

USPC Policies and Guidelines

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.
 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* found not wearing either a Medical Armband or Medical Bracelet must be removed from the activity until the member conforms to the policy requirements.

* 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.

Mounts

Suitable mounts are defined as follows:

SECTION I: General Regulations

Chapter 1 – Participation Regulations

Article 1 – Eligibility of Riders

1. All riders entered in USPC Show Jumping Rallies must be members of the United States Pony Clubs or invited members of International Pony Clubs.
2. Riders shall compete at the level at which they and their mounts are qualified to ride regardless of certification.
3. No rider may compete more than once in each round.
4. As of the official start of the rally, no competitor may ride/school/warm-up another competitor's entered horse. Doing so is grounds for elimination, from that round, of all parties involved.
5. Riders at regional rallies may be of any age and certification as stipulated by the Regional Supervisor and/or organizers.
6. District Commissioners (DCs) or Center Administrators (CAs) certify the eligibility of a rider entered in the regional rally.
7. At USPC Championships all Stable Managers must be a minimum 12 years of age and D-3 HM or up. Riders in the Introductory and Developing Horse/Rider divisions must be a minimum 12 years of age and certified D-3 Traditional/HSE or above. Riders in the Modified and Regular divisions must be a minimum of 12 years of age and certified C-1 Traditional/HSE or above.

USPC Championships include the following divisions and levels: Introductory, Developing Horse/Rider, Modified (which includes Large Pony and Horse I), and Regular (which includes Horse II, Horse III, and Horse IV).

8. Riders in regional rallies competing for a chance to ride in the USPC Championships must be challenged over a minimum of three courses, including two courses in which a portion of the fences are set to the maximum first round height and spread for that level as given in the specifications (see Appendix I). One of the rounds must have an equitation score.
9. At the Championship Rally, the rider and the same mount will compete at the level at which they have qualified at a regional Show Jumping rally.
10. Regional Supervisors are required to certify the eligibility of a rider entered in the Championships competition. The eligibility is determined from the original competition score sheets. The scores from the Regional Rally are required to be sent in with the Championships entry. The Show Jumping Committee requires that qualifiers have no more than 12 jumping faults over three qualifying rounds at their qualifying rally. (Time faults are not included.)
11. Any rider who has been eliminated for any reason in any round at a qualifying rally will not be eligible for the Championships Rally (not limited to qualifying rounds).

12. Additional Championships eligibility rules will be broadcast on DC/CA and RS Digests, posted on the website and published in the **Championships entry information**.

Article 2 – Eligibility of Horses and Ponies

1. All horses and ponies entered in USPC Show Jumping competitions must meet the requirements outlined in the **Mounts section of the USPC Policies and Guidelines in addition to:**
 - A. Be of any height, except when entered in a pony level of a Show Jumping competition, which shall be restricted to ponies not exceeding 14.2 hands, or as given in the specifications;
 - B. Be the rider's regular mount for Pony Club activities or, in the case of a newly acquired horse, the rider's intended regular mount;
 - C. Be ridden by only one rider in qualifying rounds or the rally grounds during a qualifying rally.

Article 3 – Determining Eligibility For Levels of Competition

1. Pony Specifications: It is recommended that all Ponies have a measurement card and if not they must be available to be measured as needed. Questions about eligibility may be referred to the Committee Chair.
 - A. Small Ponies—11.2-12.2 hands.
 - B. Medium Ponies—12.2-13.2 hands.
 - C. Large Ponies—13.2-14.2 hands.
2. Qualifying Divisions for Regional Rallies and National Championships (horses are eligible for any division not specified as pony, pony eligibility as below)
 - A. Introductory—May include ponies of all sizes.
 - B. Developing Horse/Rider—May include Medium and Large Ponies; distances in combinations will be adjusted accordingly.
 - C. Modified
 - Large Pony—(May include Medium and Large Ponies, and all ponies entered in this division must be prepared to jump the heights and spreads listed in the Specifications listed in Appendix I. Distances and combinations will be adjusted appropriately.)
 - Horse I
 - D. Regular
 - Horse II
 - Horse III
 - Horse IV
4. Any rally seeking to qualify riders for USPC Championships must offer divisions in which the courses will include a

SECTION III: Competition Rules

Chapter 3 – Scoring

Article 47 – General

1. Competitors are scored on a mathematical basis, with penalty faults being awarded for errors, which include disobediences, falls, knockdowns and time penalties committed between the start and finish lines. Passing through the start markers in the wrong direction before starting does not incur penalty.
2. The jumping and time faults added together give the competitor's score for his/her round. The time taken by competitors to complete their rounds may be taken into consideration to decide cases of equality of faults for first and subsequent places, according to the conditions set down for the competition.
3. In any round decided on time, the winner will be the competitor with the least faults in the fastest time. First, competitors are placed by faults, and then separated by the time taken to complete the course.
4. When a horse makes two or more faults at the same time at an obstacle, only the major fault counts; or, in the case of equal faults, only one will count. *Exception: Disobediences will count in addition.*
5. When an obstacle is composed of several elements in the same vertical plane, a fault at the top element is the only one penalized.
6. When an obstacle to be taken in one jump is composed of several elements not in the same vertical plane (oxer, triple bar, etc.), faults at several elements are penalized as one fault.
7. When an obstacle requires two or more jumps (combination or in-and-out), the faults committed at each obstacle are considered separately.
8. In cases of broken tack or loss of shoe, the rider must continue if he or she wishes to avoid penalty or may voluntarily withdraw. If a retention system should become unfastened, it must be re-fastened immediately. If a helmet comes off during a ride, the rider must dismount to replace hat under penalty of elimination. (See Article 64.23.) The clock does not stop. No other penalty is assessed beyond the time taken.
9. In all circumstances not specifically covered by these Rules, the Organizer, Steward and Judges shall make decisions in a sporting spirit to produce a fair and reasonable result approaching as nearly as possible the intent of these Rules. They may use the U.S. Equestrian Federation Rulebook as a guide.

Article 48 – Elimination Score

1. To calculate total faults for all riders who have been eliminated (over all levels in the division in that round), the Scorekeeper must add 20 faults to the worst score gained in that round and use that total for the eliminated riders in that round. *In regards to elimination scoring, "Division" indicates the competitors competing for the same set of ribbons and does NOT equate to the competition level division designation.*
2. The elimination score for each round, will be determined by the scores for that round only.
3. This applies to each division (each group receiving a set of ribbons), not to each level jumped.

Article 49 – Cumulative Scoring

1. **Individual Scoring:** When competitions involve more than one round of competition, the scoring is cumulative. That is, each competitor jumps a round; the jumping score in that round is totaled with the jumping score in all other rounds minus the Equitation score and Jump-Off bonus points, and then added to the total Horse Management score (factored by 0.25) to arrive at the total score for the competition. Equality of faults will be decided by the method described in Article 54.
2. Competitions may include individual riding awards at each level in addition to the team awards. These awards may be given on the basis of cumulative performance scoring, the Equitation score, horsemanship, sportsmanship or any combination thereof. Details of these awards must be given in the prize list for the competition.
3. **Team Scoring:** Teams are made up of four riders and a Stable Manager. For Team Scoring, only the best three of four riding scores in each round are to be totaled and included in the final score. Equitation Scores are included from the Equitation Round. (See Art. 52 Equitation Scoring*). Equitation and All Bonus Scoring (EQ, TYOL, JO) is included (one score for each rider, except as noted above*, no ghost scores). **All Horse Management scores are totaled, multiplied by the # rounds in the competition and multiplied by 0.2.** Horse Management scores include: four Turnout Inspection scores (Ghost score if needed), four Turnback scores for each round (Ghost score if needed), all scores from equipment inspection, daily sheets and any other sheets used for individual or team judging (See Ghost Scores, Article 50).
HM Score = # HM Penalties x # Rounds x 0.2.
4. Factored Horse Management Scores shall be limited to no more than 25 penalties per rider per day or 100 penalties per team per day.

SECTION III: Competition Rules

5. Overall team placing will be decided by using the formula below:

Overall Score = HM Score + Riding Score.

6. Awards may be given for Horse Management placing. All Horse Management scores are brought forward, including four Turnout Inspection scores, and four Turnback scores for each round. (Refer to Horse Management Handbook for breaking ties in Horse Management).

Article 50 – Ghost Scores for Horse Management

1. Any time a team needs a fourth score and they have only three, a Ghost Score is used. **This does not include riding scores or other instances where a score is dropped.**
2. This Ghost Score is made up by averaging the three available scores and using the average score as the Ghost Score.
3. Any team losing a fourth horse in the pre-competition soundness check or entering with only three riders shall be assigned a fourth Turnout Inspection score and all fourth turnback scores, by averaging the three available scores and using the Ghost Score.
4. Any team losing the third rider during the competition may continue to ride and will have the option of dropping from the team competition or being assigned elimination scores for the remaining rounds of competition.
5. The only time there is a ghost score created is when there are more scores required than there are available. There should never be a ghost score created with the worst score then dropped from that team.
6. In the event that a 3 man team becomes a 2 man team during the competition due to unsoundness of a mount or a rider.
 - A. Draw another competitor's number from the same division and their ride scores will become the 3rd riding score for the remainder of the competition. All competitors' numbers from that division must be in the draw hat, excluding Stable Managers
 - B. All Horse Management scores are the original rider's scores since they remain a part of the team.
 - C. This score is not to be used in a 4 man team's loss of a rider or mount. (Only used with a 3 man team rather than losing a team completely in a rally.)

Article 51 – Scoring the Jump-Off

1. Scoring consists of bonus (positive) points to increase the emphasis on the jumping phase.
2. Equality of clear rounds at each level are placed by the time taken to complete the course, with the fastest clear first, and so forth, to the slowest clear round.

3. Equality of jumping faults at each level are placed by the time taken to complete the course to separate those with equal faults, with the fastest with that number of faults ahead of the next slowest, etc.
4. Riders eliminated in the Bonus Round/Jump-Off will not receive bonus points. Neither do they receive penalty points for being eliminated. If there are only ten riders in the Jump-Off, they will be the tenth, but they will not receive any "credit" for the ride.

5. Each competitor in the jump-off receives bonus points based on his/her faults/placing, as follows:

A. Example:

1st =1.00 6th =.70

2nd =.90 7th =.65

3rd =.85 8th =.60

4th =.80 9th =.55

5th =.75 10th =.50

- B. In the case of ties with equal times, the ties will not be broken. The same points will be awarded to all tied riders. All ten places will still be awarded.
6. All other clear rounds, if any, in the jump-off receive .30 points.
 7. All other (non-clear) rounds, if any, which complete the Bonus Round without elimination receive .10 points.
 8. The bonus points are then subtracted from the cumulative score.
 9. COMPETITORS WITHDRAWING: A competitor not wishing to participate in a Jump-Off may be excused without penalty.

Article 52 – Scoring the Equitation Round (See Equitation Appendix 1, Part 8)

1. The jumper score will be recorded and added as on other rounds.
2. The equitation score will be recorded as a value between 100-1. This value will rank the riders.
3. The posted score will be the value divided by 100. I.E. a score awarded of 83 will be posted as .83; a score of 54 will be posted as a score of .54.
4. The equitation scores are positive scores, not penalty points.
5. The three best equitation scores will be used. (Eliminates need for a ghost score for short teams).

Article 53 – Scoring Take Your Own Line (TYOL) (See also Sec.II, Art. 34)

1. The round is first scored as a knock down round, with the following exception: