

SADDLERY

Saddles

Ponies must have correctly fitting leather or synthetic saddles with full trees. Saddles with half trees are not permitted.

Bits

Bits must be well made and well fitting and must not be used in a way that causes pain or distress to the pony.

The following cheek styles and mouthpieces for bits are permitted:

Permitted Cheek Styles

Simple snaffle (single rein) cheeks, eg Hanging Cheek; Eggbutt; Loose Ring; D-Ring; Fulmer.

Cheeks which fix the position of the bridle via the cheek pieces to stabilise the mouthpiece and hold it off the horse's tongue when not engaged by the rider are encouraged eg Hanging Cheek; Fulmer with keepers; and slotted cheek styles as used in the Myler system.

Cheek styles incorporating an excessive degree of leverage, eg gags; or cheeks with a cheek bar longer than 3½", are not permitted.

Permitted Mouthpieces

Mullen mouths; single jointed snaffles; and double jointed (3-piece) snaffles with a smooth-acting central section (ie French Link, lozenge or barrel).

3-piece bits where the central section is set at an angle to intensify the pressure on the tongue are not permitted (eg Dr Bristol style bits).

Ports to give the tongue room to swallow are permitted on any of the 3 permitted styles of mouthpieces, but must not be used to cause pressure on the roof of the horse's mouth.

Jointed mouthpieces designed to limit the "nutcracker" effect on the bars and outer lips; and those offering sides which move independently of one another through a central bushing system, (provided this has a sleeve to protect the horse's tongue), are also encouraged.

Materials

Bits may be made from a single metal or a combinations of metals; plastic; rubber; or similar materials. Bits must be in good condition, with no sharp edges; rust; or worn areas (a particular risk with some of the softer materials.) Intended corrosion on Sweet Iron bits, or similar compounds, is permitted providing the bit is well-maintained.

Bit Attachments and Associated "Training Aids"

No additions to bits such as curb chains, tongue grids, etc, are permitted.

If a bit is correctly fitted and used, equipment such as crank, flash and grackle nosebands, should not be necessary.

Martingales must be correctly fitted so as not to interfere with the action of the bit or the natural carriage of the pony.

General

All bits must be well-made; in good condition; and properly fitted.

Good dental care is a pre-requisite of good biting and the pony's teeth may be inspected as part of the equipment check.

Members should be aware of the importance that appropriate biting has in effective communication and to their own pony's welfare. The MGAGB regards familiarisation with the basics of equine mouth anatomy; swallowing; resistance; and bit action as a basic requirement of good horsemanship. Competitors should be able to describe the action of their mount's bit and explain why they have chosen it.

Blinkers

The use of blinkers is not permitted

The Referee and/or any nominated representative may inspect and pony/team and its tack at any time.

His/her ruling as to safety and/or severity will be final.