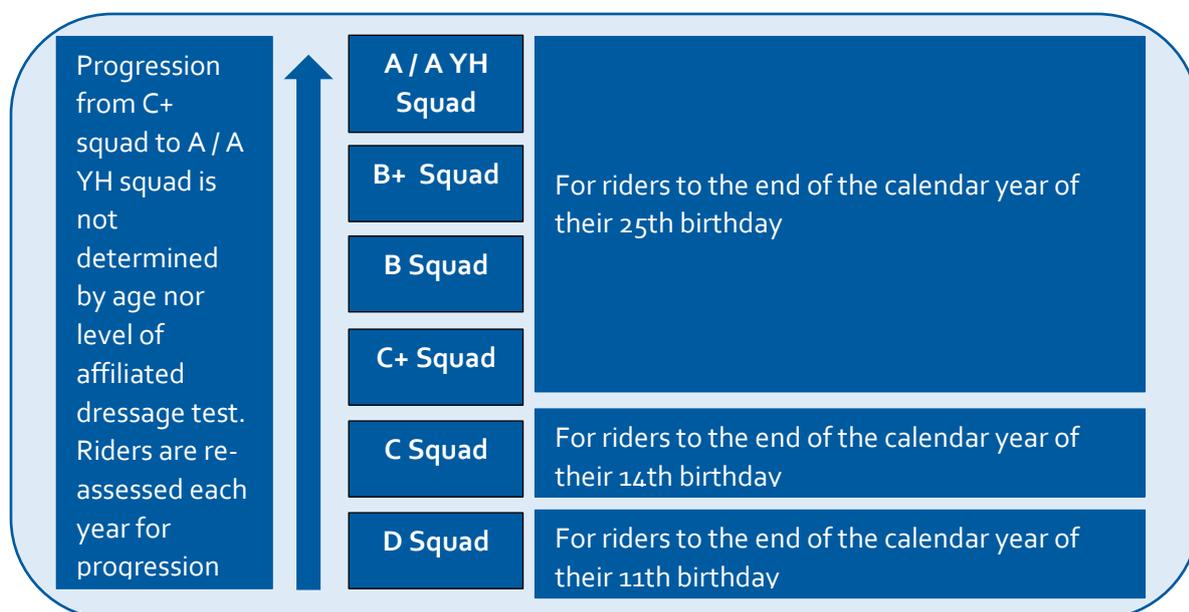




## Squad Information Sheet

### A Basic Introduction

All BD Youth riders are encouraged to participate in the rider squad test scheme which is designed to help you improve as a rider. It is important to remember that whilst there are competitions and team opportunities that focus on these tests that is not their primary function. The rider skills tests provide a pathway for rider development throughout the year and underpin all our training. The pathway that the squadding system follows can be seen below, it is important to remember that each squad is progressive as is the development within each level.



### The starting point

All BD Youth riders are strongly encouraged to participate in the squad pathway. Riders wishing to participate in regional team competitions are required to be squadded. Riders aged 11 years and under are automatically a D squad rider and will receive a D squad badge at their first squad assessment. Anyone over the age of 11 automatically becomes a C squad rider, and will then be assessed and the assessor will place them on the appropriate squad.

### How riders are assessed

Riders are put in to a squad following a squad assessment run within the region. The system is in place to help build confidence as well as understanding and ability – it isn't a good thing to try and rush through the levels. There are no time limits on a rider's progression through the system, nor any requirement that they must eventually be A squad riders.



## The tests and how they are judged

The rider skills tests have been designed to show the assessor(s) how well a rider can influence their horse's way of going through a supple and correct seat, good preparation, and a good relationship with their horse. Although they may appear relatively simple, they are constructed in a way that requires a great deal of skill to be able to ride them fluently and easily.

## What is the assessor looking for at each squad?

- **D Squad - for riders up to the end of the calendar year of their 11<sup>th</sup> birthday**

### *Position*

Working towards a correct position, but may not be able to maintain it in all paces.

### *Effectiveness*

Able to ride in a fair rhythm in walk, trot and canter.

### *Feel*

Aware of when the pony is working happily forward and able to use tactful aids.

### *Understanding*

Aware of rhythm and forwardness, and that bend should be in the direction of the movement.

### *Level*

Able to ride simple school movements with some degree of accuracy and able to identify when on the correct canter lead.

- **C Squad - for riders up to the end of the calendar year of their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday**

### *Position*

Working towards a correct, balanced position. Able to follow the horse's movement in walk, rising trot and canter.

### *Effectiveness*

Able to maintain a fair rhythm in all three paces, can influence bend and contact with the horse. Able to consistently achieve the correct canter lead.

### *Feel*

Awareness of developing a harmonious partnership.

### *Understanding*

Aware of the scales of training, especially forwardness, rhythm, suppleness and contact. Able to improve effectiveness over the horse's way of going under supervision.

### *Level*

Able to competently ride movements present at Preliminary and Novice levels, showing an understanding of how to prepare movements.



- **C+ Squad – for riders up to the end of the calendar year of their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday**

***Position***

Working towards a correct, balanced position. Able to follow the horse's movement in walk, rising trot and canter.

***Effectiveness***

Able to maintain a fair rhythm in all three paces, can influence bend and contact with the horse. Able to consistently achieve the correct canter lead.

***Feel***

Awareness of developing a harmonious partnership.

***Understanding***

Aware of the scales of training, especially forwardness, rhythm, suppleness and contact. Able to improve effectiveness over the horse's way of going under supervision.

***Level***

Able to competently ride movements present at Preliminary and Novice levels, showing an understanding of how to prepare movements. Riders to have the ability to ride a test within a 20 x 60 arena.

- **B Squad – for riders up to the end of the calendar year of their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday**

***Position***

Able to show a correct position with some depth, security and suppleness, developing some independence from the hands.

***Effectiveness***

Able to enhance the horse's way of going using correct aids, under supervision.

***Feel***

Sympathetic rider showing harmony with the horse. Awareness of problems and how to deal with them positively.

***Understanding***

Knowledge of the correct way of going of the horse, scales of training and their influence on the horse's way of going. Ability to exercise the horse independently and improve the horse when under supervision.

***Level***

Understanding of lengthening and shortening horse's stride and frame, basic lateral work and counter canter. Able to competently ride movements present at Novice and Elementary levels.

- **B+ Squad – for riders up to the end of the calendar year of their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday**

***Position***

Able to demonstrate an independence of seat, using some degree of core strength with increased balance and suppleness.



### ***Effectiveness***

Ability to present the horse in some degree of self-carriage, engagement and balance using correct, unobtrusive aids. The rider recognises their strengths and weaknesses when they are pointed out, and have ability to self-correct where necessary.

### ***Feel***

Sympathetic rider maintaining harmony with the horse whilst being able to produce correct balance and sufficient impulsion to show a difference within the paces and basic lateral work.

### ***Understanding***

Has knowledge of the movements at Elementary/Medium level, the demands these may place on the horse and demonstrates the appropriate skills, approaches and techniques to produce them.

### ***Level***

Ability to use a half-halt to balance the horse, show a clear difference between paces, and develop horse's engagement and self-carriage. Able to competently ride movements present at Elementary and Medium level.

- **A Squad – for riders up to the end of the calendar year of their 25th birthday. The A Squad Young Horse test is for A Squad riders with 5 or 6 year old horses.**

### ***Position***

Demonstrates a correct, poised position, showing depth, independence and security. A soft, supple rider who is able to follow the horse's movement with ease in all paces and during transitions, whilst enhancing the horse's balance and confidence.

### ***Effectiveness***

Ability to demonstrate a positive influence over the horse's way of going, using core strength, seat, back and legs independently of the hands to produce correct and unobtrusive aids.

### ***Feel***

Ability to improve the horse's way of going independently. Have empathy with the horse in its training and development when under supervision.

### ***Understanding***

Demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the correct way of going, and scales of training; including impulsion, straightness and collection. Has the knowledge to impart this to the horse when introducing new movements. Is able to feed back to trainers regarding the horse's progress.

### ***Level***

Ability to ride more advanced movements. Show an understanding of how to introduce these to the horse whilst maintaining a harmonious partnership. Knowledge of personal strengths and weaknesses and how to address these independently and when under supervision. Able to competently ride movements present at Medium level and above.