

Recommendations on choosing an Impartial Observer

The Impartial Observer (IO) is one of the most important positions during a Pony Club Certification at any level testing. Organizers are encouraged to choose an IO carefully in order to assure that the person taking on the position will be able to do assist in providing a positive environment.

The IO should expect to do the following throughout a testing:

- Be present from the beginning briefing to the final debriefing
- Observe the entire testing process. They will generally sit with the examiners and observe the riding and be present during the oral portion of the testings.
- The IO will stay in touch with the candidates throughout the testing to provide any assistance candidates may need
- The IO will stay in touch with parents and trainers that are observing the testing. They will attempt to liaison between the examiners and parents /trainers etc in order to answer questions and concerns
- The IO does not express an opinion or inquire as to the outcome of a candidate

With this in mind, an impartial observer needs to have the following characteristics:

- Basic information about USPC testing system. They should have a general understanding of the philosophy of testing and its general format.
- They should be impartial, neither involved in the testing program, involved with any candidates, or related to any candidates
- They will need good listening skills and will need be a good communicator
- They should have some conflict resolution skills at hand in order to help resolve issues as they may come up.
- They will need to be able to handle long days and extremes of weather.

Suggestions for choosing an IO:

- Generally, IOs should be at least 25 years old
- DC/CAs and other local leaders may make a good IO if they do not have candidates in the testing
- PC grads that have been through the testing program
- PC parents whose children are no longer active in Pony Club
- Local Level Examiners who do not have candidates in the testing
- If regions are close, someone from outside the region is ideal

It is suggested that the following are generally NOT suitable as an IO

- Anyone under 25 years of age
- Current Pony Club members
- National, Regional and Local officers/leaders that have candidates they are familiar with in the testing
- Anyone who has trained, prepped or taught a candidate in the testing
- Anyone who owns or trains a horse involved in the testing
- Anyone who also has other responsibilities at the testing such as organizing, hospitality etc.
- Anyone who is related to a candidate or NE at the testing

It is assumed that there will always be exceptions to the above suggestions. If you have questions about the suitability of someone to serve as an IO it is best to discuss it with the examiner appointed to the testing for a local testing or the PIP for a National testing.