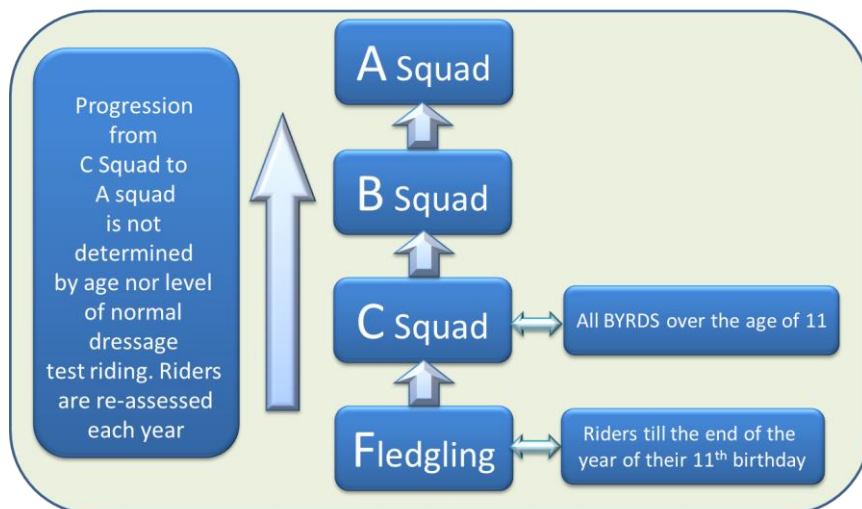




BD YOUTH RIDER SQUAD TESTS

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 squad 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 riders who join BD Youth can be squadded. If you are 11 years and under then you are automatically an Under 12. Anyone over the age of 11 automatically becomes a C squad rider, you will then be assessed and the assessor will place you on the correct squad, if you are a new member and going to a training session you can discuss your squad with the coach and if they are an assessor they can advise and squad you.

How riders are assessed

Riders are normally put in to a squad using a combination of tuition / assessment with their BD Youth coach / assessor and squad test riding. Using training as well as tests allows us to get a clearer picture of your understanding, level of work, and the relationship you have with your horse/pony. The system is in place to help build your confidence as well as your 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 tests have been designed to show the assessor(s) how well a rider can influence their horses way of going through a supple and correct seat, good preparation, and a good a 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.

Marking the tests

The tests are marked out of a score of 100, which is distributed across 3 sections – it is important to remember that this score is not equivalent to a dressage test percentage mark. The rider's relationship with their horse is reflected in all the three sections.

Score Sheet Sections and What They Mean.

Date:		Venue:		Judge:	
No:	Squad	Rider's Name:		Pony/Horse's Name:	
.....	A / B / C / F	
<p>The Scale of Marks is as follows: 10. Exceptional Ability, 9. High Level of Ability, 8. Areas of Ability, 7. Ability & Some Weaknesses, 6. More Than a Obvious Weakness, 5. Weaknesses that Need Addressing, 4. Tactless Riding.</p>					
Please tick the good points and underline those that need work.		Max Marks	Judges' Marks	Remarks	
A. RIDER'S SEAT & EFFECTIVENESS OF AIDS Relaxation & suppleness Lower back & hips going with the movement Poise Balance Security Rider's Straightness Position of head, shoulders, elbows, arms, hands and legs Harmony with rhythm of horse, especially in transitions Effectiveness of aids		10 x 4		The Seat: To bring the best out of their horse a rider must be balanced and supple. Their straightness, security, correctness of position and poise are also marked in this section.	
B. RIDER'S INFLUENCE ON WAY OF GOING Rhythm Suppleness Contact Impulsion Straightness Self Carriage Throughness		10 x 3		Way of going: It is important to remember the rider tests are focused on the rider and the way of going mark is about how you as the rider influence that. There is no mark for pace. A well trained horse that is supple, works in a good forward rhythm to an elastic contact will get better marks than a super horse working in an incorrect way.	
C. RIDER'S CONTROL OF MOVEMENTS IN TEST Preparation Accuracy Correctness of movements Errors of course - 0.5 (per error)		10 x 3		Movements and figures: Again this mark focuses on you and reflects your ability to prepare effectively to enable a test to look easy and fluent. It is also for the accuracy and correct positioning of all the movements. An ability to ride accurately is essential in the training of the horse, and is also an important discipline to enable both horse and rider to progress up the levels.	
TOTAL (Marks given to one decimal point)		100			
JUDGE'S SIGNATURE: _____					
Directives for Judges: Errors of course - 0.5 deducted for each error. For Fledglings and C Squad riders Self Carriage and Throughness in section B may not be marked, as less of a priority at this level.					
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What a coach and or assessor looks for at each level.

The table below is a basic outline of the qualities a rider in each squad would demonstrate. It is obvious that some of these things could not be determined from watching a rider ride a test, which is why the training and ongoing assessment is so important. Riders may well not exactly fulfil the criteria that are laid out below. As we showed above in figure 1 when you move up a squad you may just be beginning to fulfil them and you move on when you are well established at the level.

	Under 12	C Squad	B Squad	A Squad
Position	Working towards a basically correct position, but may not be able to maintain it in all paces	Working towards a basically correct position, aware of any major issue and with assistance is able to work on improving these. Able to follow the horses movement in the more comfortable paces.	A basically correct position showing some depth and security. A rider who is for the most part able to remain soft and supple.	A correct position with depth and security, a soft supple rider who is able to follow the horses movement with ease.
Effectiveness	Able to ride in a fair rhythm in walk trot and canter.	A rider who is able to maintain a fair rhythm in all three paces, and can influence bend to a good degree, and is aware of contact and issues that may need working on.	An effective rider who is able to positively influence their horses way of going, but may need help to improve it	An effective rider who is able to positively influence their horse in its way of going and improve it.
Feel	Aware of when the pony is working happily forward and uses tactful aids.	A rider who is aware of the harmony they are aiming for and achieves it at times, and tries to deal with problems.	A sympathetic rider who has harmony with the horse, and is aware of Any problems and deals with them in a good way.	A rider who shows very good harmony with and awareness of their horse in all their riding.
Understanding	Aware of rhythm and forwardness, and that bend should be in direction of movement.	Is aware of the scales of training, especially forwardness, rhythm, suppleness and contact. Is able to improve their own riding and maintain horses way of going with supervision.	Has an understanding of a good way of going, and the scales of training. Is able to work under supervision to improve their horse and can exercise it well without supervision.	Has clear understanding of a good way of going, and scales of training and can apply it theoretically and in practice. Is able to work under supervision and alone to improve their horse and themselves.
Level	Able to ride simple school movements with some degree of accuracy. Working towards riding without stirrups in the easier paces.	A rider who would be able to ride a prelim or novice test with understanding of preparation. Can ride without stirrups in walk, trot and canter.	A rider who has some understanding of lengthening and shortening the stride and basic lateral work. Can ride confidently and effectively in all three paces without stirrups.	A rider who can include some more advanced work in their training and understands what this brings to them and their horse.