



# What is Pony Club?

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## The United States Pony Clubs, Inc.

The United States Pony Club has existed for just over 50 years. It is an import from England and follows a similar format of the Pony Club from “over the pond”. There are also pony club groups in Canada, Australia and several other countries.

This national group directs the local club, has an annual meeting and

annual national competitions. There are many volunteer jobs that keep the United States Pony Club working. Its many committees maintain its policies and activities. It is constantly trying to improve and is driven by a large number of paid and volunteer employees. The national headquarters is located in

Lexington, KY on the grounds of the Kentucky Horse Park. The USPC website [www.ponyclub.org](http://www.ponyclub.org) is maintained by the national office. The website provides many resources which keep its members informed.



### Pony Club Pledge:

*“As a member of the United States Pony Club, 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.”*

## Great Lakes Region Pony Clubs

We are located in the Great Lakes Region. It includes the lower peninsula of MI along with 3 clubs in NE Indiana and another in NW Ohio. We are supported solely by volunteers. These adult volunteers are parents, friends, parents of those who have graduated as well as graduates of PC. The GLR also maintains a web site that has the regional calendar and other information.

The region has an elected executive board that helps to organize the group of clubs in our region, direct the calendar of events, keep clubs informed of national policies and procedures and conducts competitive rallies. This board is headed by a Regional Supervisor (RS) and assisted by Vice Regional Supervisors. It also has a Secretary, Treasurer, Regional Instructional Coordinator,

and Horse Management Organizer. These volunteers put in many hours of work for the region and its members.

Regional activities include certification preps, C level certifications, camps, rallies, leadership retreats and clinics. Most communications between the member and region are through the club DC.

## Your Local Pony Club



Each club is individually started in an area by interested families. Volunteer families in the club follow national and regional policies. Each club has a DC (District Commissioner), who is the leader. The DC is responsible for the paperwork and keeping the club compliant with national and regional policies. Each club must

also have a secretary and treasurer.

Each club is unique in its focus, direction and location. Each club sets its own calendar, meeting location and instructional topics within the Pony Club standards. The ages and interests of the members should direct the focus of the club using Pony Club materials.

We, as parents and volunteers, are the ones who make the local club succeed. It is our responsibility to support the club, the other members, as well as our own. The national, regional and club leaders all expect our active participation with our members to make Pony Club a thriving organization.

## Learning through Pony Club

Clubs use the Standards of Proficiency as a plan for instruction programs.

Certification tests are an evaluation of the members' progress through the levels and are designed to encourage the candidate to "show and tell" what he or she knows. Certifications are given in an effort to recognize achievement and encourage members to gain confidence, independence and good safety habits while working with mounts. Goal setting,

teaching and testing are good ways to accomplish this purpose. Each club is required to offer at least 2 certifications each year as opportunities to progress.

Pony Club does not group the children by age, but by riding level and unmounted knowledge. All members begin as unrated (UR). Most will quickly become a D1 and work through the D level in a couple years. The check lists (on the USPC website) show what the requirements are

for each certification. You as parents should be familiar with these requirements especially if your child is under 10. If your child is getting regular lessons from an instructor that is not familiar with PC, they should be given access to the checklists and standards. The certification system allows the individual to progress at their own pace, not by a set time table. You shouldn't expect your child to be the same rating as others their same age. Members can remain in Pony Club until age 25.

*D level testings are organized by the club. The region holds regular C1 and C2 level testings. C3, HB, B and A certifications are national testings conducted by examiners educated by USPC.*

## Certification levels

**D Certifications** are an introduction to riding, establishing safety habits and knowledge of the daily care of a horse and tack. The D learns to ride independently and securely at the walk, trot and canter and over low fences.

**C Certifications** show increasing control and confidence in all phases of

riding. The C learns to become an independent Horseman able to care for a mount and tack and to understand the reasons for what he or she is doing.

**The B Certification** is for the active horseman interested proficiency in riding and teaching. The B is able to ride experienced mounts with confidence and control.

**The A Certification** is the highest level. The A is able to ride mounts at various levels of schooling with judgment, tact and effectiveness; to train young mounts; and to retrain spoiled mounts.



## Pony Club Rallies

The Great Lakes Region holds annual rallies that allow the children to demonstrate the skills they have been practicing. Every member is awarded a ribbon as a team of 3 or 4 riders. There is also an unmounted “stable manager” that each team can have. Participation in rallies is not required, but is

encouraged. Most of our regional rallies are “qualifying rallies” that would allow the competitors to qualify for championships in either Lexington, VA or Lexington, KY sponsored by USPC. Most disciplines require that the riders be C1 or above to participate in championships. Every

three years USPC holds “festival” at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington, KY. This is a several day long set of clinics, both mounted and unmounted. It is encouraged that the younger clubbers go to their first festival unmounted. The next festival is in 2014.



## National Certifications

The HB, C3, B, HA and A are national certifications that are done throughout the country. (D level are done at the club level, while C1 and C2 are done regionally.) These could include extensive travel to another state. They are multi day tests. By the time the clubber has begun striving for this level, they are young adults.

The certifications are not always easy (at any level, but especially the national level) and could be a stressful time for the child, horse and parent. It is not automatic that the child will pass. There are opportunities to retake parts of the test, though there are guidelines for this. It could be that your child will fail and need to continue working for a

couple months and return to retake the entire certification. This is a wonderful growth opportunity and should be looked at as such.



## Suitable Mount

It is our responsibility as parents to have a suitable mount for our children. Other parents can help you connect with horses that may be for sale, but it is ultimately your responsibility to assess your child, the horse and

your financial commitment. USPC has a policy regarding mount suitability that you should be familiar with. USPC is primarily concerned with the safety of your child, other children and the horse. You can choose to

buy or lease, either is fine. If leasing, the horse/pony should be able to be transported to mounted meetings and rallies if you choose to participate in them.



## Resources

USPC Website:

[www.ponyclub.org](http://www.ponyclub.org)

Great Lakes Region  
Website:

greatlakesregionpc.  
weebly.com

Horse Sports currently  
in GLR:

Dressage

Quiz

Show Jumping

Eventing

Polocrosse\*

Fox Hunting\*

\*non-competitive

The local club is a first resource for many questions relating to Pony Club. However, there are other sources of information available. Your first tool is the Pony Club Manuals. The D manual is written with the inexperienced person in mind. Whether you are a "horse person" or not, you should read this book. If your child is less than 10, you should go over the manual with your child. Being informed about Pony Club's philosophies will increase your and your child's beneficial experiences with the group.

The national and regional web sites should be checked frequently for

updates. The regional web site is particularly relevant since the regional calendar is posted on the site. Clinics are often announced and applications made available through the DC. If your child is planning on attending a rally, you and the child should go over the rulebook for that discipline. Our region has quiz, show jumping, dressage and eventing rallies. The rulebooks can be downloaded from the national website. They can also be ordered from the USPC bookstore for about \$8.00. It is helpful to read through the manual before attending a rally.

Horse management (the non-riding stuff) is a focus of Pony Club. It is the

goal of Pony Club to make well rounded horse people, not just pretty riders. The Horse Management Handbook is a critical source of the expectations of clubbers at rallies. Read it. If your child is less than 10, you could highlight the relevant parts and be sure your child is aware of some of the things the club has not gone over. This Handbook is also full of the "safety stuff". Many of the practices are helpful to practice at home. It includes everything from helmet fit to cooling out a horse.

## Suitable Mount

## Fund Raising

The individual pony clubs may raise money for their own clubs. These activities vary from running food booths at rallies to selling holiday wreaths. These fund raising activities support the local club and allow the membership fees to be lowered. The local

club could use these funds to pay for certifications, stable manager rally fees, camps, rally kits, club libraries and meeting materials. Each club should also support their leadership in paying for mandatory meetings and retreats.



LOCAL PONY CLUB:

DC Name:

Phone Number: