



**Introduction to the  
MHCGB  
Performance Classes**

# Introduction to Performance Classes

MHCGB performance classes, which include Halter Obstacle, Jumper, Hunter Jumper, Dressage (In-hand, Long Reined, Driven), Puissance and Liberty are open to any equine eligible to be entered on the MHCGB Show Register or hold a passport issued by the Miniature Horse Club of Great Britain.

Not all horses are suited to do all of these classes, but many can be trained to achieve great results in these versatile classes, which really give the horse and handler things to think about during training.

Performance work with your animals is both rewarding and great fun. It will help improve your bond, and the skills your horses will develop can then be used in many different daily situations. It is also a great way to keep them fit, giving variety to their training programs and keeping their mind active.

There are a few key things to bear in mind when training or taking part in performance with your animals.

## 1 – Make sure it is safe

- ❖ Any obstacles or jumps you construct should be safe should anything go wrong.
- ❖ They should come apart easily if the animal or yourself gets caught up to prevent injury.
- ❖ If they are to be weight bearing then they need to be solid and capable of holding the weight safely.

### **Common sense should always be applied when building obstacles and jumps**

You should work with a long lead, of around 8 to 12 feet. This will allow you to keep a distance during some obstacles and jumping fences while still keeping control of your animal. Gloves are always a good idea; if they shy or pull away, the rope can slip through your fingers rather quickly. Hard hats are also sensible during training, particularly with young handlers. It is also advisable that the horse wears boots to protect their legs during training.

## 2 – Give them time to understand what you are asking

- ❖ For many this will be new, and most animals find new things rather scary.
- ❖ Let them investigate, re-assure them and use a constant command every time you ask for that particular action.
- ❖ Some will take longer to learn than others.
- ❖ Some will train to just voice praise, some will work to clicker training while others can be trained with treats.

### **Do what works for you and your animals but always finish a training session on a positive note.**

They are all different and will work in their own way, but with time and trust they will begin to understand what you are asking.

## 3 – Have fun!

The whole idea behind the performance classes is you have fun. Enjoy it, laugh, smile and be amazed by what your animals can do with training, time and love.

## MHCGB competition rules state.....

To take part in performance classes, animals must be:

2 years+ for halter obstacle, liberty and in-hand dressage

3 years+ for jumping, and long reined classes and all driving classes

(The show age of the horse is determined from January 1<sup>st</sup> preceding its birthday)

Dress code: burgundy club issue kit (to include any club branded kit purchased through MHCGB) or show attire, with smart trousers or jeans. All exhibitors must wear gloves and suitable footwear.

All junior exhibitors (16 years and under) are to wear an approved British Standard hardhat.

There is to be no baiting / treats given in the ring in any performance classes.

Any exhibitor displaying inappropriate or rough handling of any horse in any discipline will be eliminated at the judge's discretion.

The judge's decision is final.

There will be no requirement for the horses to be let off their lead in either Novice or Open sections with the exception of Liberty classes.

*Remember that, to allow bones and joints to develop properly, jumping should not be undertaken until the animals are 3 years or older. The same goes for driving and long rein work. However, in-hand work can begin from any age, providing there is nothing strenuous until they are over 2 years old. Objects like bending poles, walking over a variety of flat surfaces such as tarpaulins or water trays or asking them to wait while you walk away are all great ways to start training at a very young age and will also help with daily chores such as turn out and doorway manners.*

**Full rules for all classes which make up the MHCGB Performance Section can be found in our Rule Book which is available for download from the club's website.**

### Equipment required

#### **In-Hand Obstacles**

- ❖ All horses should be worked in an American performance halter / headcollar and on a lead between 8 and 12 feet long.
- ❖ The handler is not allowed to carry a whip of any sort.
- ❖ The animal should not have a bit or chain in the mouth.
- ❖ MHCGB classes will allow the wearing of protective boots.

#### **Liberty Obstacles**

- ❖ All horses should be presented in an American performance halter / headcollar, this can be left in place for the class duration if preferred.
- ❖ The handler is not allowed to carry a whip of any sort.
- ❖ The animal should not have a bit or chain in the mouth.
- ❖ MHCGB classes will allow the wearing of protective boots.

#### **Jumping**

- ❖ Horses can compete in either a bitted or bitless bridle or an American performance halter / head collar.
- ❖ The handler is not allowed to carry a whip of any sort.
- ❖ MHCGB classes will allow the wearing of protective boots.

## **Long Reined Dressage and Obstacles**

- ❖ All horses should be in a bridle (bitless bridles are permitted, head collars ARE NOT a bitless bridle), roller and long reins.
- ❖ Cruppers are allowed.
- ❖ Overchecks / Sidechecks are not permitted.
- ❖ The handler may carry a dressage whip.

## **In Hand Dressage**

- ❖ All horses should be in a bridle (bitless bridles are permitted, head collars ARE NOT a bitless bridle).
- ❖ The handler may carry a dressage whip.

## **Mini Driving Trial**

- ❖ All animals 4 years and over.
- ❖ Made up of three Technical Driving classes – Cones, Dressage and Obstacle
- ❖ Hard hats must be worn by ALL competitors.
- ❖ Grooms must be in ring, wearing gloves and hard hat.
- ❖ Horses may wear boots or bandages.
- ❖ Any harness or cart allowed provided safe and appropriate to the horse.

## **Handler attire**

To take part in the Obstacle, Jumping, Dressage and Driving Trial classes you do not need to be in full show attire.

Remember, you are going to be running about, twisting and turning, bending and stretching! Comfortable and practical clothes are what we ask for. Trainers are often a good choice of footwear, particularly for the jumping classes to give good footing as you run around the course. Looking smart will always give a nicer picture to the judge and audience, but smart can be a tidy pair of jeans and a club polo shirt. We do ask that gloves are worn by all handlers from a safety point of view, in this same respect your footwear of choice should be a solid covered shoe and not open topped or toed and all junior competitors (under 16 years) are required to wear a hard hat as previously mentioned. If you want to go all out, and dress in the same outfit you would show your horses in, then that's great too – we won't turn you away so long as it is fit for purpose within the performance ring.

Club kit can be ordered from our website for collection at MHCGB Shows and is allowed to be worn for competing in the Obstacle, Jumping, Dressage and Driving Trial classes.

Show Driving classes, however, should be entered in correct attire for the type of driving class you are showing in.

## **Turnout of the animal**

For the MHCGB Obstacle, Jumping or Dressage classes, horses do not need to be turned out show ready. Clipping, bathing, plaiting – do if you want to but it is NOT a requirement.

Again, driving classes should be entered in the correct turnout for the type of driving class you are showing in.

## Scoring

All MHCGB performance classes for Obstacle, both halter and long reined, Jumping, Dressage and Driving Trial classes are scored on our own Score Sheets and published on the club's website after each show. We try not to name competitors on the sheets, but work by your competitor number at all times – so it is vital that you ensure you have the correct number on for the horse you are exhibiting at the time. ***This is 100% the handler's responsibility!*** It is also a good idea to remember your number if you are going to go and hunt out your individual results after the event.

Placing are awarded in the classes 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> and when Performance Championships are listed within a schedule they will always be calculated on a points basis, where a 1<sup>st</sup> place gains 6 points down to a 6<sup>th</sup> place gaining 1 point across these classes.

### The Performance Trio

Over the course of a season, competitors can take part in Dressage (In-hand or Long Rein), Halter Obstacle and In Hand Jumper at a variety of our MHCGB events.

If you take part at a minimum of three shows - one of which **MUST** be the Grand Championships Show in August – in all three of these disciplines you will automatically be eligible for points towards a chance of achieving the prestigious title of:

#### **THE ULTIMATE PERFORMANCE TRIO HORSE AND HANDLER SUPREME.**

All three events must be completed at a show for that show's placings to count.  
1st place will gain 10points, 2nd 8points, 3rd 6points, 4th 4points, 5th 2points and 6th 1point.  
(Points are awarded on a horse / handler combination)

You can compete in either the Novice or Open section for the season. You only need to move into the Open section if you have been crowned Novice Performance Trio Champion at a past MHCGB National Championship Show, or if you choose to move into the Open section. Once you have moved into Open you should no longer compete in the Novice classes.

A maximum of three shows from across the year will give the final totals.

If four or more Junior (16yrs or under) competitors compete at a minimum of three shows - one of which **MUST** be the Grand Championships Show in August - then we also award the highest place Junior Trio competitor.

*Please be aware that all rules and requirements discussed within this document are those of the Miniature Horse Club of GB. If you plan to compete in an AMHA judged Performance Class at our AMHA affiliated shows please refer to the current AMHA Official Rulebook ([http://www.amha.org/pdf/memb/rb/Amha\\_Rulebook.pdf](http://www.amha.org/pdf/memb/rb/Amha_Rulebook.pdf)).*