards of Proficiency. The style of Horse Management instruction varies depending on each club or center, however, every program is developed based on the Standards, and the result is a common level of knowledge at any given level.

Pony Club prepares members for the responsibilities of horse ownership by judging Horse Management skills during Pony Club rally competitions and at testings. At rallies, the competitors are judged within their respective certification levels on their knowledge and application of sound, practical horse care principles acquired through Horse Management instruction and regular practice. The evaluation of competitors' performances at rallies reinforces the information taught at the club or center level. The emphasis of Horse Management judging is always on the care and safety of both horse and rider.

Horse Management instruction and experience in Pony Club is designed to encourage inquiry into the nature of horse care and safety, based on logic and practical reasoning.



Safety

A concern for safety is an important part of Pony Club's foundation. Pony Club was the first equine organization to require its members to wear safety helmets. The core values regarding safety reach into every aspect of the organization. Volunteers and staff make safety a priority. For mounted instructional meetings, Pony Club safety practices must be followed. All members are required to wear an approved riding helmet and medical armband or bracelet. While riding, conventional riding footwear with a heel, such as leather or rubber riding boots, Jodhpur boots, or the equivalent, is required. When unmounted around horses, acceptable footwear is a shoe that is securely fastened, entirely enclosed, covers the ankle and is thick-soled and in good condition. Canvas or cloth shoes of any kind are not allowed.

Pony Club stresses and teaches safety first. The well-being of members and their mounts is of primary importance. To this end, the program for all levels stresses preventative techniques, common sense and daily routines within a reasonable framework of expectations.



Mounted Meetings

A mounted meeting is where members attend a lesson together and ride in groups based on their skill level. The basics are stressed and taught continually, but fun is part of lessons at all levels.

Clubs and centers try to organize a program that is fun, educational and interesting to members. Mounted meetings are often structured so that members who are serious about setting and pursuing their goals may practice at their own level of intensity. Beginning members are offered lots of fun mixed in with educational opportunities. Experienced youth members or knowledgeable adults will assist members in preparing for certifications.

Many clubs and centers set up a program in which an advanced member is assigned to mentor a new member. The advanced member may demonstrate proper handling, tying, and grooming. Lessons about tack fit, tacking up and safety (including the all-important safety check, supervised by an adult) are reviewed before the member begins riding. The advanced member benefits from the teaching experience and from watching the progress of the beginner members.

Mounted meetings differ greatly from one club or center to another, but all instruction emphasizes safety, control and the development of fundamentally sound basics.



Unmounted Meetings

Unmounted meetings are set up as a meeting where all members attend, but usually without their horses or ponies. These meetings are often structured around Horse Management instruction. Some examples of topics may include:

- Feed (types of feed and cost)
- Shoeing (types of shoes, process of shoeing or trimming)
- Vet visits and vaccinations
- Deworming and product use
- Temperature, pulse and respiratory rate
- Types of tack and identification of equipment
- Breeds of horses and ponies
- Set-up and safety at competitions
- Grooming, braiding, turnout inspection

- Tack-care, fitting, types, construction, use
- Trailer Safety
- Conformation/suitability
- First Aid
- Breeding/foaling
- Stable manners
- Understanding different equine disciplines
- Identification of horse anatomy
- Practice quizzes
- Analysis of barns and stables

Pony Club members are known for their responsible and complete approach to horse care. Members should be proud of their Horse Management skills, which set Pony Club apart from all other horse and rider organizations. To become an effective and efficient horseperson, the Pony Club member must be a willing and eager student.





Learn More!

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