

PONY TROT RULES & CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP

1 GENERAL INFORMATION

- 1.1** Harness Racing Victoria (HRV) conducts the Pony Trots program.
- 1.2** It is a condition of membership of the Pony Trots program ("PT") that the member will abide by these rules, any policies implemented by HRV and any reasonable direction of HRV.
- 1.3** These Rules have been developed to ensure the safe running of the Pony Trots program.
- 1.4** Members and their parents, guardians, supporters, friends and family acknowledge that the purpose of the Pony Trots program is to encourage participation in harness racing at grass roots level and to provide an opportunity for children to learn about the care and control of horses.
- 1.5** HRV endorse the *Australian Sports Commission Junior Sport Codes of Behaviour* and expect all parties involved in the Pony Trots program to comply with these Codes as they apply to our sport.
- 1.6** These Rules may be amended by HRV from time to time.
- 1.7** Any matter not provided for in these rules shall be determined by HRV, which will be final and binding on all members.

2 DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATION

- 2.1** In these Rules:
 - (a) "Clerk of the Course" means the official Clerk of the Course appointed by HRV or a harness racing club at the race meeting.
 - (b) "Steward" means the person appointed as the Steward on the day of the races or trials.
 - (c) The terms "member" and "driver" are interchangeable.
 - (d) Any task to be performed by HRV may be delegated by it to another duly qualified person.
 - (e) Unless a contrary intention appears, words importing a gender include any other gender, and words in the singular include the plural and vice versa.
 - (f) An appropriate HRV Licence refers to a Stablehand, Trainer or Driver Licence approved by HRV for the current harness racing season.

3 MEMBERSHIP

- 3.1** Children between the ages of 6 and 16 years are eligible for membership of PT. If an applicant turns 17 after 1 September, he or she is eligible to compete for that season or until he or she applies for a trial permit.
- 3.2** An application must be made in writing on the prescribed form and must be accompanied by the appropriate fee, as determined by HRV from time to time.
- 3.3** HRV reserves the right to request proof of age identification.
- 3.4** HRV must determine whether to approve or reject an application for membership.
- 3.5** Children located interstate wanting to compete in Victoria must complete the appropriate application form and be registered with PTV before they compete in a Victorian race.

4 ELIGIBILITY TO COMPETE IN PTV RACES

- 4.1** Only members can participate in PT races.
- 4.2** A member's competency to drive will be assessed by HRV. All members must be assessed as being competent in order to be eligible to compete in a pony race.

- 4.3 A member with a pony must register the pony with HRV prior to the member's first race or trial.
- 4.4 All ponies must race at a minimum of two Victorian race meetings before they will be eligible to compete in the Country Cup circuit.
- 4.5 Interstate competitors must be qualified in their respective state before they can compete in a PTV race.

5 PONIES

- 5.1 All ponies must be registered with HRV before their first race or trial start in Victoria
- 5.2 All ponies must be assessed by HRV prior to the pony participating in a trial or race.
- 5.3 The decision of HRV to register or refuse to register a pony for participation is final.
- 5.4 Ponies must be 13hh or under. Ponies will be measured if there is a height dispute.
- 5.5 Pony stallions are excluded, as are any registered or freeze branded standardbreds.
- 5.6 Ponies must have reached the age of two to compete in a race or trial

6 RACES

- 6.1 Non-Country Cup races are discretionary handicaps.
- 6.2 The winning pony of a Country Cup final race will be handicapped back 20 metres in all instances.
- 6.3 If a pony has been unplaced on 2 occasions in a race, the pony will be handicapped forward 10 metres.
- 6.4 Field selection of races is determined by HRV and its decision is final.
- 6.5 A minimum of 4 ponies in a field is required before a race can be conducted.
- 6.6 If a scratching is received the morning of a race meeting leaving the field with only 3 runners, the race will go ahead.
- 6.7 Ponies which gallop excessively and or interfere with other runners may be relegated or disqualified by the Steward.
- 6.8 If a pony gallops/breaks gait during a race its driver must take immediate action to restrain the pony to its correct gait (trotting) to avoid disqualification.
- 6.9 If a pony breaks gait during a race and the Steward is of the opinion that advantage was gained or interference with another runner occurred, the Steward may disqualify or relegate the pony and driver.
- 6.10 Whips are prohibited at all times.
- 6.11 A pony that gallops across the finish line may be relegated or disqualified.
- 6.12 A member who fails to comply with these rules is guilty of an offence and may be penalised

7 BEHAVIOUR OF MEMBERS

- 7.1 Any member whose behaviour is deemed to bring HRV into disrepute may have his or her membership cancelled and accordingly, nominations refused.
- 7.2 All members must present themselves and their ponies in a professional manner when competing.
- 7.3 Parents/Guardians of PT members must also obey these Rules or they may be banned from attending future Pony Trot events.
- 7.4 Pony Trot participants are not permitted to enter the driver's rooms for any reason when NOT competing at that race meeting.
- 7.5 PT participants and their connections are bound by the Australian Harness Racing Rules and subject to AHRR 188, 188A, 189 – 194, 195, 195A, 196, 196A and 196 B. (For the purposes of the above 'connections' include but are not limited to the owners or lessees of pony or an immediate family member of a participant).

8 DRESS STANDARDS AND EQUIPMENT STANDARDS OF MEMBERS

- 8.1** All members must ensure their personal appearance, racing attire and ponies are clean, neat and tidy.
- 8.2** When driving in races, members must always wear;
- (a) Registered colours
 - (b) An approved safety helmet
 - (c) An approved body protector (vest) to the equestrian standard Beta 1, Beta 2 and or Beta 3
 - (d) White Pants
 - (e) Riding boots or good quality black or brown boots. NB: No other footwear including runners or sneakers of any kind will be allowed
- 8.3** A helmet approved by Harness Racing Australia must be worn by the member at all times when he or she is in the sulky.
- 8.4** Sulkies must be of an approved standard as set out in schedule 1.
- 8.5** All sulkies must have a dustsheet affixed.
- 8.6** All harness/gear must be safe and meet all OH&S requirements.
- 8.7** Any persons wearing open toed shoes, sandals, thongs etc. will be refused entry to the pony/horse area due to OH&S requirements.
- 8.8** American style sulkies will not be permitted unless approved modifications have been made to the foot rests, and a cross bar attached. Approval may be granted by HRV on inspection.

9 STARTING PROCEDURES AND RACING ETIQUETTE

- 9.1** Children/Parents/Guardians are not permitted to ride on the side of a member's sulky at any time. Drivers are not permitted to race with their feet out of the stirrups or on the dustsheet. Offending drivers will be automatically disqualified.
- 9.2** Drivers shall at all times obey the instructions of the Clerk of the Course.
- 9.3** A driver must not delay the start of a race or be late onto the track.
- 9.4** The pony driven by any driver who shouts loudly, makes improper noises or attempts to do anything which interferes with the progress of another runner may be disqualified.
- 9.5** The pony driven by a driver who use their reins to whip their ponies may be disqualified.
- 9.6** Drivers shall not before, during, or after a race, drive in a manner which in the opinion of the Stewards is careless, reckless, intimidatory, improper, incompetent, foul or likely to endanger participants or ponies.
- 9.7** The pony driven by a driver who looks behind during a race may be disqualified after one warning has been issued.
- 9.8** Drivers must at all times keep a straight racing line after passing another competitor (no weaving in or out) or the pony driven by that driver may be disqualified.
- 9.9** Once on the racetrack, drivers must proceed immediately to their handicap mark. If the driver's pony will not stand, the driver must have a handler holding the pony until the starter gives the signal to race. All handlers must hold a current licence with HRV.
- 9.10** If a member's pony requires a handler and the handler is not present the pony may be declared a non-starter.
- 9.11** Handlers must not run and cheer from the infield; this may result in disqualification of their pony.
- 9.12** Handlers must not push, pull or conduct any action that could advantage the driver at the start of a race.
- 9.13** A member who fails to comply with these Rules is guilty of an offence and may be penalised.

10 NOMINATIONS

- 10.1** All nominations are to be directed to HRV.
- 10.2** Nominations will close 5pm the day the race horse fields are released to the public.
- 10.3** If a member has nominated (via phone/fax/email) for a race and is unable to attend, the members must telephone the Pony Trot Representative of that race meeting no later than 10:00am on the morning of the race. Failure to abide by this rule may result in refusal of future nominations.
- 10.4** It is the member's duty to check start times of races at all venues.
- 10.5** All nominations must be made online through the PTV website or by sending an email to HRV.
- 10.6** Late nominations will be assessed on a case by case arrangement.

11 JUDGES

- 11.1** Races shall be judged by HRV, the Steward and/or any other person appointed by HRV. Where possible the official race day judge will be used.
- 11.2** The Judge's decision is final.
- 11.3** The Judge may correct a mistake.

12 OFFENCES/DISPUTES

- 12.1** The Steward and/or a HRV delegate will determine if an offence has been committed and may determine the appropriate penalty if they consider a penalty should be imposed. Any of the penalties prescribed by Australian Harness Racing Rule 256 may be imposed.
- 12.2** All decisions are final.

Schedule 1

SULKY & WHEELS

Sulky Standard

- No less than 900mm and no wider than 1200mm
- No longer than 2750mm
- The sulky shafts, frame and undercarriage shall be manufactured from steel or another material if approved by HRA. Accepted steels are mild steel, low carbon alloy steel, low alloy steel (including chrome-molybdenum alloys, chrome-manganese alloys, etc) and structural stainless steel alloys with a minimum tensile strength of 350MPa and a minimum elongation at break of 20%.
- All edges must be rounded, including shaft tips
- Wooden sulkies, including shafts are not permitted (as of 1 July 2017)

The sulky shall contain:

- Two wheels,
- Undercarriage,
- Two shafts for attachment to the horse,
- A driver's seat, and
- Driver's footrests.

Wheel Standard

The wheel diameter shall be in the range of 508mm (20") to 660.4mm (26") for Ponies and no smaller than 406.4mm (16") for Shetlands - but to be viewed in the context of what is appropriate given the height of the pony.

The wheel shall be:

- Attached to the sulky via a conventional T-bar axle or other approved axles
- If spoked, be covered on both sides by a disc of approved brand.
- The tyres shall be an approved type and be no more than 50mm in width.
- Wheels shall be manufactured from approved materials only. Wooden wheels are not permitted.

Other

At all times whilst in the sulky, licensees shall wear an approved helmet, wear an approved body protector, keep both feet in the sulky footrests and sit on the end of the reins.

No competitor will be permitted to have a passenger on the side of the sulky at any time. Licensees must keep their bodies within the confines of the sulky at all times.

Schedule 2

PONY WELFARE

Competitors, officials and administrators acknowledge and accept that at all times the welfare of the pony must be paramount in turn they will determine if a pony is competent and fit to compete.

The following code must be read in conjunction with State Control Bodies equine welfare policies and adhered to as a minimum:

General Pony Welfare

a) Good Horse Management

Stabling and feeding must be compatible with the best pony management practices. Clean, good quality hay, feed and water must always be available.

b) Training Methods

Ponies must only undergo training that matches their physical capabilities and level of maturity. They must not be subjected to methods which are abusive or cause fear.

c) Farriery and Gear

Foot care and shoeing must be of a high standard. Gear must be designed and fitted to avoid the risk of pain or injury.

d) Transport

During transportation, ponies must be fully protected against injuries and other health risks. Vehicles must be safe, well ventilated, maintained to a high standard, disinfected regularly and driven by competent personnel. Competent handlers must always be available to manage the pony.

e) Transit

All journeys must be planned carefully, and Horses allowed regular rest periods with access to food and water.

Fitness to Compete

a) Fitness and competence

Participation in Competition must be restricted to fit pony's and participants of proven competence. Ponies must be allowed suitable rest period between training and competitions; additional rest periods should be allowed following travelling.

b) Health status

No pony deemed unfit to compete may compete or continue to compete - veterinary advice must be sought whenever there is any doubt.

c) Doping and Medication

Any action or intent of doping and illicit use of medication constitute a serious welfare issue and will not be tolerated. After any veterinary treatment, sufficient time must be allowed for full recovery before Competition.

d) Pregnant/recently foaled mares

In accord with Australian Harness Racing Rule; 103B, a mare or filly shall not race or perform track work after day 120 of its pregnancy or with foal at foot. Prior to 120 days if the club/event organiser is concerned about the ability of a pregnant mare/filly to compete a vet check can be requested.

e) Misuse of Gear or Equipment

Abuse of a pony, including by the use of approved gear and equipment will not be tolerated.

Events Must not Prejudice Pony Welfare

a) Competition Areas

Ponies must be trained and compete on suitable and safe surfaces. All competition conditions must be designed with the safety of the pony in mind.

b) Ground Surfaces

All ground surfaces on which ponies walk, train or compete must be designed and maintained to reduce factors that could lead to injury.

c) Extreme Weather

Competitions must not take place in extreme weather conditions that may compromise welfare or safety of the pony. Provision must be made for cooling conditions for ponies after competing.

d) Stabling at Events

Stables or tie up areas must be safe, hygienic, comfortable, well ventilated and of sufficient size for the type of pony. Washing-down areas and water must always be available.

Humane Treatment of Horses

a) Veterinary Treatment

Veterinary expertise must always be available at an event. This can include an on-call local veterinarian. If a pony is injured or exhausted during a competition, the pony must stop competing and a veterinary evaluation performed.

b) Competition Injuries

The incidence and cause of all injuries sustained in competition should be closely monitored, with risk factors examined carefully to identify ways to minimise future injuries.

c) Euthanasia

If injuries are sufficiently severe a pony may need to be euthanised on humane grounds by a veterinarian as soon as possible, with the sole aim of minimising suffering.

d) Retirement

The Association must be notified of the pony's retirement from Mini Trots, including what is happening with the pony (family pet, sold etc....).

Ponies must be treated sympathetically and humanely when retired from competition.

e) Sale

Ponies that are sold must be notified to relevant authorities and details updated in registries to comply with State Government Legislation.

Education

Harness Racing Australia (HRA) and Mini Trotting Associations urge all those involved in Mini Trots to undertake any and all available education in order to improve themselves and the care and management of their ponies. Mini Trotting Associations Code of Conduct