

MINNINNOOKA POLO & RIDING SCHOOL

Junior Development Squads — Information Sheet

Purpose, structure, eligibility and rules of conduct.

This document provides the basis for assessing squad places against external funding and sponsorship.

At Minninnooka we believe the best players aren't made by riding once a week. They're built through consistent coaching, time around horses, teamwork, match experience and responsibility. Our Development Squads bring all of that together to help young riders become confident riders and players — not just better at lessons.

1. Purpose of this document

This document explains what it means to be a member of a Minninnooka Development Squad. It sets out:

- who the squads are for
- how riders are selected
- the standards expected of squad members
- how places are maintained
- the responsibilities of riders and their parents

Our long-term goal is to secure sponsorship that allows committed riders to access more training, more matches and greater opportunities. This document ensures any sponsored places are awarded fairly and transparently, using the same standards for every rider.

A squad place is earned through commitment, attitude and a willingness to improve — it isn't simply booked like a lesson slot. It gives a clear, consistent basis for awarding squad places, and any funding attached to them, to the right riders for the right reasons, and for reviewing a rider's ongoing suitability for membership or sponsorship. Access is limited to riders who continue to meet the eligibility criteria set out in Section 6.

2. What a squad place is — and isn't

Individual lessons teach skills. A squad place builds riders and players through structure, repetition and consistency: regular coaching, a wider range of horses, and a development plan that takes a rider from lessons to playing and competing with confidence.

Every squad follows the Minninnooka Method: honest assessment, a clear development plan, technique built through repetition, and skills established before speed or pressure are introduced. Sponsored places are reviewed against attendance, conduct, commitment and individual development — not attendance alone.

3. The two squad programmes

Minninnooka runs two development squad pathways. Both follow the same philosophy — structure, repetition, consistency, and a defined plan that moves a rider from lessons to genuine capability. Each pathway develops different skills and leads to different outcomes.

Foundation → Development → Advanced → Minninnooka Teams → Pony Club/SUPA → HPA

The Minninnooka pathway: from first lesson to national competition.

3a. Junior Polo Development Squad — three progression levels

The programme is divided into three progression-based squads: Foundation, Development and Advanced. Placement is based on each rider's assessment, current capability, confidence, commitment and development needs. Foundation, Development and Advanced are progression levels based on ability and readiness, not fixed groups: a rider may be placed at any level while developing the skills and independence required for the next stage.

Junior Development Membership costs £45 per month; riders are placed within Foundation or Development following assessment. Advanced membership is available as Weekend (£195 per month) or Full (£295 per month). Advanced squad places are limited by horse and staff capacity.

Foundation

Building a love of horses and polo while learning the early fundamentals of riding and horsemanship: horse care and basic handling, riding balance and position, introduction to stick and ball, group play and mini chukkas. Riders get their first taste of match play, learn everyday stable routines, and grow in confidence around horses — all while becoming part of the Minninnooka team. No pressure, no complicated technique: just a genuine, well-founded introduction to the sport, and confident young riders who are ready to progress.

Development

Where the real foundations of polo are laid. Riders develop their riding and flatwork, stick work and shot technique, game theory and positioning, and horse care and management. Riders will have opportunities to book instructional chukkas and participate in match play as they become ready. There is more structure, repetition and responsibility than at Foundation level, preparing riders for the next stage of their development.

Foundation and Development — member benefits

Foundation and Development membership is designed to encourage more yard involvement. Benefits happen within planned, booked sessions.

Includes:

- 15% member lesson rate
- Individual initial assessment
- Simple development plan
- Priority access to squad lessons, camps and training days
- Group theory sessions
- Opportunities for extra training when published
- Supervised horse preparation, grooming and untacking connected to booked sessions
- Eligibility for Minninnooka teams and selected competitions

Does not include:

- Guaranteed additional riding
- Unrestricted yard access

- Unbooked attendance
- Individual supervision outside scheduled sessions
- The right to remain at the yard for unlimited periods

Foundation and Development membership supports consistent training through reduced lesson rates, an individual development plan and access to squad opportunities. Lessons and activities are booked and paid for separately. Membership does not include unrestricted yard access or guaranteed additional riding. Any time on the yard outside a booked session must be agreed with a manager in advance.

Advanced

For riders who are genuinely committed to their polo. The programme covers advanced riding and collection, full shot range, tactical play, young horse and retraining work, fitness for polo, horsemanship and horse management. Advanced riders can choose Weekend membership, with up to one additional confirmed yard ride per week on Saturday or Sunday, separate from the required weekly lesson, or Full membership, with up to two additional confirmed yard rides per week during the published Tuesday to Sunday squad times, separate from the required weekly lesson — around three mounted sessions a week for Full members, including their lesson — with multiple horses to ride and a programme that expands as each player's capability grows.

Advanced membership provides controlled additional yard access — not open or unlimited yard access. It is not included in Foundation or Development membership; any yard time outside a booked session must be agreed with a manager in advance. Full membership places are limited according to horse and staff capacity. Membership may be reviewed if attendance patterns, horse availability or staffing requirements make the agreed level of access unsustainable.

Every visit — lesson or additional ride — must be requested through the app or with a manager and confirmed before attendance. Visits are subject to a daily capacity limit, and to suitable horses, weather, welfare and staffing, and are attached to yard responsibilities such as grooming, tacking and putting horses away.

The purpose of the weekly group lesson is to check in on how much each rider has achieved, assess their progress and guide the next stage of their development. One group lesson each week is the minimum expectation, not the whole programme.

Every rider will complete an initial assessment and receive a development plan. This plan will be reviewed regularly to set priorities, record progress and guide horse allocation and training.

3b. Junior English Squad — Horse Riding Development Programme

A structured monthly programme for riders who want more than a weekly lesson. Riders develop real horsemanship by riding multiple horses and working toward producing and competing a horse of their own.

No horse ownership required: Minninnooka's large and varied string allows each rider to be carefully matched with suitable horses as they develop.

The rider's journey follows three stages, each building on the last:

- **Stage 1 — Building the foundation:** Riding multiple horses, developing position, balance and 'feel', learning what different horses need.
- **Stage 2 — Bring on a horse:** Matched with a horse to bring on, learning its character, establishing a routine, developing it through schooling.
- **Stage 3 — Producing & competing:** Structured coaching, regular riding, horsemanship and horse care, working toward genuine competition readiness.

4. What we expect from squad members

A squad place carries real expectations. These apply across both the Polo and English squads and should be considered before a place — funded or otherwise — is confirmed or renewed.

- **Genuine commitment** — a squad place is an ongoing commitment, not a drop-in class. Riders are expected to attend regularly, arrive on time and make the most of every opportunity.
- **Theory lessons** — Riders are expected to attend scheduled theory sessions alongside riding, not just turn up to ride.
- **Regular training** — A minimum of one group lesson each week is required to maintain an active squad place. This regular coaching check-in reviews progress, reinforces technique and catches unhelpful habits early. Advanced riders may use their remaining confirmed yard visits for varied riding rather than additional formal lessons. This applies during normal operation; planned absences, illness, competitions and other exceptional circumstances should be communicated to a manager in advance.
- **Riding a variety of horses** — Riders are not allocated a single pony. Learning to ride, read and adapt to different horses is central to the programme.
- **Horsemanship — tacking up and handling** — Riders are expected to tack and untack their own horse, with staff supervision, as part of every riding session. Hands-on horsemanship and responsibility are an essential part of becoming a capable horsewoman or horseman. Horses are not handed over ready to go.
- **Advanced rider responsibilities** — Advanced riders must help with appropriate yard duties and prepare, tack up, groom and put away their allocated horses. They are expected to contribute positively to the daily running of the yard, under staff direction.
- **Advance communication** — Advanced riders must tell staff by 4:00pm on the day before each intended visit. This allows staff to confirm attendance and allocate a suitable horse and activity.
- **Ride allocation** — A confirmed Advanced riding visit will normally include one allocated ride. The horse and purpose of the ride will be decided by staff and remain subject to horse welfare, suitability, weather and operational circumstances.
- **Contributing to the squad** — A strong, committed and consistent squad allows the whole group to benefit from exposure and opportunities as they come up, such as matches, visiting coaches, competitions and sponsorship interest. Irregular attendance affects the whole group, weakening it for everyone, not just the individual rider.

Advanced yard times run from Tuesday to Sunday and are published on the shared arena calendar. Weekend members may book up to one additional confirmed yard ride per week on Saturday or Sunday; Full members may book up to two additional confirmed yard rides per week, from the published Tuesday to Sunday times. Both are separate from the required weekly lesson, which is booked and paid for separately. Daily numbers remain controlled by managers. Foundation and Development riders may only access the yard outside formal sessions by prior agreement with staff.

5. Yard Opening Times and Additional Lessons

Yard opening times and available lessons will be updated regularly on the calendar. Riders and parents must check the calendar before attending. The hours below are general yard operating hours, not squad-access times: they show when the yard and lessons are available, not when Advanced squad members can attend. Advanced squad access follows the published Tuesday to Sunday squad-access times, subject to each rider's weekly ride allocation (one additional ride for Weekend, two for Full) set out in Section 4.

Summer holidays

During the summer holidays, additional morning lessons will be added to the timetable.

- The yard will generally be open from 7:00am to 10:30am, Tuesday to Sunday.
- Lesson times and availability will be shown on the app.
- Advanced riders may attend during the published Tuesday to Sunday squad-access hours, subject to prior confirmation, their weekly ride allocation, and the conditions of their membership.
- Any solo ride normally counts towards the rider's weekly membership allocation unless it is separately booked and paid for or specifically offered by a manager as an additional training opportunity.
- The yard is closed on Mondays.

Term time

During term time, the yard will generally be open from 4:00pm to 6:00pm, Tuesday to Friday, 7am – 11am Saturday & Sunday.

- Lessons will be available during these afternoon hours.
- Exact lesson times and yard availability will be published on the app & calendar.
- The yard is closed on Mondays.

Booking and attendance

Riders must still book lessons and confirm every yard visit through the Minninooka app or directly with a manager. Published yard opening times do not mean riders can attend without prior confirmation.

Solo riding is never automatic. Every rider will be assessed by staff and must receive approval before riding independently, regardless of squad membership. All riding remains subject to horse welfare, horse availability and staff approval.

6. Who can apply — eligibility

Squad places are offered on an individual basis, not on a first-come-first-served basis. We are looking for riders who demonstrate the attitude, commitment and willingness to learn that will allow them to thrive in the programme. What is assessed is:

- Positive attitude
- Consistent attendance
- Willingness to learn
- Good sportsmanship
- Respect for horses and teammates
- Commitment to personal improvement

The criteria above apply both when awarding a squad place and when reviewing a rider's ongoing suitability for membership or sponsorship.

7. Squad Dos and Don'ts

Do

- Attend consistently and arrive on time — squads are built on regular, repeated sessions, not occasional attendance
- Attend at least one group lesson per week to keep an active squad place
- Wear a riding helmet and riding boots for every lesson and activity
- Wear appropriate riding clothing, including covered shoulders — no vest tops or cropped tops
- Tack up and untack your own horse, with staff supervision, as part of every session
- Complete consent, contact and medical forms on the Minninnooka app, and immediately update them if anything changes
- Speak to a member of staff (Josh Leiva or Kirstie Otamendi) about any concerns or booking issues
- Treat instructors, staff and other riders with courtesy and respect
- Leave the yard clean and tidy after use
- Report any accident, hazard or concern to staff immediately
- Follow instructions from coaches and staff immediately where safety is concerned

Don't

- Don't enter the stable area or riding arena without the instructor's consent — this includes after an accident; staff are first-aid trained and will call you in once it's safe
- Don't use phones while riding, in lessons, or handling horses
- Don't feed the horses — several are on specific diets or have allergies
- Don't wear shorts, skirts, flip-flops or open-toed shoes around the horses
- Don't bring umbrellas onto the yard — they frighten the horses
- Don't smoke, drink alcohol or take drugs on the premises
- Don't run or shout around the yard
- Don't leave non-riding children unsupervised on site

8. General yard rules

- **Bad weather:** Safety is our priority. A decision will be made at least an hour before the lesson if the weather conditions require it to be postponed, and it will be rescheduled.
- **Complaints:** If you have a complaint, please email polo@minninnooka.co.uk — you'll get a reply within 48 hours.
- **Dogs:** Strictly no dogs on the premises.
- **Photography and social media:** You are welcome to photograph or video the rider you are accompanying. You must obtain permission from the instructor and the rest of the group if anyone else could appear in the footage before recording or sharing images.
- **Spectators:** Please treat instructors, staff and other riders with respect, don't interrupt or distract a lesson, and be respectful of other clients.
- **Driving on site:** The maximum speed limit is 10mph. Vehicles and personal possessions are left at your own risk.

- **Squad yard open times:** Advanced yard times are published on the shared arena calendar. Weekend membership allows up to one additional confirmed yard ride per week on Saturday or Sunday; Full membership allows up to two additional confirmed yard rides per week, from the published Tuesday to Sunday times. Both are separate from the required weekly lesson, which is booked and paid for separately. Riders must notify staff 24 hours before attending, and every visit is subject to a daily capacity limit and to suitable horses, weather, welfare and staffing. Foundation and Development riders may only use yard time outside formal sessions with prior staff agreement.
- **Safeguarding:** Minninnooka Ltd is committed to safeguarding the welfare of every child and accepts its legal and moral duty of care under the Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004 to protect all children and safeguard their welfare, regardless of age, ability, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or socio-economic background. All instructors are trained in safeguarding. The Designated Safeguarding Officers are Kirstie Otamendi and Josh Leiva.

9. Membership Terms and Conditions and Price List

- **Cancellations:** strict 24-hour policy. Lessons or activities cancelled within 24 hours are fully chargeable; cancellations made outside 24 hours may be transferred to another day.
- Membership fees are collected automatically each month through the agreed payment method and are due by the seventh of each month.
- Membership may be cancelled with 30 days' written notice.
- Lessons not covered by membership must be paid for within 24 hours via the app payment link or bank transfer.
- Riders requiring monthly invoicing should register this directly with Kirstie Otamendi.

10. Membership pricing (monthly)

Membership provides access to the relevant development programme. Foundation and Development riders receive the Member rates shown below; Advanced riders receive the Advanced Squad rates.

Membership	Monthly fee	Controlled access
Junior Development Membership (Foundation / Development)	£45	Booked activities only
Advanced — Weekend	£195	Up to one additional confirmed yard ride per week (Saturday or Sunday), separate from the required weekly lesson (£40, paid separately)
Advanced — Full	£295	Up to two additional confirmed yard rides per week (Tuesday to Sunday), separate from the required weekly lesson (£40, paid separately). Places limited by horse and staff capacity

Junior Development Membership costs £45 per month. This provides membership of the relevant development level (Foundation or Development) but does not include open yard access or automatically unlock the Advanced Squad rates shown below. Advanced riders may choose Weekend membership or Full membership; Advanced places are limited by horse and staff capacity.

Advanced membership at a glance

Weekend — £195/month includes:

- Up to one additional confirmed yard ride per week on Saturday or Sunday, separate from the required weekly lesson
- One group lesson each week is required and is booked and paid for separately at the Advanced Squad rate of £40
- A development plan, reviewed regularly
- Priority access to Minninnooka teams and selected competitions
- Grooming, tacking and yard responsibilities as part of every visit

Full — £295/month includes:

- Up to two additional confirmed yard rides per week (Tuesday to Sunday), separate from the required weekly lesson
- One group lesson each week is required and is booked and paid for separately at the Advanced Squad rate of £40
- A development plan, reviewed regularly
- Priority access to Minninnooka teams and selected competitions
- Grooming, tacking and yard responsibilities as part of every visit

11. Lessons and home-yard pricing

Prices below are per session unless stated. “Horse/session” is the standard non-member charge for that activity; “Own Horse” is the coaching fee; “Member rate” is the discounted horse-only rate for anyone on the relevant membership (15% off); “Advanced Squad rate” is the flat rate for riders on an Advanced paid membership. Foundation and Development riders pay the applicable Member rate unless a different price is agreed in writing.

Group Polo Lesson (60 min)

Tier	Horse/session	Own Horse	Member rate	Advanced Squad rate
Adult	£90	£35	£76.50	—
Child	£75	£30	£63.75	£40

Group English Lesson (45 min)

Tier	Horse/session	Own Horse	Member rate	Advanced Squad rate
Adult	£70	£35	£59.50	—
Child	£60	£30	£51.00	£40

Private Polo Lesson (60 min)

Tier	Horse/session	Own Horse	Member rate	Advanced Squad rate
Adult	£150	£40	£127.50	—
Child	£130	£40	£110.50	£50

Private English Lesson (45 min)

Tier	Horse/session	Own Horse	Member rate	Advanced Squad rate
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Adult	£130	£40	£110.50	–
Child	£95	£40	£80.75	£40

Home Chukkas (booked individually, per chukka)

Tier	Horse/chukka	Own Horse	Advanced Squad rate	Notes
Adult	£65	£15	–	Booked individually, subject to horse availability, staffing, welfare and confirmation
Child	£55	£15	£30	Booked individually, subject to horse availability, staffing, welfare and confirmation

Home Challenges (3 chukkas — players placed into teams)

Tier	Own Horse	Entry	Advanced Squad rate
Adult	£60	£190	–
Child	£60	£150	£90

All players are placed into teams for Home Challenges — no need to arrive with a full four.

Away Chukkas (per chukka, at another club)

Tier	Fee (all-in)	Notes
Adult	£120	Per chukka
Child	£95	Per chukka

12. Off-site pricing (competitions and events)

Pony Club (per event)

Tier	Fee	Entry	Format
Child	£285	≈£50/rider	3 chukkas

Club Challenges (off-site, 1 day)

Tier	Fee (all-in)	Format	Notes
Adult	£580	4 chukkas / 1 day	Needs at least 3 players to book — players can split a spot.
Child	£500	4 chukkas / 1 day	Needs at least 3 players to book — players can split a spot.

13. How this compares — HPA tournament benchmark

For context, here's what a typical HPA-level tournament at another club costs:

Item	HPA tournament (other clubs)
Horse hire	from £150 per chukka
Coaching/pro	from £300–£500 per goal of handicap, per game
Entry	from £1,000
Format	4 chukkas / 2 days

On costs, Minninnooka's onsite events run at roughly a fifth to a half of typical HPA polo costs. It's our aim to bridge the gap between lessons and HPA competition — riders get tournament experience at a fraction of the cost, then move up once they're ready for it.

14. Why do squads work?

Riders improve fastest when they ride consistently, work with the same coaching team and play regularly with the same group of players. Squad training lets coaches build long-term skills instead of starting again every week, helping riders develop confidence, teamwork and game understanding much faster than occasional lessons alone.

That consistency is the whole idea behind the squad structure: fewer one-off lessons, more genuine progression.

15. Contact

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