

# SUSSEX YEOMANRY SPECIALIST MOUNTED SKILL-AT-ARMS GROUP



## Skill-at-Arms Competitions

### General Rules

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#### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of a Tentpegging and/or a Skill-at-Arms competition is to test the combination of horse and rider for speed and accuracy.

When tentpegging, the horse/pony is required to maintain a full gallop within its own capabilities, i.e. it should be using its maximum effort, along a straight run while the rider attempts to pick up a wooden or plastic peg embedded in the ground with the point of a lance or the point of a sword held in his/her right hand. Any horse or pony that is cantering or trotting shall be marked down accordingly.

In order to encourage novice competitors, those competitors will be judged on their own merit – judges will use their discretion.

If in the opinion of the senior judge present, weapons handling, horsemanship, behaviour of a horse and/or concern for the welfare of a horse arises that is detrimental, the rider may be disqualified from the competition for the day.

## **WEAPONS STEWARDS**

All competitors must comply with instructions given by the Weapons Stewards who are responsible for storage and handling of weapons on the ground. They are also responsible for checking that all weapons are serviceable and comply with the stipulations set out below.

## **COMPETITORS**

Both male and female competitors are eligible.

## **HORSES AND SADDLERY**

Horses should be at least five years of age and may be ridden in any type of saddlery – civilian or military. Running reins and dropped nosebands are permitted, martingales are optional. **Whips are NOT allowed.**

## **WEAPONS**

**Lances** may be of any material but must be a minimum of 7 feet 6 inches long with a smooth 3-sided metal point without any serrations or barbs.

**Swords** should be a cavalry thrusting 1908 type or of a similar pattern and length with a smooth metal point without serrations.

**Prickers** are to be 2 feet in length exclusive of the point which is to be 1/2" inch long.

All weapons are to be serviceable. A competitor will be disqualified for using a sword, lance or pricker that does not conform to the Rules.

## **WEAPONS HANDLING - SKILL AT ARMS**

### **WORD**

#### Engage

The point of the sword is brought forward smartly in one movement without unnecessary flourish, with forearm and blade in one line pointing at the target (whether high or low, right or left), by allowing the pistol grip to rotate 90 degrees around the knuckle of the index finger and placing the thumb in the thumb grip. The elbow should be slightly bent and clear of the body to allow freedom to parry or point, sword edge to the right, wrist may be bent laterally but not flexed. Entering the dummy with a bent arm will be penalised.

#### Momentum

The horse should show increase of pace from the engage of the sword to the moment of impact with the dummy, so that the rider can have the full momentum of his/her horse and himself/herself behind the point of the sword. After impact the pace of normal canter is resumed.

### Body and Arm

The rider comes out of the saddle, weight is transferred onto the knees and stirrup irons and the body is positioned to the right/left. The sword is brought to the engage position. The arm is then straightened with panache so that the forearm and sword are in a straight line pointing at the target. The right shoulder should be well forward to gain extra reach and eyes should be focussed on the target.

### Sword Edge

The back of the hand is turned to the left (without any shift of the finger and thumb grip) so that the sword edge is vertical on impact with the dummy and the arm is locked.

## **PRICKER**

On being drawn from the holster the pricker should be carried over the right shoulder pointing vertically with the tip of the pricker held high above the rider's right shoulder. The pricker is only lowered from this position when the target is engaged. Immediately thereafter it is again held high. After the last target is engaged the pricker is returned securely to the holster and the hand is held high to show that it is free of a weapon.

## **LANCE**

The lance should be taken at the point of balance and brought without changing grip to the engage from which position it is brought smartly up under the armpit and held firmly parallel with the ground, the right hand underneath supporting the lance pole - a hand's width in front of the rider's body. An alternative to this is to use the over-arm method of holding the lance. After the second ring is taken or struck the lance is brought swiftly down without the rider changing grip until the right hand is in line with the instep underneath the rider's right shoulder. In this position the peg is taken. The head and eyes of the rider should follow the point of the lance. As the lance reaches the top of its arc the arm of the rider is brought down, then forward to its fullest extent and is finally brought smartly back to the trail as the rider's seat is regained and the horse is reined in.

## **WEAPONS HANDLING – TWO RINGS AND PEG**

### **THE LANCE**

The start is approached with lance at the trail. The judges are saluted by the raising of the lance smartly and returning it to the trail to signal that the rider is ready to commence. This will be acknowledged by the raising of a green flag by a judge to show that the course is clear and that the rider may start. The raising of a red flag shows that the course is not clear and that the rider may not start.

### The Engage

After a few strides the lance is brought smartly from the trail and is held firmly under the armpit parallel with the ground, the right hand underneath supporting the lance pole as the rider comes out of the saddle. An alternative to this is to use the over-arm method of holding the lance. Weight is transferred onto the knees and stirrup irons and the body is positioned forward, leaning to the right.

### The Recovery

After the second ring is taken or struck the lance is brought swiftly down without the rider changing grip until the right hand is in line with the instep underneath the rider's right shoulder. In this position the peg is taken. The

head and eyes of the rider should follow the point of the lance. As the lance reaches the top of its arc the rider's arm is brought down, then forward its fullest extent and is finally brought smartly back to the trail as the rider's seat is regained and the horse is reined in.

## **THE SWORD**

The start is approached with sword at the slope. The judge(s) is/are saluted by the bringing of the sword smartly to the carry position and returning it to the slope to signal that the rider is ready to commence. This will be acknowledged by the raising of a green flag by a judge to show that the course is clear and that the rider may start. The raising of a red flag shows that the course is not clear and that the rider may not start.

### The Engage

The rider lines up with sword at the slope. After a few strides the sword is brought smartly down from the slope to a position where the blade is parallel with the ground and the right arm is bent in a shallow 'V' to enable the rider to see the point over the bottom of the hilt. At the same time the pommel is transferred to the palm of the hand, the rider's weight is transferred to knees and stirrups-irons and the body leans forward to the right.

### The Recovery

After the second ring is taken or struck the sword, arm and body are dropped down to take the peg in the sword pegging position. After impact the head and eyes follow the point of the sword as it reaches the top of its arc, the sword is then brought down and forward to the sword pegging present position and returned smartly to the slope as the rider's seat is regained and the horse is reined in.

## **WEAPONS HANDLING – TWO ORANGES AND PEG**

The start is approached with sword at the slope. The judge(s) is/are saluted by the bringing of the sword smartly to the carry position and returning it to the slope to signal that the rider is ready to commence. This will be acknowledged by the raising of a green flag by a judge to show that the course is clear and that the rider may start. The raising of a red flag shows that the course is not clear and that the rider may not start.

### The Engage

The rider lines up with sword at the slope. After a few strides the point of the sword is brought forward smartly in one movement and the palm of the hand is turned upwards. The sword is then rotated over the right shoulder behind the neck with the blade in a horizontal position. The blade is then brought forward over the right shoulder in front of the face – level with the eyes – to cut the first orange and is taken across and rotated over the left shoulder where the palm of the hand is turned to face downwards. From that position – with the blade in a horizontal position – the blade is brought forward in front of the face – level with the eyes – to cut the second orange.

### The Recovery

After the second orange is cut or struck the sword, arm and body are dropped down to take the peg in the sword pegging position. After impact the head and eyes follow the point of the sword as it reaches the top of its arc, the sword is then brought down and forward to the sword pegging present position and returned smartly to the slope as the rider's seat is regained and the horse is reined in.

## **WEAPONS HANDLING – TENTPEGGING**

### **THE TRAIL - LANCE**

The lance is held at the point of balance with hand resting on the rider's right thigh, the point of the lance over the rider's horse's left ear. This position is most important in the team events from the safety aspect.

### **THE PRESENT**

#### Lance

The lance is presented by bringing the right hand up from the trail position to shoulder height. It is then pushed smartly forward with the arm slightly bent at the elbow keeping the lance perpendicular. At the same time the rider comes forward and to the right with his/her weight taken off his/her seat bones transferring it to his/her knees and stirrup irons.

The lance remains in the same position relative to the rider's arm as the lance arm and body are lowered together onto the peg in a smooth arc until the point of impact.

#### Sword

The sword is thrust up smartly from the slope at an angle of 45 degrees with the pommel being cupped in the palm of the hand. At the same time the rider comes forward and to the right with his/her weight taken off his/her seat bones, transferring it to his/her knees and stirrup irons.

The sword is then slowly lowered onto the peg in a smooth arc until the point of impact.

### **THE RUN**

#### With Lance

The rider enters the arena and walks towards the start with the lance at the trail. The judge(s) should be saluted by the raising of the lance to signal that the rider is ready to begin the run. A judge will acknowledge this by the raising of a green flag to show that the course is clear and that the rider's run may commence. The raising of a red flag shows that the course is not clear and that the rider may not commence his/her run.

When the rider is in line with the peg, the horse should be turned onto it - either left or right depending on which side of the arena he/she approaches the start – pause slightly to make any adjustment to the line-up on the peg and to show control of the horse : the horse should then go straight into a gallop, at which time the judge(s) will start to mark the run for pace and style.

#### With Sword

The rider enters the arena and walks towards the start with the sword at the slope. The judge(s) should be saluted by halting and by bringing the sword smartly to the carry position to signal that the rider is ready to begin the run. A judge will acknowledge this by the raising of a green flag to show that the course is clear and that the rider's run may commence. The raising of a red flag shows that the course is not clear and that the rider may not commence his/her run.

When the rider is in line with the peg, the horse should be turned onto it - either left or right depending on which side of the arena he/she approaches the start – pause slightly to make any adjustment to the line-up on the peg and to show control of the horse : the horse should then go straight into a gallop, at which time the judge(s) will start to mark the run for pace and style.

## **THE RECOVERY**

### Lance

The head and eyes of the rider should follow the point of the lance as the peg comes out of the ground - failure to do this may cause the butt end of the lance to hit the rider on the back of the head.

As the lance reaches the top of its arc, the arm should be brought down and forward at the same time as the rider's body returns to the upright position. The lance is taken forward to its full extent and is then brought smartly down to the trail position (the recovery). Style points will be deducted from the recovery if the lance is over-flourished (i.e. is lifted too high).

As the rider returns the lance to the trail, he/she should start to rein his/her horse back slowly so it is not brought to a sudden halt. This will help to stop any undue strain and jarring being placed on the horse's legs.

### Sword

The head and eyes should follow the point of the sword after impact. When it reaches the top of its arc, the arm should be brought down and forward to the present at the same time as the rider's body returns to the upright position. The rider's right arm takes the sword forward to its full extent and then brings it back to the slope as the horse is reined in.

## **TEAM TENTPEGGING**

In team tentpegging the object is to have the team hit their pegs at the same time.

A team may consist of a half section or sections of 3 or 4 horses and riders.

As with an individual run, the team should walk out to the start, for safety the riders may have their lances resting on their right boot. However, before starting the lances should all be brought to the trail with the team captain saluting the judges by the raising of his/her lance. A judge will acknowledge this by the raising of a green flag to show that the course is clear and that the team's run may commence. The raising of a red flag shows that the course is not clear and that the riders may not commence their run.

After arriving at the line of their respective pegs, the team should turn left or right onto the line of their pegs, pause briefly and if any of the team has a problem hold their position until the team is ready to run.

If there is a problem with one or more of the horses, the team captain may abort the start and line the team on their pegs again without being penalised.

In team pegging the competition may be held over one or two runs.

The following Rules apply:-

1. The make up of each team must be declared to the Entries' Secretary – who must inform the Senior Judge - before the event commences.
2. The name of the captain of each team must be identified to the Senior Judge before the event commences.
3. Once nominated, riders/horses must remain in their respective teams for the duration of the event (i.e. Preliminary to Final).

4. Under no circumstances, once the competition has started, can there be a substitution of horse or rider for any reason. Disqualification will result in team events if any rider is injured or any horse becomes lame.
5. If any team that has qualified for the next phase of the competition fails to arrive that team shall be disqualified.
6. Captain of each team to nominate the pegs on which each team member shall run – that peg is to remain the same for each phase of the competition.