

2026 Kay Irving Games, Flat Teams & Ian Wardell Musical Ride Championships

# IAN WARDELL MEMORIAL MUSICAL RIDE RULES

20/21 JUNE 2026 | VENUE: BACCHUS MARSH PC

Ian's love of Pony Club started in 1976 when he took his son to Bacchus Marsh Pony Club, closely followed by his two daughters. Ian quickly joined the committee and was appointed D.C in 1977, which he held for 9 years. He was PAV State Treasurer from 1991 to 2004 and a member of the State Games & Flat Teams Committee from 1991 until his passing in 2008. Ian was made a Life Member of both the Pony Club Association of Victoria and Bacchus Marsh Pony Club and was also the Barwon Zone Examining Secretary for many years.

During Ian's reign as D.C., there were often in excess of 120 riders at the club. Ian's main love at Pony Club was the games and flat teams where lots of riders could be involved. Bacchus Marsh had up to four games teams and three flat teams at the zone eliminations and for many years teams went on to compete successfully at state level. There were always riders who didn't necessarily like the speed & hype of the games, nor had the right horses or skills for flat teams, but Ian wanted every rider to have the opportunity to be involved.

In the late 1970's Ballarat Agricultural Show had a Musical Ride Competition where Bacchus Marsh Pony Club had over thirty riders competing in teams. Floated up in the cattle truck, ponies & horses of all shapes and sizes came together in an exceptional display. Senior riders & junior riders all working together was a philosophy that Ian greatly encouraged.

The Musical Ride at zone and state level was Ian's suggestion. Anybody could be involved, regardless of ability, experience, type of horse or a uniform team. Participation, practice and ultimately teamwork were what were called for. Ian's great passion was that any child who wished to participate should be able to do so. Over the years and hopefully for many to come, the Musical Ride has and will continue to provide that opportunity for all Victorian Pony clubbers.



PONY CLUB  
VICTORIA

## TEAM COMPOSITION

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## THE EVENT

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## JUDGE'S COMMENTS

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## AN OPEN LETTER

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## SCORE SHEET

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## TEAM COMPOSTIONS

- a) Each club team comprises four mounted combinations that meet the eligibility rules.
- b) No other person may participate in the conduct of the Musical Ride.
- c) There shall be no restriction on the size of the horse or pony.



If you have any queries with the Games, please contact:

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# MUSICAL RIDE

## The Event



- a) The musical ride is a separate competition to the Flat Teams.
- b) The arena is 60m x 30m. Opening is 8m wide.
- c) Each musical ride team has a team of four.
- d) Body numbers are not required. Costume – is optional for the musical ride Teams may compete in club uniform. **Costumes must be safe and all riders must still wear an approved helmet and riding boots. No boots or leggings on horses.**
- e) Length of ride = minimum 4 minutes, maximum 8 minutes.
- f) Witches hats will be available at the State Championships for use by teams. Team Managers are responsible for placement of these markers if needed.
- g) Teams must supply their own CD and/ or Digital Music player with auxiliary cable (one copy of each is a good idea for backup) for the State Championships. The state organising committee will provide the sound equipment.

For zone qualifying competitions, zones must stipulate their requirements.

- h) Music - The music should enhance the ride if it is in time with the movement and pace of the horse.

The teams can either ride to music or to a musical background.

- i) Judges - At the State Championships, there will be two judges, with separate pencilers in 2 cars. Principal Judge at C and long side judge at B both 5 metres back from arena. The scores will be aggregated.

## Judge's Comments

- a) The music is an integral part of the ride, and the tempo a major factor. Canter music needs to be 'up tempo' compared to the trot music, and if possible, foot tapping to attract the audience. In most cases this year the music was good and judging by some of the tapes, I suspect the riders had a major input. This is an added advantage as they then enjoy riding to it.
- b) Riding to Music: Select tunes with an appropriate "beat" that corresponds with the movement and paces of the horses. Choose 'two time' for trot, 'four time' for walk, so matching the rhythm of the paces.



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- c) A Musical Background: This means that the general time/rhythm/beat of the music should be appropriate to the horses' paces, no attempt is made to match the foot falls to the beat of the music.
- d) Type and Number of Movements: There should be a balanced mix of movements which require the riders to separate and come back together as a team of four. The number of movements chosen should fit into the time allowed of a minimum of four minutes and a maximum of eight minutes.
- e) Keep the ride entertaining. Imagine yourself on the sidelines watching the clubs perform. Would you enjoy their ride, or would you lose interest? Would you find the music pleasing or boring or even discordant? Put yourself in the position of the spectators. Listen to the comments from others whilst you are planning the ride and practicing. They often have good suggestions as they are removed from the planning. Saluting at the beginning of the ride is not recommended as it spoils the momentum of the ride.
- f) Horses are notorious for playing up at the most inopportune times. If the riders worry, they will become worse. Providing the horse is not producing dangerous behaviour the best thing a rider can do is to "grin and bear it". Everything will improve, and in most cases, marks are not deducted unless dressing and lines are badly affected. Allow the horse to settle in his own time. Trying to rectify the problem in a group often makes it worse. Concentrate on your next move.
- g) If your horse is on the wrong leg, you will not be marked down. A musical ride is all about entertaining, not necessarily equine excellence. A horse may be totally unsuitable in the dressage ring, but a world-beater in an event such as a musical ride. It is not always the best-educated mount who fares the best, but often the pony from the 'back paddock' who rides out with others regularly.
- h) We all make mistakes. Don't take it to heart. Unless it is a glaring mistake and because the ride is not a set test, it is more than likely that the judge will not pick it up. If the judge sees that you are enjoying yourself the chances are that the mistake will not even be noticed.
- i) Dressing, distances and lines are extremely important so ensure all your movements and transitions are done as a group with a minimum of fuss. Practice riding in pairs or a section, but at a distance. Look to each other all the time to make sure your distances are constant; you are in line and make allowances for going around corners and different sized mounts.
- j) Most clubs would accept that a ride with plenty of movement is more eye-catching and that too much walking slows the momentum. Minimal walking is recommended, and is fine as a lead into the salute, or after it, or while leaving the arena.
- k) Back numbers are not required to be worn.



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## An Open Letter



To: All Parents, Competitors, Instructors and Selectors of Club Musical Ride Teams for the State Musical Ride Championship.

### Extract - Letter from Senior Constable Margaret Foy

Constable Margaret Foy has judged the Musical Ride competition for 8 years. Margaret was a member of the Victorian Mounted Police Squad and participated in the Royal Melbourne Show over a period of years in the Police Musical Ride.

She kindly provided the Games Committee with the comments, and we circulate them for the benefit of those involved in the PCAV Musical Ride Championship.

An identical comment from last year and I know I make it every year, but these rides are becoming more and more difficult to judge. The thought, content and obvious practice preceding the day of competition showed in the finished product and I think the score sheets reflect this as did the initial placings with count back required for several.

Again, it was very encouraging to see so many all-round pony club mounts instead of the higher level competition horses which have been becoming more prevalent over the past few years. The riders are becoming more adventurous with their rides and in many instances, the costuming. As I have mentioned before, the enhancing of the mounts, although it does not earn extra points, helps when a theme is connected with the music. It also grabs the attention of the audience. Flashing light, toe tapping music, glitter or drawing on the horses all add to the spectacle. The movements many of the rides contained show that clubs are asking a little more of the horses, but with only a couple of exceptions, mostly within their limits. Imagination plays a great part and I appreciate their hard work.

I always tell the riders that our end of the arena is the fun end, and I want to see that they can work together as a team and show everyone watching they are really enjoying their horses and having fun. The number of smiles flashed toward the audience shows they are listening and taking heed. I suspect also that one of the things making life a little easier down my end is when I tell them I am not looking for equine excellence, but rather an entertaining ride.

An entry on the move is a good way to attract attention. To keep the lines straight, start a fair way outside the arena and pick a point in a direct line. A total of 10 points are allocated for the initial impact of the ride and an entry at the walk will not impact like an entry at a trot or canter. I would prefer the salute is given at the end of the ride or alternatively on the move. Stopping to salute at the beginning of a ride slows momentum, which is often difficult to recapture.



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It is not necessary for the team leader to ride in a specific spot. It sometimes makes movements restricted. As long as the team knows who the leader is and works to her/him, position is not important. There is an even number of points for trot and canter movements, and might I suggest the clubs look at an even amount of time in their ride for each. This will really test the concentration and teamwork with dressing and distances.

A musical ride is nothing like a flat team event where each rider is individually judged, and seat, aids and correctness on the part of horse and rider are major considerations. Quite often a judge of flat team's events finds it difficult to separate that from a musical ride event. Judges of a musical ride must be aware they are judging an entertainment event relying on 'close encounter' movements and other like movements drawing attention of spectators.



# MUSICAL RIDE – OFFICIAL SCORE SHEET



NAME OF CLUB .....

DATE OF RIDE ...../ ..... / 2026

TEAM WORK	Mark	Remarks	ARTISTIC IMPRESSION	Mark	Remarks
Walk Activity and Regularity	5		Initial Impact of Ride and Arena Entry	10	
Trot Rhythm & Activity	10		Choreography Balance, Design & Variety. Use of Arena Space	20	
Canter Regularity & Smoothness of Paces	10		Suitability of Music & Costuming	10	
Transitions Smoothness & Accuracy of Execution	10		Overall Impression of Ride		
Team Work Dressing, distances & Lines	15		Continuity of Flow & Interest	10	
<b>Total for Team Work</b>	<b>50</b>		<b>Artistic Impression</b>	<b>50</b>	

FALL OF HORSE/RIDER WILL INCUR A PENALTY OF 12 POINTS, 6 PER JUDGE

<b>FINAL SCORE OUT OF 100:</b>
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ANY OTHER REMARKS BY THE JUDGES:

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JUDGES SIGNATURE.....