

THE SHETLAND PONY GRAND NATIONAL RULE BOOK 2026

The Management of SPGN reserves the right to add or amend a rule or rules at any time or when the management deems it to be appropriate and without prior notice.

CONTENTS

1. Introduction & Authority of Management

2. Eligibility Requirements
   2.1 Jockey Eligibility
   2.2 Pony Eligibility
   2.3 Rider–Pony Suitability

3. Insurance Requirements

4. Entries & Administration

5. Trials Day Requirements

6. Racing Rules

7. Pony Welfare, Tack & Equipment Regulations

8. Rider Regulations

9. Handler Regulations

10. Parent & Guardian Requirements

11. Code of Conduct

12. Social Media Policy
    12.1 General Expectations
    12.2 Prohibited Conduct
    12.3 Disciplinary Action
    12.4 Enhanced Social Media Rules

13. Racing & Selection Process

14. Display Races

15. Media & Publicity Rules

16. Sponsorship Rules

17. Stabling & Show Commitments

18. Ownership & Leasing Requirements

19. General Provisions

1. **INTRODUCTION & AUTHORITY OF MANAGEMENT**

1.1 The Shetland Pony Grand National (SPGN) Management reserves the right to add, amend, or remove any rule at any time, without prior notice.

1.2 All competitors, owners, handlers, parents, guardians, and associates must comply with this Rule Book, the SPGN Code of Conduct, and all guidance issued by SPGN Management.

2. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

2.1 **Jockey Eligibility**

2.1.1 Jockeys must be 8 years old on or before 1 January of the current year.

2.1.2 *NEW for 2026* Jockeys whose 8th birthday falls between 1 January 2026 and/on 29th March 2026 (Trials Day) may participate only if:

- They ride a pony that has successfully raced with SPGN for at least one full season.
- They successfully pass Trials Day.
- They understand they are not eligible for: • Invitation shows • London International Horse Show (LIHS) • International selection

2.1.3 Jockeys must NOT have reached their 14th birthday by 1 January 2026.

2.1.4 All jockeys will be measured at Trials Day. Any jockey measuring 5’0” or over at any point in the season will not be permitted to race.

2.1.5 Jockeys selected for LIHS must have attained their 9th birthday and must not have reached their 14th birthday by 1 January of that season.

2.1.6 Where the Hong Kong International Horse Show takes place during the early part of the following calendar year, SPGN Management may permit jockeys selected during the preceding SPGN season to participate, provided that:

1. The jockey satisfied all SPGN age eligibility requirements during the season in which they were selected.
2. The jockey was formally selected by SPGN Management to represent the organisation at the Hong Kong International Horse Show based on their performance, commitment and suitability during that season.
3. The jockey has not reached their 15th birthday by 1 January of the year in which the Hong Kong International Horse Show takes place.
4. The jockey continues to meet all other relevant eligibility, safeguarding, safety and participation requirements.
5. Participation is subject to the approval of the Hong Kong International Horse Show organisers and any applicable governing body or insurance requirements.

This exception applies solely to the Hong Kong International Horse Show and does not extend the jockey's eligibility to compete in the normal SPGN season or at any other event.

2.1.7 It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to obtain school permission for any absences required for SPGN participation.

2.2 **Pony Eligibility**

2.2.1 Ponies must be registered with the Shetland Pony Stud Book Society and measure between 38 and 42 inches.

2.2.2 Ponies suspected of being outside the height range will be measured at Trials Day. A valid JMB height certificate is the only acceptable override.

2.2.3 Ponies must be aged between 5 and 21 years old on 1st January of the current year. Please note that the age is as per their date of birth in their passport.

2.2.4 Ponies aged 17 or older must provide a veterinary letter confirming soundness in wind, heart, eyes, and action.

2.2.5 Ponies must demonstrate appropriate fitness, stamina, and behaviour for racing, including during mounting, starting, and presentations.

2.2.6 A maximum of two ponies per owner/team may be selected for LIHS unless otherwise restricted by SPGN.

2.3 **Rider–Pony Suitability**

2.3.1 Jockeys must be suitably mounted. Their height and weight must be appropriate for the size of pony they ride.

2.3.2 SPGN Management reserves the right to exclude any combination deemed unsuitable. Such combinations are not eligible to compete.

3. INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

3.1 All owners/lessees and jockeys must hold personal and public liability insurance of at least £2,000,000.

3.2 By entering SPGN, teams confirm they hold valid insurance for the entire season.

3.3 Non-compliance may invalidate SPGN’s event insurance and result in exclusion.

4. ENTRIES & ADMINISTRATION

4.1 Entries must be submitted by email only to the address provided by SPGN (bindy@shetlandponygrandnational.co.uk)

4.2 Entries close five weeks before the first day of the show. Declarations must be received three weeks before the show.

4.3 Phone or text entries are not accepted. No phone calls after 9pm.

4.4 All team members must be registered with SPGN. Teams include ponies, riders, parents, guardians, owners, and associates.

5. TRIALS DAY REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Attendance at Trials Day is mandatory for all pony/jockey combinations wishing to race with SPGN. Each combination must successfully complete the Trials Day. Only combinations that successfully meet the required standards will be confirmed, and a jockey licence will be issued to those approved.

5.2 Each jockey may ride a maximum of three ponies, and each pony may be ridden by no more than three jockeys.

5.3 Management decisions regarding suitability, safety, and eligibility are final.

6. RACING RULES

6.1 The start will be at walk or standstill, as instructed by SPGN officials.

6.2 Falls before the start:

- First fall: race may be held pending medical clearance.
- Second fall or pony leaving the ring: automatic disqualification.

6.3 Falls during the race: jockeys may not remount.

6.4 False starts:

- First false start: verbal warning.
- Second false start: disqualification.

6.5 Competitors must follow the full course, including all jumps. Failure results in disqualification.

6.6 Kicking:

- First kick: advisory warning; may be moved to back of line.
- Second kick in same race: disqualification.
- Dangerous ponies may receive a lifetime ban.

6.7 Officials may disqualify any competitor impairing a fair start or behaving dangerously.

6.8 Objections must be made at the SPGN base, not in the arena.

6.9 SPGN competitors may not participate in other Shetland racing events without written approval.

7. PONY WELFARE, TACK & EQUIPMENT

7.1 Ponies must comply with BHA Equine Influenza vaccination rules. For clarification please visit: https://media.britishhorseracing.com/bha/Veterinary_Resources/EI_October21_update.pdf

You can check your ponies compliance to the rules by using the calculator here: https://vaca.horseracing.software

7.2 Only flat shoes permitted; no studs or road nails.

7.3 Tack must be safe and compliant. Prohibited items include:

- Cheltenham gags
- Driving bits
- All martingales (except Irish Martingales)
- Whips, spurs, or additional headgear such as prickers (Cheek Pieces, ear plugs & hoods are permitted)

7.4 Bridles must be black or brown; coloured browbands permitted.

7.5 Safety stirrups with elastic peacock rings are mandatory.

7.6 Over girths must be secure and non-elastic (except elastic-ended).

8. RIDER REGULATIONS

8.1 Riders must wear:

- White racing breeches (sponsors on breeches are permitted but only once confirmation of payment has been given by SPGN)
- Approved racing boots with a minimum 1cm heel
- Approved Hat and Body Protector as per below (in line with BHA/PRA ruling)

Body Protectors

Must meet certified safety standard **(BS) EN 13158:2018,** evidence of quality testing (e.g. BETA approval mark) and be of **Level 2 standard or above**. Rules come into effect on the 1st January 2025.

Riding Helmets

Helmets must comply with at least two different international testing standards; one from Group A **and** a different one from Group B. Rules come into effect on the 1st July 2025.

Group A	**Group B**
British standard PAS 015 2011 and any subsequent updates.	British standard PAS 015 2011 and any subsequent updates.
European standard (EN): UKCA and/or CE marked products referencing harmonised standard EN1384:2023	European standard (EN): UKCA and/or CE marked products referencing harmonised standard EN1384:2023
European standard (EN): UKCA and/or CE marked products referencing the VG1 performance specification. (**Please Note:** NB VG 1 will be withdrawn as an acceptable standard on the 1st of June 2025.)	European standard (EN): UKCA and/or CE marked products referencing the VG1 performance specification. (**Please Note:** NB VG 1 will be withdrawn as an acceptable standard on the 1st of June 2025.)
	American ASTM F1163:2015 and any subsequent updates.
	American Snell E2026 and any subsequent updates. (Please note: Snell combines a standard with subsequent quality testing so no additional quality testing mark is required.)

- SPGN-approved racing silks

8.2 No jewellery or makeup permitted.

8.3 Proof of age must be provided at Trials Day (either passport or birth certificate).

9. HANDLER REGULATIONS

9.1 All handlers must be 16 years or older.

9.2 Handlers must wear:

- Plain black trousers/jeans
- Dark footwear
- SPGN sweatshirt/polo shirt

10. PARENT & GUARDIAN REQUIREMENTS

10.1 A parent or guardian over 21 is advised to accompany each jockey.

10.2 LIHS riders must have a parent/guardian over 25 present for the entire show.

11. CODE OF CONDUCT

11.1 Any behaviour bringing SPGN into disrepute may result in removal from the event and possible suspension.

11.2 Prohibited behaviour includes:

- Aggression
- Bullying
- Swearing
- Unsafe conduct
- Alcohol consumption before racing

11.3 Safety of children is paramount.

12. SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

12.1 General Expectations

All SPGN participants must use social media responsibly and respectfully.

12.2 Prohibited Conduct

Malicious, derogatory, or harmful posts about SPGN, its members, management, or associates are strictly prohibited.

12.3 Disciplinary Action

Breaches may result in suspension, removal from events, or permanent exclusion.

12.4 Enhanced Social Media Rules

All participants — including riders, parents, owners, handlers, and associates — must familiarise themselves with the Enhanced SPGN Social Media Rules, which provide detailed guidance on acceptable online behaviour, safeguarding expectations, and disciplinary procedures. These enhanced rules form an integral part of the SPGN Code of Conduct and apply to all online activity connected to SPGN. There rules are available online under the Rule Book section.

Failure to comply with the Enhanced Social Media Rules may result in:

- Immediate suspension pending investigation
- Withdrawal from events or the season
- Loss of eligibility for invitation or international shows
- Permanent exclusion in serious cases

All participants are responsible for ensuring they understand and adhere to these enhanced requirements.

13. RACING & SELECTION PROCESS

13.1 All combinations must attend Trials Day.

13.2 LIHS-selected combinations must raise a minimum of £1,000 for the nominated charity.

13.3 Combinations must attend at least five shows unless exempted.

14. DISPLAY RACES

14.1 Maximum of eight ponies per jump race; flat race numbers vary by venue.

14.2 All combinations must maintain good behaviour throughout the season.

15. MEDIA & PUBLICITY RULES

15.1 All media, publicity, sponsorship, and branding relating to SPGN must be approved in advance.

15.2 SPGN is a registered trademark; unauthorised use is prohibited.

15.3 No SPGN photography may be given to third parties.

16. SPONSORSHIP RULES

16.1 Jockeys may carry up to four sponsors on their breeches. Each sponsor must pay £300 to the SPGN charity.

16.2 Sponsorship must be approved and paid before display. (please see details on our website under the ‘Breeches Sponsorship’ Section.

16.3 Alcohol, gambling, and tobacco sponsors are prohibited.

17. STABLING & SHOW COMMITMENTS

17.1 Stabling is allocated by organisers and must be kept clean and tidy. All stables must be fully mucked out and all bedding removed at the end of the show. Failure to do so will result in being balloted for the next race.

17.2 Competitors must commit to all days of a show unless prior permission is granted.

18. OWNERSHIP & LEASING REQUIREMENTS

18.1 No person under 18 may own or lease a pony for SPGN.

18.2 Loan/lease agreements must be confirmed in writing by the registered owner.

19. GENERAL PROVISIONS

19.1 SPGN accepts no liability for loss, damage, or injury. Competitors indemnify SPGN and event organisers.

19.2 SPGN may refuse entry to any person, pony, or team at its discretion.

19.3 SPGN may withdraw any combination at any time without explanation.