

PRELIMINARY COACHING SAMPLE LESSON PLANS

OVERVIEW

The 13 Preliminary Coaching Lesson Plans at the back of the 'Workbook & Coaching Practice Log' are aimed at the D, D* level. In this state we appear to have a number of Clubs that are finding it increasingly difficult to be able to access qualified, experienced coaches for their rallies. They do, however, have some very enthusiastic Mums, Dads and volunteers, with varying ranges of skills and experience, that would be willing to 'have a go' but are hesitant, due perhaps to an unwarranted lack of confidence in themselves, especially when it comes to lesson planning.

Planning is an important aspect of coaching. It helps make the lessons more enjoyable and ensures maximum use of the time available. By making these sample lesson plans accessible to coaches, we hope that it will help them not only develop sound teaching methods, but also have the confidence, over a period of time, to modify and adapt them to their own requirements and style. They have been constructed to provide a 'starting point' for those people wishing to pursue some form of coaching in their Club, but who lack a little confidence to actually get started.

We would like to point out how very important it is that coaches use standard teaching commands and terminology to control the movements of a group. This provides our riders with an understanding of a universal language, which is able to be followed no matter where they go or who instructs them.

It is also imperative that lessons are conducted in a properly marked arena using school figures. School figures help train both the rider and the horse and give purpose and structure to our riding sessions. They help riders to become disciplined and accurate, and provide them with correct lines to ride when practicing. They also help eliminate boredom in group situations, especially when there is a limit to the knowledge and ability of the group (i.e. very young, nervous, green horses etc). School figures will help you, as a coach, test a rider's position, their ability to prepare, position and ask their horse correctly, and to ride forward on their line at their tempo. School figures also give the rider a very good medium through which to train their horse through repetition of aids, and they allow riders to discover their own weaknesses and strengths, not just relying on you as their instructor, as they are generally working on their own at home.

The school figures, arena language or protocol used in these lesson plans are as follows:

Tracks in the arena - Line up on centre line facing B (or E);

- How to correctly leave the centre line;
- Follow the large arena track (outer track) or go large;
- Turn down the quarter line (3/4 track) – inner track;
- Diagonal track;
- Circles - Follow the centre circle (20 m diameter);
 - Follow the circle at A, B, E or C (20 m diameter);
- Serpentine - 3 loop.

Forms of riding in the arena - Ride in open order;

- Ride in single file, 2 horse distance apart (leading file);
- Nominating a leader.

Changing rein - Turn across the long diagonal KXM or HXF and change rein;
- Turn down the centre line and change rein;
- Turn across the school at B or E and change rein;
- Change rein out of the circle (or from C or A follow the figure of 8).

Arena protocol - Manners - be aware and courteous, look where you are going;
- Never overtake except a walking rider on the inner track. Turn and circle away;
- Walk on the inner track;
- Never halt on the track – move to the middle of a short side circle;
- If approaching on the opposite track, pass left hand to left hand;
- Riders practicing lateral or advanced work always have the right of way.

There are, of course, many more school figures that can be taught to your riders. For example you can increase and decrease the circle, ride 15, 10 metre circles and voltes, do reverse ½ circles, change rein through the circle, execute short diagonals, 4 loops serpentines and loops, ride independently etc, etc, but you must make sure that you don't challenge your riders with school figures that are beyond their current level of capability and skill. Riders must be capable of producing good corners and circles correctly if they want to go on and perform more advanced work – it is fundamental to everything that follows. Try to practice riding correct circles and corners as often as you can.

The 13 sample lesson plans that follow are based on the same layout as that in the 'Workbook & Coaching Practice Log'. You will notice that we have expanded the space provided at the top of each lesson plan to accommodate 8 rider and pony names in lieu of 6, as this is often what coaches are required to deal with at rallies. We certainly hope that you do not get presented with 8 riders or larger numbers than this as the lessons really do then become much less productive.

Remember to make sure that your pupils can hear what you have to say. Nothing causes lack of attention more quickly than a class unable to hear commands. Remember each command requires the following three parts: (1) WHAT is to be done; (2) WHO is to do it; (3) WHEN it is to be done. Prepare the ride for the command and give them time to execute the movement/prepare for transitions if they are involved. It is always useful to teach new movements at the walk or on foot first. Learn and practice the correct method of giving commands.

Try to position yourself upwind if teaching on a circle, or stand just inside or outside the track – this will enable you to speak individually to each rider. Vary your position as you teach – don't forget the outside aids, check the rider's outside leg position and the straightness and bend of the horse. Don't spend too long in single file as this can become boring and allows riders to let their horses just follow the one in front, but it can be very useful when warming up and working on a rider's position or learning a new movement. When talking to a class at the beginning, during or end of a lesson insist they line up in an orderly fashion, sit square on the horse's back, keep their feet in the stirrups and do not allow the horse to rub his legs or scratch. This is a safety as much as a discipline matter.

As Pony Club coaches we will be continually challenged to modify our lessons to accommodate a number of rider and horse differences in the same lesson, sometimes having to deal with a large group of riders and ponies in the one class. It is important to make lessons fun and be inclusive in our coaching.

Once people get started, they will come across many different ideas that can be utilized in their lessons and will gradually build up an archive of ideas for future use. We know that you will search out new and exciting ways to adapt these lesson plans to your own style. We know that we already have a wonderful array of coaches across the state who present their lessons with great enthusiasm and skill, and who have some fantastic ideas for making lessons fun and exciting. If you have found something to be hugely successful in one of your lessons, we would very much like to be able to tap into these great ideas so that they can be shared and enjoyed by other Pony Club coaches. Please feel free to forward these ideas to the State Coaching Panel – we could then make them available to other coaches via the web site.

Finally, we would like to reiterate once again, that these sample lesson plans are not meant to be conclusive, they have simply been put in place to hopefully encourage people to get started and 'have a go' – who knows, you may actually like it and find it very rewarding !!! We have tried to 'spell out' certain elements of the subject matter to be taught in each lesson so as to help you feel more confident that you are teaching the required subject matter correctly and to Pony Club standard and protocol.

GOOD LUCK!

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State Coaching Panel