



Your First Mounted Rally

Hopefully you have attended the Everything But The Horse Rally so you have a basic understanding of the parts of a rally. Now that you are going to your first mounted rally, there are a few more things you need to know.

The success of the rally depends on good preparation and the team working well together with everyone doing her share. You have to rely on each other, as parents are not allowed to be involved with what you are doing once the rally starts.

As a team member, your responsibility is to:

1. Be prepared --- clean pony, tack and clothes; read the rulebooks so you know the discipline rules, etc
2. Seek out the information you need and ask questions so you can be prepared
3. Be a good team member --- do your job and be ready to help others
4. Demonstrate good sportsmanship
5. Be respectful of your stable manager and adults running the rally

The following items will be helpful and can be found at the USPC website:

(www.ponyclub.org) Click on “forms” and then the letter of the document:

- Formal inspection standards (click H and then look for HM: formal inspection standards D1-D3)
- Sample stall card (click S for Stall card) -- lots of times teams create their own so check with your stable manager
- Overnight rally equipment list (click H for HM: Phase scoresheet: Equipment checklist overnight rallies) --- not all of this is required for a one day rally, but if you go the night before you will want the extra items

Team Organization: The Stable Manager for your team should encourage you to get together as a team to go over the rally equipment and plan for extra equipment that each member needs to bring. If you don't hear from the stable manager two weeks before the rally, you should contact her.

Riding Practice: The team may want to get together for extra lessons or practice sessions. You can coordinate these with our instructor or an older, experienced club member.

Rally attire: Generally for D rallies, safe and neat attire is acceptable. There is no need to have correctly formal or informal attire. You can coordinate with your team members, but

club polos or sweatshirts (without hoods) with tan breeches or jodhpurs (with straps) would be good. Don't forget the other important elements which include proper footwear, helmet and pony club pin. Have something to wear over your riding clothes while you are grooming so you are clean and ready for inspection. Proper footwear is required at all times in the barns. Tall boots are preferred for riding. Rubber ones are fine. Half-chaps maybe allowed, check the rulebook.

Formal Inspection: This is much like the inspection you have at a rating. You use the same information to introduce yourself and your horse. Review the formal inspection sheet to see exactly what is expected at your rating level for you, your horse and your tack. Check your tack well in advance to be sure that all stitching is secure and that everything is in good repair. You won't be allowed to ride with equipment that is not safe.

Before your first ride, you will have a formal inspection (don't be late!) and afterward a turnback inspection where they check that your horse and tack have been cared for properly. The next time before you ride you will only have a safety check. Never mount up with out a safety check!

General Information: The club rally coordinator should give you a copy of the entry form which will give you lots of information about the rally schedule, food available at the rally along with where to stay, when to arrive, etc. Often you can have lunch with your parents. It is always a good idea to have juice, water and snacks in the tack room. The rally entry packet also should give you information about lodging or camping.

Rulebooks/Written tests: Each discipline has its own rulebook (show jumping, dressage, games, etc.). In addition, the rally will be governed by the Horse Management Handbook, another rulebook. Information from both of these rulebooks will be included on the written test along with information from your rating level. The club has at least one copy of the rulebooks. You can download these at the USPC website on the forms page under R for Rulebooks.

Get familiar with these rulebooks! It makes the whole rally experience much easier as you know what is expected and you will do better on the written test. In preparing for the rally, plan study time.

Travel & Trailer Use: Parents and team members should discuss travel plans and "pony-pooling". (When to leave, how many trailers to take, etc.) Think about the horses' sizes and any special travel issues. Decide who will haul the rally equipment.

At many rallies, trailers are used for tack rooms and feed rooms so plan ahead which trailers to use and think about how the equipment can be stored in them. Sometimes it is nice to have a tarp to put down in the back of a trailer.

Parents: While you can't be in the barns with the team members, you do have important roles to play. Each team is required to have a chaperone, who is to be on the rally grounds as long as the team is there. Most rally organizers require three parent volunteers to help with various jobs. There is a **neutral zone** where you can go to meet the kids during the rally. A member of the horse management staff can let the team know if you need to see someone or you can make advance plans with the kids.

As your child is preparing for the rally, take an interest in what they are doing. Help them to stay on track and make sure all the needed preparation gets done. It seems like a lot of work the first time a child goes to a rally, but it gets easier each time. Good horse management practices on a daily basis make preparing for rallies and ratings easier!

Upon arrival at the rally site, parents can help unload rally equipment and carry it to the tack room, but not set up. They also can help with the horses. Once the rally officially starts, it is hands off.

Rally Equipment: The club has most of the equipment that the team needs with the exception of extra tack items that need to fit the horses or people. For example, you must have an extra halter and a girth that would properly fit any of the horses you take. If one person rides a 16.2 hand horse and someone else rides a 14.1 hand pony, then you need more than one extra. All extra tack must be cleaned to inspection standards of highest rated rider.

You should expect to get together with your stable manager in advance to go through the equipment, make sure everything is in order and plan on who will bring which extra items. Plenty of equipment for cleaning and/or stripping stalls makes the job easier, even though only one manure fork is required.

Look closely at your own grooming kit to see that you have all required items. You should have double ended snaps for your water buckets.

Feed: Most D rallies are technically one-day rallies, but usually you arrive the night before. Check with your stable manager about how to pack grain, hay and other feed for your horse. Don't put hay in plastic garbage bags. It either needs to be weighed and labeled by feeding or the team should have a scale for weighing the hay. You will need to have a feed chart so anyone would know how to feed your horse in your absence. All amounts should be listed as a weight or a weight and volume together. (i.e. 6 ounces (1 Cup) of Strategy, or 5 lbs. (1 flake) of grass hay)

Rally Meeting: At the start of each rally there is a meeting where you will hear from the organizer and the Chief Horse Management Judge (CHMJ). It is important for the whole team to be at this meeting as lots of critical information will be given. It is a good idea for parents to attend this meeting as observers.

Ask Questions! More than likely, the stable manager has rallied at least once before and will have lots of ideas and information as will other club members and parents. They will be happy to help you.

Sample One-Day Rally Schedule

6:00 am	Barns open
7:00	Rally meeting (the whole team should attend and parents, too)
7:30	Volunteer & Chaperone meeting Coaches meeting if it is a show jump rally. No coaches for dressage.
8:15	Jog outs
9:00	Formal inspections begin --- you will have a time assigned for this.
10:00	Riding begins
Noon	Lunch

12:30	Safety checks begin
1:30	Afternoon rides begin
4:00	Awards and time to pack up and go home

From the USPC Policies on Rallies:

Section 3. Pony Clubber's Responsibilities.

- * Be prepared and work for the good of the team.
- * Have a cooperative attitude.
- * Respect organizers' efforts and the facility... leave the area in better condition than you found it.
- * Take the time to make new friends in the region.
- * Thank the organizers for their work in planning the competition.

Section 4. Parents Responsibilities.

It is the responsibility of the parents to get the child (and horse) to the rally in a calm rested, but prepared state at or before the scheduled arrival time. Except for helping to unload heavy items, the parent can relax and enjoy the event, watching with a positive attitude and good sportsmanship, allowing the child the freedom to compete without parental "guidance."