

## **LESSON PLAN 2 – Teach the rider to hold the reins in both hands.**

**Pony Club Venue:**

**Date:**

**Rider:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

**Pony:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

**Topics and goals for session:**

1. Rider to hold reins correctly in both hands.
2. Rider to gain feel of pony's mouth through reins.
3. Rider to understand basic use of reins for stopping and turning.
4. Rider to shorten reins correctly.
5. To introduce a new school figure/arena language/arena protocol to riders.
6. To revise, integrate and consolidate previously learnt school figures, arena language/protocol.

**Equipment needed and layout:**

- Arena with letters and cones.
- 8 x Cones – placed on the 4 tangent points of the centre circle – 2 per tangent point (ie. for riders to ride through).

**Introduction to session (key points):**

- Introduce yourself and chat to riders about themselves and their mount (some combinations may be new to you, and you also need to know what they have been working on since the last rally).
- Revision of previously taught skill & school figure/arena language.
- Explain how to hold reins in both hands.
- Explain how to shorten reins when they get too long.
- Explain how to correctly use reins for stopping, going forward and turning.
- On foot (can be done in prior horsemastership session) demonstrate use of body when turning your pony – where your body and hands are and how that effects the pony.
- Introduce how to correctly ride a 20 metre circle.
- School figure/arena language – Follow the centre circle; go large.
- Arena Protocol – Manners (be aware & courteous, look where you are going)

**Gear Check ( List gear to be checked): As per Gear Checking Rules for Pony Club.**

- **Rider:** Clothing - Clean & correctly attired with appropriate Club uniform including safe boots & correctly numbered helmet;  
Hair - Long hair tied back;  
Jewellery - Check jewellery;  
Fitness - Age of rider; weight of rider in comparison to mount.
- **Horse:** Gear - clean; correctly fitted; approved; stitching OK; safe;  
Condition - clean/groomed (no bot eggs), including feet;  
Fitness - age; soundness; what work has mount been doing?  
  
(Are pony/horse and rider capable of doing planned lesson?)

**Warm up activities and rider exercises:**

Halt, walk and trot using upward and downward transitions, and large school figures, to ensure pony/horse is sound, attentive and listening to rider. (Canter could be included in the warm up but would depend on the rider's level of skill & ability.)

Select some rider exercises to complete on a 20 metre circle.

**New Skill/s (name of skill):**

- Able to hold the reins correctly in both hands whilst riding forward, stopping, turning and shortening the reins;
- Correctly ride a 20 metre circle.
- Follow the centre circle, and go large.

**Key teaching points and demonstration method:**

Demonstrate using one rider out in front of group (use different rider for each demonstration and ask riders questions to keep them alert and interested).

Explain and demonstrate the steps, and how to hold the reins correctly in both hands.

- Rein passes between the third and little finger and comes out between the index finger and thumb. Thumb pressed down on the rein/this stops it slipping through your hands.
- Fingers closed but not tightly clenched.
- Hands remain quietly in position above and in front of the pommel on either side of the neck and about 5 cm apart (as wide as the bit).

Explain and demonstrate the steps, and how to shorten the reins if they get too long – Right rein (reverse for left).

- Take hold of the right rein between your left thumb and first finger.
- Slide your right hand down to the required length.

Explain in group and demonstrate individually, using the rider and coach holding the rider's rein, the feel of the pony's mouth through the reins.

- Even.
- Light.
- Flexible – follows the movement of the pony's head.
- Never pull backwards.

*Key teaching points and demonstration method (continued):*

**Explain and demonstrate basic aids for stopping. Can also be applied and felt individually as above.**

- Check position and sit up tall.
- Close your legs.
- Stop following the movement of the pony's head and neck and squeeze/release with your hands (like squeezing water out of a sponge)
- Continue to squeeze/release until stopped. Never pull back.
- Then soft hands/allow.

**Explain and demonstrate basic aids for turning.**

- Turn your head and body to the direction you wish to go – see where your hands are now).
- If required take your hand (right for turning right; left for turning left) out away from pony's neck until you get the response – Never pull back.
- Place hand back in correct position.

**Demonstrate and walk through how to ride a 20m circle using the cones and then go large onto the outer track. Remind riders about correct arena protocol – manners.**

**Practice activities:**

- Line up on centre line for demonstrations.
- At markers walk, trot, stop, turn. Ask riders if they can feel their pony's mouth – if not shorten the rein a little making sure that hands return to correct position just in front of the pommel. Add in mounting and dismounting from previous lesson.
- Ride 20 m circles on both reins – go large.

**Cool Down:**

**Long rein walk using school figures.**

**Session Evaluation and Summary:**

- Riders to line up on centre line facing B or E.
- Discuss with riders what and how they felt - give them some more tips - something to take home to practice. All riders to be involved in this session using question techniques rather than dictating coach's thoughts.
- Evaluate the lesson – BE HONEST! - What did you as the coach like?
  - What worked well or didn't work?
  - What would you do differently?