

## **This information document for event organisers:**

### **GUIDELINES FOR THE RIDER AND JUDGE**

#### **2.1 GRADES 4 AND 5 & PREPARTORY**

At Grades 4 and 5, particularly the latter, the overall picture should be one of a relaxed, happy combination. The rider is not expected to be totally steady with hands and seat at this stage, but simply to have sufficient balance not to interfere with the horse's movement. It is important not to place too much emphasis on contact, as with a very young rider this will usually lead to resistance resulting in a shortening of the frame and a loss of forward movement. At Grade 5 incorrect diagonals and leading leg should be commented on but not severely marked. At Grade 4 mistakes in these two areas would cause a lowering of the mark.

#### **2.2 PRELIMINARY/GRADE 3**

At Preliminary/Grade 3 the rider is expected to have a sufficient degree of balance so that the hands and legs are becoming steadier. We should now be looking for a **light** but steady contact and smoother application of the aids. Again, it is important that the rider should not be shortening the frame of the pony, as so many riders are heavy with their hands in an effort to "get the pony on the bit". It is far more important to have a pony that will move freely forward into contact than one who is being pulled in at the front and inevitably resisting. By this stage we should be expecting a rider who can use the whole arena more intelligently and therefore ride with more correct bend, perform smoother transitions at the correct markers etc.

#### **2.3 NOVICE/GRADE 2**

At Novice/Grade 2 the rider should now be a more polished version of the Preliminary/Grade 3 rider. All aspects mentioned should be present; steadiness of legs and seat, firm but not restricting contact, correct bend, smooth transitions with a minimum of resistance. Overall a balanced active rider and a horse that moves freely forward into contact with bend and impulsion.

#### **2.4 ELEMENTARY/GRADE 1**

At Elementary/Grade 1 we expect a competent combination. The rider should have a deep, effective seat and sympathetic hands. The horse should move with impulsion and engagement of the hindquarters. There should be correct bend, good tempo and rhythm at all paces. They should be able to produce good lengthening of the stride at the trot and canter. At this stage it is now expected that the horse will be accepting of contact and therefore be moving freely forward from the hindquarters into the bit, with no resistance to indicate a reliance of the rider on reins and stirrups for support. Therefore, transitions should be executed with precision, the horse moving clearly and smoothly from one pace to the next. Overall the picture should be that of a partnership working in harmony.