

THE NATIONAL PONY SOCIETY



2024 BRITISH RIDING PONY BREED STANDARDS AND SHOWING RULES

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BRITISH RIDING PONY

BREED DESCRIPTION

The British Riding Pony is a breed, established over a hundred years ago, originally by the Polo Pony Stud Book Society in 1893. However, 20 years later it became the National Pony Society and to this day it is the custodian of the Stud Book. The Stud Book was formed to encourage the breeding, registration and improvement of both Riding Ponies and at that time all the native breeds too, though they now have their own stud books.

The foundation blood lines of all the British Riding Ponies were Polo Ponies, Thoroughbreds, Arabs and the British Native Breeds (mostly Welsh or Dartmoor). An increasing number of the ponies now being registered with the NPS are the progeny of British Riding Pony sires and dams and through many generations of selective breeding a very high standard has been achieved.

British Riding Ponies are of three categories or types – Show Ponies, Show Hunter Ponies and Sports/Competition Ponies. The Sports Ponies result from cross breeding with Sport Horses or Ponies.

All types have outstanding quality while retaining the pony characteristics of good temperament, hardiness, soundness and surefootedness. They provide an ideal mount for today's competitive riders and are successful in a wide variety of equine competitions and disciplines.

The British Riding Pony is much respected and sought after world wide and some of the best blood lines have been exported, predominantly to Australia, New Zealand and America.

SHOW PONY BREED DESCRIPTION

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: The Show Pony should have elegance, quality and refinement but be of true pony character. Show Ponies should have a long, low, sweeping, floating action from the shoulder and cover the ground with effortless ease. The Show Pony should look like a scaled down version of the show hack.

HEIGHT: Up to 148 cms.

COLOUR: All colours are allowed.

HEAD: An alert intelligent outlook. A slightly dished / chiseled outline, refined under the throat-line is preferred. The head should be well set on the neck, having good flexion at the poll.

EYES: Bold, intelligent.

EARS: Neat and small.

NECK AND SHOULDER: Long sweeping refined neck set on to a well laid back shoulder giving a good length of rein and a good prominent riding wither.

BODY: Good depth of girth, deep heart room. The wither must be clearly defined and the back strong, not long, with enough scope to carry a saddle. A good length of quarter and a well set on tail, carried gaily.

LIMBS: Limbs with quality bone in proportion to the body. Good broad, flat knees; short flat cannon bones and fetlock joints large enough to stand ridden work. Fore limbs neither back of the knee nor over at the knee. The hind legs to have a strong second thigh and good, clean hocks. The pastern should be sloping. Show Ponies should have open feet.

ACTION: Free, low to the ground, flowing, extravagant action, straight from the shoulder. A good length of stride and engagement of the hocks. All movement should be balanced, straight and true.

PERFORMANCE: The Show Pony should demonstrate a light and obedient way of going with easy transitions through its paces. While the gallop is not an essential, the show pony should show an extension in canter.

SHOW HUNTER PONY BREED DESCRIPTION

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: The Show Hunter Pony should combine quality with bone and substance. It must display a workmanlike appearance while still retaining show-ring quality. It should be sure footed and have a strong, effective action and be capable of giving a good day's hunting. It should resemble a scaled down version of the middleweight hunter.

HEIGHT: Up to 153 cms.

COLOUR: All colours are allowed.

HEAD: A good honest head with a good width of forehead, still showing pony characteristics but size in proportion to the body. The head should be well set on the neck.

EYES: Bold, intelligent.

EARS: Neat and in proportion to the head.

NECK AND SHOULDER: Plenty of length in front of the saddle with a sloping shoulder, a good length of rein and a good prominent riding wither. The neck should be long but not swan-like and may be deep as it comes out of the shoulder.

BODY: Substantial body with a frame and limbs in proportion to it. The wither must be clearly defined and the back strong, not long, with enough scope to carry a saddle. A good length of quarter and the tail should be carried in a relaxed position such that, when viewed from behind at the walk, it swings like a pendulum from side to side.

LIMBS: Plenty of good strong quality hard bone which shows no sign of roundness. Sufficient substance to carry a deep and compact body. Joints should be large in size and flat in aspect. Fore limbs neither back of the knee nor over at the knee. Show Hunter Ponies should have strong second thighs, clean hocks, and an open foot. All of the above provide hardy limbs suitable for significant work.

ACTION: Correct and workmanlike movement with good engagement of the hind quarters but without the extravagance of the Show Pony in front. The movement should come from the shoulder and not the elbow and have slightly more knee elevation than the Show Pony. This type of action suits the rough terrain of the hunting field.

PERFORMANCE: The show hunter pony should be forward going and workmanlike in its attitude, remaining obedient with easy transitions. The gallop is important and should show a change of rhythm to four time, a lowering of the body and a lengthening of the stride. It should come easily back to hand as it comes back to canter.

SPORTS/COMPETITION PONY BREED DESCRIPTION

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: The Sports Pony should have the structure, quality, bone, substance and movement expected of a really high class competition animal for dressage, jumping or eventing whilst retaining pony characteristics. Sports Ponies should have an athletic action and purposeful way of going.

HEIGHT: Up to 158 cms.

COLOUR: All colours are allowed.

HEAD: An alert intelligent outlook with a good width of forehead. The head should be well set on the neck, having good flexion at the poll.

EYES: Bold, intelligent.

EARS: Alert, need not be small.

NECK AND SHOULDER: Long yet strong neck set on to a well laid back shoulder giving a good length of rein and a good prominent riding wither.

BODY: Good depth of girth, deep heart room. The wither must be clearly defined and the back strong, not long, with enough scope to carry a saddle. A good length of quarter.

LIMBS: Sufficient quality bone in proportion to the body, flat knees, strong second thighs, clean hocks, sloping pasterns and an open foot. Fore limbs neither back of the knee nor over at the knee and upright pasterns should be penalized. All of the above are required for a variety of competition work.

ACTION: Free, athletic, straight movement from the shoulder. A good length of stride and engagement of the hocks. Good natural balance and rhythmical movement showing plenty of impulsion. Versatile impression overall.

PERFORMANCE: Depending on the discipline for which it is destined, the sports/competition pony must demonstrate athletic ability and obedience at all times with elevated paces in front and strong action behind. If required it must be able to perform a dressage test and/or over jumps.

BRITISH RIDING PONY

SHOWING RULES AND GUIDELINES

NB: This section should be read in conjunction with the current version of the NPS Showing and Competition Rules book which is published each year and issued to all NPS members. This section focuses on information relevant to people showing British Riding Ponies in NPS competitions and it includes some specific rules, taken from the NPS Rules book, as well as useful guidelines.

1. General

- 1.1 Pony age is calculated from 1st January in the year of birth. Ponies are one year old on 1st January in the year after they are born.
- 1.2 Ridden ponies must be four years old or over.

2. Stallions and Colts

- 2.1 All stallions and colts 2 years old or over must hold a Stallion Licence issued by **the National Pony Society or a relevant breed society.**
- 2.2 In the interest of safety all stallions and colts, two years old or over must be suitably bitted and led by a handler that has attained their 14th birthday before January 1st of the current year.
- 2.3 Riders of stallions not exceeding 128 cms must have attained their **12th birthday before January 1st of the current year. Riders of stallions exceeding 128 cms must have attained their 14th birthday before January 1st of the current year.**

3. Mares

- 3.1 For showing purposes, females are acknowledged as being Brood Mares when four years old or over with a foal at foot. A mare that has lost her foal in the current year may, on production of a vet's certificate, compete in brood mare classes.
- 3.2 Barren mares are defined as mares without a foal at foot and not in foal. Barren mares may not compete in Brood Mare classes.
- 3.3 No mare with a foal at foot can be shown in a ridden class.
- 3.4 Brood mares may be shown in a leather head collar or any bridle.

4. Youngstock

- 4.1 Youngstock may be required to be measured on the day of the show before their classes. They must comply with the heights stated in the rules for youngstock of different ages and expected adult heights.
- 4.2 Youngstock should be shown in a leather head collar or show bridle.

5. Foals

- 5.1 All foals must be at least four weeks old on the day of the show and must accompany their dam into the ring and be led alongside the mare as much as possible.
- 5.2 All foals to be shown in a halter or leather head collar. No foal to be shown in any bit of any kind.
- 5.3 At foal shows
 - Foals must be weaned.
 - They must not be under 20 weeks old.
 - They must only be shown in a halter or head collar, not in a bit of any type.
 - No foal to be lunged.
 - No foal to be full body clipped.

6. Trimming

- 6.1 In all cases manes should be pulled. Tails should be pulled or plaited and banded – cut square across at the bottom at a length just below the point of the hock when the tail is carried. Razored/clipped tails are discouraged.
- 6.2 Ears may be trimmed inside as well as outside. Long hairs on the jaw line may also be trimmed.
- 6.3 Feather and heels should be trimmed.
- 6.4 Quarter marks and flashes are usual on Show Ponies and Show Hunter Ponies, those on Show Hunter Ponies being limited to simple basic patterns that do not distract from the workmanlike image.
- 6.5 Whiskers are **not** to be trimmed.

7. Turnout – Ponies

- 7.1 Manes must be plaited in all showing classes, except foals where plaiting is optional.
- 7.2 Ponies in Novice Ridden classes must be shown in a snaffle bit. In other ridden classes a double bridle is standard but not compulsory. The judge can take into account the suitability of the bridle and bit, based on the rider's competence and the way the pony is going in the class.
- 7.3 All ponies in Leading Rein classes must be shown in a snaffle bit. The leading rein must be attached to the noseband only and the reins must go directly from the bit to the rider's hands.
- 7.4 Coloured browbands are popular for Show Ponies. For Show Hunter Ponies and Sports Ponies the bridle may have a plain, laced or plaited browband. Colts may be shown in brass browbands. Nosebands should be plain but can be broader depending on the size of the pony's head. Martingales are not acceptable.
- 7.5 **Saddles should be well fitting. The use of a plain coloured numnah is optional.**
- 7.6 Boots are not acceptable except in classes where jumping is included.
- 7.7 Ridden stallions must display a stallion bridle marker. In hand stallions (2 years old and over) are advised to display a stallion bridle marker.

8. Turnout – Riders and Handlers

- 8.1 Riders, handlers and grooms must, at all times, present themselves in the show ring neatly and smartly dressed.
- 8.2 Handlers should wear a hat and gloves and carry a stick.
- 8.3 Handlers aged 14 years and under must wear correctly secured British standard skull caps/riding hats.
- 8.4 Correctly secured Skull Caps/Riding Hats that meet one of the following current Safety Standards/specifications **MUST** be worn by all Riders of all ages. All PAS 015; VG1; (BS) EN1384 2017; ASTM F1163 04a onwards; SNELL E2001; SNELL E2016; AS/NZS 3838 2003 onwards. The most recent updates to the list are the addition of SNELL E2016 and EN1384 (2017); the newest version of the SNELL Standard is accepted to the list; the newest version of the EN1384 Standard is also accepted to the list. Handlers of ponies in In-Hand Classes aged 14 years and under must wear a correctly secured skull caps/riding hat that meets one of the above standards.
- 8.5 The wearing of spurs in NPS classes is forbidden.
- 8.6 Whips/canes must not exceed an overall length of 76 cms (30 inches).
- 8.7 **Jodhpurs or breeches should be canary, cream or fawn. The style of boots is optional.**
- 8.8 Black/navy jackets are standard for riders of Show Ponies. Tweed jackets are standard for riders of Show Hunter Pony and Sports Ponies.
- 8.9 Shirts should be light in colour and worn with a tie.
- 8.10 Gloves should be worn.
- 8.11 Jewellery must not be worn.