

## **Upper Level Candidates --- What to Expect**

The first step to take is to meet with your parents, DC and instructor(s) late this summer or early in the fall to discuss your goals and schedules to qualify for upper level ratings next year. Club programs do not generally prepare candidates for upper level ratings; candidates should plan on taking regular instruction outside of Pony Club group lessons and should be riding regularly throughout the winter in order to be able to sufficiently participate in assessments and preps at the level being sought. You will be required to file an "intent to rate" form by January 1, 2009 along with a non-refundable \$50 deposit per rating. This deposit will be applied toward mounted or unmounted preps.

For the mounted tests (C3, B and A) there will be two winter assessments given by the region: November and December can be expected. Qualified national examiners will be used that will do an assessment of your skills compared to the standards which will include written notes for you. Attendance will be required at one of the two but you may attend both. Two mounted preps will be offered in late spring and early summer to include riding in the open. Minimum attendance will be required. Attendance at a longeing and bandaging prep will also be obligatory.

Candidates should hope to come away from assessments and preps with an idea of where they currently meet standard and where they don't meet standard, and will receive written feedback to that effect. In order to more likely meet standard, candidates should be regularly taking lessons from instructors with a pony club emphasis. Instructors with a strictly hunter/jumper or eventing specialty may not fully understand the pony club standards which puts the candidate at a learning disadvantage. Networking with candidates and others in the region will help you find a qualified instructor in your area.

For the unmounted tests: H-B and H/H-A, at least one prep will be provided by the region to assist you in your preparation. There will be a minimum attendance requirement for the candidates of one one-day prep.

Locations for the assessments and preps will be determined based on facility accommodations and location of the majority of candidates. This can vary year to year. Costs will be based on the number of expected candidates. Oregon candidates are expected to prep in the Oregon Region and regional budgets are based upon these commitments. Only extraordinary exceptions (such as attending University in another region) will be considered by the committee and approved only by the RS. Parents may be asked to help in these activities by organizing meals and snacks, moving jumps, removing manure from the arena, by videotaping their candidate, if desired, and in other ways. Upper level candidates will be expected to dress in a professional manner. They will be provided with contact information for the other candidates and are encouraged to study together, to carpool, and to communicate with each other regarding instructional opportunities, etc.

The USPC National Office has found that there is a higher pass rate among candidates who have taken clinics and preps with a National Examiner. Each region is urged to provide these opportunities for its members; the Oregon Region's upper level programs are similar to those provided by the Northwest Region and others. Candidates are also encouraged to take advantage of opportunities to ride with USPC National Examiners

outside of the mandatory program, whenever possible. Check regional calendars for these opportunities. In addition, there are excellent books and videos that candidates should become familiar with during their rating year.

Upper level ratings have traditionally been held in the summer (July and August) in the Oregon Region. Not all test levels may be offered by our region due to numbers and restrictions from the national office, so you may have to travel to another region to take your test.

**Cancellation policy from National and the Oregon Region:** Before 6 weeks out from test date, full refunds will be given. Between 6 and 4 weeks out from test date, refunds will be given minus \$50 office fee. No refunds will be given after 4 week out deadline. There is a \$50 fee for changing site.

**Fees to expect:**

- \$50 intent to rate fee (to be applied toward mounted or unmounted preps)
- Fee for the assessment ride(s). Approximately \$100
- National application fee ranges from \$150-\$250
- Regional testing fee of \$125
- Mandatory prep fees (Approximately \$100-150) + bandaging/lunging prep (approximately \$75) minus intent to rate fee of \$50
- H-B or H/H-A prep fees (approximately \$75)

All assessment/prep fees are based on the number of participants, facility costs and instructor fees.

*Please note that fees do not include the cost of travel, lodging and some meals to attend the activities or for lessons and clinics outside of Pony Club.*

**Expected Deadlines:**

- January 1, 2009 intent to rate form and fee(s) payable by club checks due
- April 1, 2009 applications, regional and national test fees due to RS for tests held between May 27<sup>th</sup> and August 26<sup>th</sup>
- If testing at another region at a different time of year, consult the Candidate Application for deadlines. Completed applications and payments are due to the RS two weeks in advance of stated deadline. <http://ponyclub.org/files/bin/3077>

*From The United States Pony Clubs, Inc.*

**STANDARDS OF PROFICIENCY**

***Appropriate Horse***

It is the responsibility of the candidate and his/her parent(s) or guardian to bring an appropriate horse(s) to the testing. The conditioned mount(s) must be capable of completing all required phases of the test. The mount(s) must also be available for change of riders. Embracing USPC's commitment to safety for all horses and riders is of utmost importance. Failing to follow these guidelines may make it difficult for the candidate to meet the standard on that given day.