

# USPC Policies and Guidelines

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## Governing Rules

With regards to Qualifying Rallies this Rulebook is a precise specification of rules that **MUST** be followed. For Non-Qualifying Rallies/Divisions this Rulebook should be viewed as a general guideline that can be modified by the Rally Organizer/Regional Supervisor to best meet the needs of the Region. Additional governing documents for all Rallies are the following:

- USPC Horse Management Handbook and Rules for Rallies (current edition)
- Annual Newsletters & Clarifications from USPC.
- USEF Rulebook (current edition). However, since USPC does not always follow USEF rules, where there is a disparity between Rulebooks, this Rulebook will be followed.

Since Rules cannot provide for every eventuality (unforeseen or exceptional circumstance), it is the obligation of the Ground Jury to make decisions in a sporting spirit and to follow as closely as possible the intention of these Rules. If there is an inconsistency, the Discipline Rulebook takes precedence over the Horse Management Handbook.

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**REMINDER:** This is an updated Rulebook for 2018. Additions, deletions and changes have been made since the last Rulebook was issued. Be sure to read the entire publication carefully so you will be aware of all the rules for the upcoming competition season.

These rules are based on copyrighted Rules of the U.S. Equestrian Federation (USEF) and are printed with the permission of USEF, which neither sponsors nor is responsible for their publication or implementation at any United States Pony Clubs event.

## Responsibility

A competitor is ultimately responsible for knowing these rules and complying with them. The appointment of a steward or official, whether or not provided for in these rules, does not absolve the competitor from such responsibility.

## Participating Member Code of Conduct

The United States Pony Clubs, Inc. is proud of its reputation for good sportsmanship, horsemanship, teamwork and well-behaved members. The USPC expects appropriate behavior

from all members, parents and others participating in any USPC activity. Inappropriate behavior may include, but is not limited to: possession, use or distribution of any illegal drugs or alcohol; profanity, vulgar language or gestures; harassment (i.e., using words or actions that intimidate, threaten or persecute others before, during or following USPC activities); failure to follow rules; cheating; and abusing a horse.

**Any USPC Member or parent not conforming to the Code of Conduct is subject to the following action:** The Officials of the competition may immediately suspend or expel an individual from the competition upon consulting with the Ground Jury.

## Championships Competitor Age and Certification

Each discipline/division has minimum age and certification requirements for participation in Championships. Championships competitors must meet the age requirement based on January 1, of the Championships competition year. They must have competed at the minimum or higher certification level at the Qualifying Rally and have achieved the minimum certification level by the closing date of the Championships. Therefore, any fall Qualifying Rallies should base their division entry status on the competitor's age for the following year and take into account planned advancements in certification level.

**Exceptions to Minimum Age and Certification Requirements for Championships:** Exceptions to the minimum age and certification requirements are occasionally granted and the process for requesting an exception is outlined on the Championships Competition Information page of the USPC website. All requests for exceptions must come from the RS to the appropriate Discipline Chair.

## Member in Good Standing

Members are considered in Good Standing if they are current with all dues and fees owed the Registered Club/Riding Center Program, Region and USPC and when available participate in one or more of the following:

1. They show evidence of sincere interest in the activities of Pony Club at the local, regional or national level.
2. They assist younger members in the learning process.
3. They participate in Pony Club activities at the local, regional, or national level when and where appropriate, according to age, experience, and suitability of mount.

## Cruelty to and Abuse of a Horse

1. Cruelty to or the abuse of a horse present on the grounds of any competition is forbidden, and renders the offender subject to penalty. The Organizing Committee must bar violators from further participation for the remainder of the competition.
2. USPC or the Judge, Steward, or TD may appoint a veterinarian to inspect any animal on competition grounds or entered to compete. Refusal to submit an animal for examination by an authorized veterinarian after due notification shall constitute a violation.

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3. The following are included under the words Cruelty and Abuse but are not limited thereto:

- a. Excessive use of a whip on any horse in a stall, runway, schooling area, competition ring or elsewhere on the competition grounds, before or during a competition, by any person. Except in emergency situations, any striking of the horse's head (on the poll and forward of the poll) with the whip shall be deemed excessive.
  - b. Any evidence of cruel or abusive training techniques.
  - c. Rapping the legs of a horse with the butt end of a riding crop or other implement.
  - d. Use of any substance or method to induce temporary heat.
  - e. Manual poling with any object.
  - f. Use of a wire or chain in conjunction with any schooling jump.
  - g. Use of electric device in schooling or showing.
  - h. Use of shackles, hock hobbles and similar devices (not to be construed as rubber or elastic exercising devices).
  - i. Showing a horse with raw or bleeding sores around the coronets, pasterns or legs.
  - j. Use of any explosive (e.g. fire crackers, torpedoes, fire extinguishers except in case of fire, etc.) or laser beam devices anywhere on the competition grounds, except in an exhibition or if required in class specifications.
  - k. Withholding of feed and water for prolonged periods.
  - l. Letting blood from a horse for other than diagnostic purposes.
  - m. Inhumane treatment of a horse in a stall, runway, schooling area, competition ring or elsewhere on the competition grounds, by any person.
  - n. Use of any object that prevents the horse's ability to close his mouth. (Exception: use of an oral speculum by a veterinarian or equine dentist to provide legitimate dental/oral medical care.)
  - o. Soring of any horse, including but not limited to the application of caustic chemicals to a horse's legs or hooves, in order to cause pain and/or affect a horse's performance, and/or used as a training technique. (For the purposes of this rule, the term "soring" is defined by the Horse Protection Act, 15 U.S.C. §1821.)
4. Any action(s) against a horse by a competitor or an exhibitor, which are deemed excessive by a judge, steward, technical delegate or competition veterinarian, in the competition ring or anywhere on the competition grounds may be punished by official warning, elimination, or other sanctions which may be deemed appropriate by the Organizing Committee. Such action(s) could include, but are not limited to excessive use of the whip or spurs.

### Mounts

Suitable mounts are defined as follows:

1. Stallions are not considered suitable mounts.
2. Mounts must be serviceably sound, in good overall health and in condition for the activity in question.
3. Mounts must be appropriate for the certification level of the rider and must be at a level of training to participate safely in the activity.
4. Except as noted below, mounts must be at least five (5) years of age in order to participate in USPC competitive, instructional, and recreational programs and activities. In establishing the age of mounts, the first year is considered to be January 1 following the date of foaling.
5. Members holding a Riding Certification of C-1 and above may participate in all USPC activities on an appropriate mount at least four (4) years of age (See A.3 above). A mount must be excused from any activity if in the opinion of the instructor, examiner, or appropriate authority, it is unsafe either to its rider or to other riders or mounts.

### Protective Headgear

USPC requires members participating in mounted and some unmounted activities to wear a properly fitted equestrian helmet, securely fastened, containing certification that it meets the criteria established by the following international or national safety bodies: ASTM F1163 (North America), AS/NZ 3838 (Australia and NZ), PAS 015 (UK). (See USPC Policy 0800A)

### Medical Armbands and Bracelets

USPC requires that members participating in any USPC affiliated mounted or un-mounted activity, must wear either a Medical Armband or Medical Bracelet while participating in the activity. The member may choose which one to wear.

1. Medical Armbands must include a current completed copy of the individual's USPC or USEA Medical Card. It must be worn on the upper arm. If the member has small arms, he/she may safety pin the armband to his/her upper sleeve. (Armbands are available for purchase from Shop Pony Club.)
2. Medical Bracelets must visibly list these five items on them: Name and Date of Birth, Contact Information, Known Allergies, Current Medications, and Existing Medical Conditions. More information is acceptable, but these five items are required to be on the bracelet.

All officials on site at the USPC mounted or un-mounted activity are encouraged to work with the competitors to remind them of this requirement.

Any member at a USPC affiliated mounted or un-mounted activity<sup>4</sup> found not wearing either a Medical Armband or Medical Bracelet must be removed from the activity until the member conforms to the policy requirements.

- <sup>4</sup> Tetrathlon competitors will not be required to wear them while actually shooting or swimming, but must have them visible and next to them for these activities and must wear them at all other times.

## SECTION I: General Regulations

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curing rosette adornments are also permitted. Long braids (tail braided but not done up in mud knot or similar) are not permitted. Tail braids must be taken out after the last chukka of the day.

### Article 6 – Dress:

1. Team members must wear the same color polo shirt or Jersey with sleeves and must be properly dressed in appropriate riding boots with a clearly defined heel, and white breeches or jodhpurs with garters and/or elastics. White jeans (5-pocket, boot-cut, polo or riding) will be also permitted attire in Polocrosse.
2. Tall boots, cowboy boots, polo boots, or half chaps (smooth or rough) worn over a rider's jeans or breeches are permitted. Cowboy boots and paddock boots may be worn under jeans with or without the use of gaiters (smooth or rough).
3. Spurs with pointed rowels are not permitted, however spurs with smooth disc rowels or free rolling balls on the ends are allowed. Bumper spurs are permitted.
4. A Pony Club pin must be worn for Turnout Inspection. (See USPC Horse Management Handbook and Rules for Competition.)
5. Players must be numbered correctly with clearly visible Arabic numerals on their backs. Playing positions (numbers on riders' backs) should act as identification while on the playing field. Other forms of identification may be used in the barn and cool out areas.
6. Knee protection for rider is allowed. Knee guards must be made of leather, neoprene or cloth.

### Article 7 – Saddlery and Equipment:

1. Required Equipment:
  - a. All equipment must be well fitted, in good repair and working condition. All equipment must be clean according to rider's level of certification.
  - b. The Ground Jury shall have the right to determine the safety of all equipment and can disallow the use of any equipment deemed a hazard to a rider or mount. The abuse or misuse of any equipment shall be grounds for immediate removal.
  - c. Leather, synthetic and nylon bridles are permitted. All reins must have a breakaway component. Split reins are not permitted. Snaps on the ends of reins are a designated breakaway point. **Any sharp buckles or chain chain strap hooks must have its open end taped so as not to injure the horse or get caught in the tack.**
  - d. Draw reins and German martingales are not allowed on the field. They may be used in warm-up with the approval of the TD and the CHMJ.
  - e. **Bits must be properly fitted with no protruding side bars. All leverage action in bit must be partially incorporated**

within the main ring. In the event that the CHMJ questions the legality of a bit, the TD will be called in. The TD and Chief Umpire will consult and final decision will be presented by the TD. English shankless hackamores are permitted. Snaffles or snaffle gags without sidebar protrusions, kimberwicks, bitless bridles and sidepulls are legal.

- f. Figure eight, flash, drop, cavesson nosebands, and bosals are permitted and must be properly adjusted.
- g. Breastplates or breast collars are required.
- h. Cruppers are permitted but are not considered a substitute for the required breast plate.
- i. Standing or running martingales and tiedowns are permitted.
- j. All Australian, English or Western type saddles that do NOT have a horn are permitted. All saddles must fit the rider and horse properly and must be in good riding condition.
- k. Leg protection is required on all four legs of the mount. Boots or polo bandages should protect from below the knee or hock to and including the inside and outside of the fetlock.
- l. Bell boots covering the coronet and heels are required on all four feet.

**CAUTION:** Be aware bell boots may cause rubbing or chafing to pastern area of mount, if not properly fitted. The length of the bell boot may need to be adjusted to prevent excessive contact with ground. Polo type wraps may be taped in a spiral fashion. Each club/center shall provide a designated person to apply or supervise the application of polo bandages. It is recommended that this be an upper level Pony Club member or an adult experienced in applying bandages according to USPC standards.

**Helpful hint:** *Cut the bottom of the bell boot to prevent rubbing, yet leave long enough to protect coronet band.*

- m. Eye protection for the horse is highly recommended. Protection may be in hood or goggle form, and must allow the mount 365 degrees of unobstructed viewing.
- n. Crops must have a leather flap (with a maximum length of 2 inches) at the end. The maximum length of the crop is limited to 34 inches, including the flap. The crop may not be weighted. Crop must be present at Turnout Inspections and safety checks. No duct tape will be allowed, nor any crop that could cause harm to other riders or horses.
- o. The Polocrosse racquet may be of any length. It may not have any metal reinforcements or any protrusions.
- p. The Polocrosse Ball shall be a thick-skinned sponge rubber ball four inches in diameter weighing 6.5 ounces.

## SECTION III: Scoring

### Article 17 – Rally Scoring:

- The number of goals earned by each team in a chukka will be recorded. An example of a Chukka Score Sheet is provided in Appendix V.
- The total number of goals earned by each team will be the sum of the goals earned in each chukka. The team earning the most goals wins the chukka.
- Riding scores are calculated by awarding points per chukka.  
 win = 4 points  
 tie = 2 points  
 loss = 0 point
- Horse Management points for each team will be accumulated in accordance with the USPC Horse Management Handbook and Rules for Competition. The sum of these points will be tabulated for each team.

- Scoring for Polocrosse will be on a positive point basis. The total number of chukkas played by each team will be recorded. The Bonus Points will be determined using the following formula: Bonus=# chukkas played - (# chukkas played \*0.04)\*(HM penalties). Bonus scores cannot be less than zero.
- The final score will be the total of (1) riding score, (2) positive bonus score. **See example below.**

### Article 18 – Scoring Horse Management and Ties:

- Horse Management scores will not be factored.
- At rallies, ties will be broken by Horse Management, and if still tied, by goals scored.

## Sample Master Score Sheet

	# OF CHUKKAS	RIDING SCORE	HM PENALTIES	BONUS POINTS	TOTAL	OVERALL PLACE	HM PLACE
<b>TEAM</b>							
<i>Chicks with Sticks</i>	11	38	2	10.12	48.12	1	1
<i>We 3 Polocrosse</i>	11	32	29	0	32	2	4
<i>Jersey Devils</i>	11	22	10	6.6	28.6	3	2
<i>Orange Crush</i>	11	24	56	0	24	4	5
<i>Wranglers</i>	11	12	21	1.76	13.76	5	3
<i>Antietam Avengers</i>	11	28	5	8.8	36.8	1	1
<i>Zippy Zebras</i>	11	30	12	5.72	35.72	2	2
<i>3 Stooges</i>	11	28	13	5.28	33.28	3	3
<i>Rebel Riders</i>	11	20	30	0	20	4	4
<i>Sunny D'lights</i>	9	36	21	1.44	37.44	1	1
<i>Pickering Ponies</i>	9	0	35	0	0	2	2

## SECTION VII: Appendices

### APPENDIX VII

#### NOTES FOR UMPIRES

While it is not the intention to go fully into the methods and standards of Umpires or Umpiring, it is felt that some general comments should be included, especially for prospective and inexperienced Umpires.

First it cannot be emphasized too strongly that all Umpires in any game of Polocrosse must be suitably mounted. It is the responsibility of the club or committee organizing the rally to ensure that the Umpire is suitably mounted. Too often Umpires are seen trailing the field or hampering play due to the inefficiency of their mounts. Umpires should realize that they have the right to refuse any mounts that they consider unsuitable.

Umpires should at all times be correctly dressed so as to keep in harmony with the appearance and dress of the players. When mounted, they should always carry a Polocrosse racquet to save time in picking up the ball on the field.

The first prerequisite of an Umpire is to know the rules of the game. This does not mean just reading the rulebook, but knowing how to apply the rules on the field. Experience can be obtained from discussion with Senior Umpires.

The Umpire should concentrate on the game every moment focusing on the line of the ball should an incident arise. A common and natural error among inexperienced Umpires is a loss of concentration due to watching some brilliant player, mount or combined play. The side line (Chief) Umpire also needs to be officiating the game, not merely supervising the Umpires riding on the field.

With regard to the use of whistle, it is a good practice to use one strong blast to stop play and two short consecutive blasts to call for time-off. An Umpire should be careful in the use of the whistle but should never hesitate to blow it when the necessity arises. Nothing is more aggravating to players and spectators alike than a "whistle-happy" Umpire. On the other hand, if a foul is observed the whistle should be blown immediately, as all players respect a strict Umpire who makes a definite decision and does not allow players to get away with fouls.

Halfhearted or late decisions are indicative of either inexperienced or inefficient umpiring. The advantage rule should be remembered at all times, as in many instances the infliction of a penalty would be an advantage to the side that committed the foul. After blowing the whistle for a foul and stopping the game, the Umpire should immediately inform the players why he stopped the game, who committed the foul, and what the penalty is to be. He should indicate to players the spot from which the penalty is to be taken and recommence the game by calling out, "Play" to the player taking the penalty, in a voice loud enough for all players to hear. No penalty can be executed

until directed to do so by the Umpire. Similarly, an Umpire stopping play and calling time-off should ensure that the time-keeper understands that time-off has been called for and the reason for it. It is also indicative of a good Umpire if, when stopping play for any reason, the decision can be conveyed to the field officials as well as the players and the public.

#### 10 Yard Throw

Prior to any 10 yard throw, the Umpire MUST ensure that the player taking the 10 yard throw has a completely clear gallop lane.

#### Wild Swings

A growing concern is the dangerous play involving "wild swings." Any attempt to hit an opponent's racquet, which in the opinion of the umpire constitutes a wild or vicious swing, will be deemed a dangerous play. The swinging of a racquet in more than one consecutive circle while trying to dislodge the ball from an opponent constitutes dangerous play. Players are not to provide round swings or angled swings.

Umpires should realize that they have full control not only of the players and the game but also of all their particular field officials, the field and its surrounding areas. They should stop play if any of these do not conform to the rules, or for common sense safety concerns.

#### Rights of Umpires

The Umpire can declare time off for any reason that they consider necessary. It is within the discretion of the Umpire not to stop the game for purpose of inflicting a penalty, if stopping the game would be disadvantageous to the fouled team.

(Guideline: If a foul has occurred, and it is not dangerous, the Umpire may elect to let play continue as to not take the advantage away from the fouled player. This constitutes playing an advantage. The fouling player should be cautioned so that they are aware that the foul was observed.)

Finally, the Umpire must never enter into an argument with the players or spectators. The Captain of a team is the only player who may lodge an inquiry with the Umpire, but even then the Captain must in no way enter into an argument with the Umpire on the field.