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# INTRODUCTION

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Vaulting is gymnastics on a moving horse, an ancient sport which had its beginnings in the bull vaulting of the ancient Minoans. It was used in the training of cavalry troops since Roman times, throughout the Middle Ages and into the Twentieth Century. Vaulting became an Olympic event in the 1920 Olympic Games in Antwerp, where the competitors were cavalry teams.

Vaulting is officially recognized as an international equestrian discipline by the Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI), which is the world governing body for international equestrian sports, it is one of the six disciplines offered at the World Equestrian Games (in addition to Jumping, Dressage, Three-Day Eventing, Endurance Riding and Driving). This sport is divided into two sections by the FEI - Juniors (up to 18 years of age) and Young Riders (16 to 21 years of age). It is also recognized by the American Horse Shows Association (AHSA) at the Silver and Gold Medal levels with no age limit.

Vaulting competitions are divided into two major categories: 1) compulsory, or required exercises and 2) kür, or free-style exercises. Competitions are offered for teams, pairs and individuals. (See Chapter IV, for description of types of competitions.)

The practice of vaulting fills many needs in the equestrian world - sometimes as the means to an end, sometimes as an end in itself. The following are some applications of this sport:

**SAFETY** is the first and most important application of vaulting. By increasing confidence and balance, it decreases falls; by teaching proper vault-offs from every position as well as good landings, it reduces chances of injury from a fall. Helmets and boots are not worn for vaulting because they alter a vaulters balance. (Refer to USPC Policy 0125A Safety Requirements for Pony Club.)

**RIDER TRAINING** is enhanced with the improvement of confidence, suppleness, balance and rhythm. Using vaulting techniques, the time required in learning to ride safely can be cut in half. It is also good for Pony Club Games competitors because they learn to dismount and remount more quickly and safely.

**VIRTUALLY INSTANT SUCCESS** is more often the rule than the exception when learning basic vaulting. Unlike riding, which requires many months from beginning to even slight accomplishment, vaulting competence, up to the novice award level, often can be achieved in a matter of weeks.

As a **RAINY DAY ACTIVITY** vaulting is ideal. Work on the barrel is a must for vaulters of every level and it can be made fun and exciting when run as a mini-competition or as games. Dismounted meetings can be dynamic and appealing.

**HORSE SHORTAGES**, whether caused by lack of funds or lack of transportation, need not doom some Pony Clubbers to the role of onlookers. A dozen Pony Clubbers can share one horse for a half-day's activities.

**EXPENSE** is minimal for each Pony Club vaulter because the expenses can be divided many ways for one horse, its equipment and transportation.

**COMPETITIONS AND EXCHANGES** can be arranged even for beginner vaulters. Local, National and International competitions are held every year.

**HORSE MANAGEMENT** is an integral part of Pony Club. This is also true for Vaulting activities and competitions. The proper care of the horse is always taken into consideration.

Both as a **TEAM AND INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY**, vaulting is structured to offer opportunity for accomplishment to both the child who wants to become an individual star and to the person who gains confidence from acceptance by teammates.

**PONY CLUBBERS OF ALL AGES AND LEVELS OF ABILITY** can work in the same lesson without rushing beginners or holding back the more accomplished students.

**MEDAL EXAMINATIONS** offered by the American Vaulting Association (AVA) are available to Pony Clubbers who are also AVA members. Medals are offered at the Novice level at trot or canter to the left. Medals are offered at the Bronze, Silver and Gold level at the canter to the left or right.