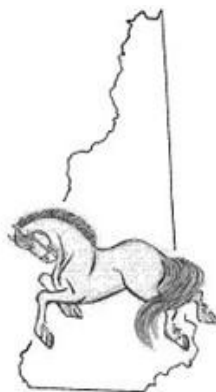


New Hampshire  
Equestrian



High School  
Teams

# Rulebook

Revised September 2026

This edition of the Rules for NHHSET comes into force on September 30, 2026. As from this date, all other texts covering the same matter (including other editions, official minutes, memoranda or bulletin) issued previously are superseded.

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## **Introduction**

New Hampshire High School Equestrian Teams (NHHSET) shall be a “not for profit” organization dedicated to promoting and organizing equestrian competition in high school athletic, middle school athletic or activity programs in both high school and middle school.

New Hampshire High School Equestrian Teams (NHHSET) has as its main goal, recognition in the high schools and middle schools of the equestrian participant and to give them an opportunity to achieve that recognition in a fair, positive and educational format. The goals are to encourage team play, peer acceptance and good horsemanship. Competition is to follow sportsmanship guidelines as set down by the New Hampshire State Board of Education, individual participating school activity guidelines, NHHSET, USEF, and equine sportsmanship guidelines.

NHHSET is governed by the NHHSET State Board of Directors who meet monthly. The NHHSET State Board of Directors is composed of the NHHSET Officers (which includes the state chairperson, vice chairperson, treasurer, secretary, communications director), one school representative for each registered school and one student representative from each registered school. Refer to NHHSET Bylaws for more information.

Any high school or middle school in the state of New Hampshire is eligible to form a team and join the NHHSET organization. Regular season shows will be held with the goal of qualifying for a final State Championship Show.

Competition is a winter/spring sport, and the purpose is to promote continuous growth in programs fostering horsemanship education, sponsor activities to encourage interscholastic participation and to have cooperative adult supervised leadership for all students in grades 7 through 12. With permission of the school and at the discretion of individual teams, grades 7 through 8 students may join NHHSET and participate on their school’s team. New Hampshire High School Equestrian Teams support, challenge, and offer recognition to the dedicated students who both physically and mentally pursue the challenge of the sport of equine competition.

## **General Information**

A New Hampshire High School Equestrian Team (NHHSET) rulebook and guidelines are published by the NHHSET State Board of Directors and are to be followed by every team member and adult associated with NHHSET. NHHSET rules and guidelines have been formulated specific to NHHSET competition and these rules shall prevail. Should any clarification become necessary after the new season starts, they will be made public via email, and other appropriate lines of communication including direct communication with the NHHSET State Board of Directors Members.

## **Rulebook Information**

NHHSET Bylaws and NHHSET Rulebook

C/o Kellie Femino, 537 Black Brook Rd., Goffstown NH 03045, NHHSET@gmail.com

Our website address is: [www.nhhset.org](http://www.nhhset.org)

### **Equine Inherent Risk Law**

The New Hampshire High School Equestrian Teams program is a school related equine activity. Therefore, all activities are subject to the New Hampshire State Equine Inherent Risk Law.

All persons associated with NHHSET will be regarded as participants and are limited by the inherent risk law.

### **Title LII - Actions, Process, and Service of Process - Chapter 508 - Limitation of Actions – Section 508:19**

# NHHSET STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

## 1. NHHSET TEAM SUPERVISION REQUIREMENTS

### 1.1. REGISTERED TEAM ADVISOR

- 1.1.1. Is a required position for every team
- 1.1.2. Team Advisor may concurrently serve as the team Head Coach
- 1.1.3. Must be 21 years old or older
- 1.1.4. May or may not be a school employee as required by the school
- 1.1.5. Organizes team to show the mission, purpose and goals of the NHHSET program
- 1.1.6. Liaison with the schools. Understands the school's requirements for participant participation (i.e. code of conduct, grade requirements, etc.)
- 1.1.7. Utilizes communication guidelines and includes the NHHSET Chairperson in issues as appropriate to promote fairness within the state
- 1.1.8. Has a clear understanding of NHHSET rules, policies and guidelines
  - 1.1.8.1. Acts in an advisory capacity to assist the coaches, participants, parents and volunteers in participating according to NHHSET rules, policies and guidelines
- 1.1.9. Identifies in writing clear expectations of team members regarding conduct, attendance, lettering requirements (if applicable), practice guidelines, participation in fundraising, etc.
- 1.1.10. Responsible for team registration
  - 1.1.10.1. Ensures team approval by the school via signature of a School Administrator on a letter of approval of team participation
- 1.1.11. Ensures all coaches Show NHHSET and school requirements
- 1.1.12. Ensures complete registration of all participants including verification of medical insurance, signed Code of Conduct and Release Form, and school requirements are met
- 1.1.13. Maintains appropriate paperwork at all NHHSET functions
- 1.1.14. Personally signs a Code of Conduct and Release Form and Confidentiality Policy
- 1.1.15. Ensures all team volunteers sign a Code of Conduct and Release Form, a Confidentiality Policy and complete a Volunteer Registration Form annually

### 1.2. REGISTERED TEAM HEAD COACH

- 1.2.1. Is a required position for every team
- 1.2.2. May concurrently serve as the Team Advisor
- 1.2.3. Must be 21 years old or older
- 1.2.4. May or may not be a school employee as required by the school

- 1.2.5. In conjunction with the Team Advisor identifies in writing clear explanations of team members regarding conduct, attendance, letter requirements (if applicable), practice guidelines, participation in fundraising, etc.
- 1.2.6. Provides, conducts and hosts equestrian interscholastic programs with proper instructions, coaching methods, conditioning rules, health, safety and welfare of each participant and equine
- 1.2.7. Personally signs a Code of Conduct and Release Form, Confidentiality Policy and completes a Volunteer Registration Form annually
- 1.3. **REGISTERED ASSISTANT COACH**
  - 1.3.1. Teams may register two (2) Assistant Coaches
  - 1.3.2. Optional positions for every team
  - 1.3.3. Assumes team supervision at practice or at shows in the absence of the Head Coach
  - 1.3.4. Must be 18 years old or older
  - 1.3.5. May or may not be a school employee as required by the school
  - 1.3.6. Personally signs Code of Conduct and Release Form, Confidentiality Policy and completes a Volunteer Registration Form annually
- 1.4. **NHHSET VOLUNTEER**
  - 1.4.1. Must be 18 years old or older
  - 1.4.2. Provides documentation of experience
  - 1.4.3. Personally signs a Code of Conduct and Release Form, Confidentiality Policy and completes a Volunteer Registration Form annually
  - 1.4.4. Teams must have one (1) recognized adult supervisor (advisor/coach/volunteer) for every seven (7) team members (riding or spirit), who is not otherwise committed to volunteer activities, at all team events involving equines
  - 1.4.5. Teams are encouraged to have one (1) recognized adult supervisor per five (5) students at all competitions

## **2. REGISTRATION, PAYMENT & FUNDRAISING**

- 2.1. **GENERAL PARTICIPATION IN NHHSET**
  - 2.1.1. To be eligible for team points, schools must have a minimum of three (3) registered riders and complete in a minimum of twelve (12) classes
  - 2.1.2. Schools with two (2) or fewer registered riders may register a team with NHHSET, however will not be eligible for team points at regular season competitions
  - 2.1.3. The coaches and advisors forming the equine sport program must follow school and state board of education guidelines
  - 2.1.4. Volunteers, coaches, advisors and team adult supervisors must understand and sign the NHHSET Code of Conduct & Release Form and complete a Volunteer Registration Form annually
  - 2.1.5. Original forms must be filed with the NHHSET Chairperson as appropriate and must be available at each show

**2.2. TEAM PARTICIPATION IN NHHSET**

- 2.2.1. All teams must register with NHHSET
- 2.2.2. A team must have the approval of the proper authorities of the school as indicated on the Team Registration Form
- 2.2.3. Each team advisor and coach will comply with the rules and guidelines as set forth by their middle school or high school regarding security and or criminal history background check
- 2.2.4. Adult supervision must be present at all team activities
- 2.2.5. A team can consist of both riding and non-riding participants.

**2.3. PARTICIPATION IN NHHSET**

- 2.3.1. All participants must register with the NHHSET
- 2.3.2. Any student, regardless of race, creed, sex, physical or mental challenge may participate in NHHSET
- 2.3.3. Parents/guardians are required to acknowledge the participant's registration which includes acknowledgment of:
  - 2.3.3.1. Providing proof of equine rabies vaccination and negative Coggins test within one year of the event date
  - 2.3.3.2. Agreement with the Code of Conduct & Release Form
  - 2.3.3.3. Agreement with the Confidentiality Policy
  - 2.3.3.4. Agreement with the Health Release
- 2.3.4. Student participants must supply their own health insurance
- 2.3.5. All the participants representing a school must be enrolled in or reside in that school district
  - 2.3.5.1. Exceptions will be addressed by the NHHSET State Board of Directors and will be consistent with the State Board of Education rules whenever possible
- 2.3.6. Students who attend public school may represent only the public school located within the public-school attendance boundaries of their legal residence if the school competes in NHHSET.
- 2.3.7. Home educated students who meet the eligibility standards established by New Hampshire law may represent a public or a private school located within the public-school attendance boundaries of their legal residence if the school competes in NHHSET.
- 2.3.8. Students attending a private/charter school may only represent that private school in NHHSET. If that private/charter school does not participate in NHHSET, the private/charter school student(s) may represent the public school located within the public-school attendance boundaries of the student's legal residence.
- 2.3.9. If there is not a public school located within the public-school attendance boundaries of the student's legal residence that offers a NHHSET program, the student may apply to Co-Op with another school. (Please see the [Cooperative Sponsorship](#) Section).

- 2.3.10. Participants' parents/guardians are responsible for participant and equine transportation
- 2.3.11. All participants and their parents or guardian must read, sign and understand the NHHSET Code of Conduct & Release Form
- 2.3.12. A participant registration form with listed attachments must be completed, filed with the team and available at all events and practices
- 2.3.13. Only registered riders are allowed to ride at NHHSET practices and competitions
- 2.3.14. The NHHSET State Board of Directors may make exceptions to the above on a case-by-case basis.
- 2.4. **FEES**
  - 2.4.1. A participation fee, established prior to the competition season will be charged to each participant
  - 2.4.2. Fees for the 2026-2027 season are to be determined at the October 2026 board meeting and posted to our website.
  - 2.4.3. Fee must be received in full prior to any participant participating in any NHHSET sanctioned event
  - 2.4.4. Schools may submit payment in full for all team members via a school issued check
  - 2.4.5. No personal checks will be accepted by NHHSET for participation fees. Only certified bank checks, school checks, money orders, and online payment via the website will be accepted by NHHSET
  - 2.4.6. Participants withdrawing from NHHSET after registering but prior to March 1<sup>st</sup> will receive a full refund of any participation fees paid
  - 2.4.7. No refunds will be considered after March 1<sup>st</sup>
  - 2.4.8. Due to a cancellation of season by NHHSET at any time, will result in no or partial refund to participants. The amount of partial refund will be determined at time of cancellation.
  - 2.4.9. NHHSET is not responsible for any fundraising the individual registered teams partake in
  - 2.4.10. NHHSET is not responsible for any additional fees (excluding the NHHSET registration fee) that the coaches, or advisors charge the participants
    - 2.4.10.1. It is required that the school is aware of potential additional fees charged by the coaches and that the school approves them

### **3. COOPERATIVE SPONSORSHIP (CO-OP)**

- 3.1. Cooperative sponsorship should not be a matter of convenience but more a matter of necessity. NHHSET is dedicated to the growth of our organization and believes that every participant in the state should be given the opportunity to represent his/her school in the equestrian sport
- 3.2. Before applying for a co-op, a diligent effort must be made to create an independent team

- 3.3. Cooperative sponsorships will be considered on an individual basis. Assistance from the NHHSET Officers on each project should be requested. Issues such as economics, boundaries and growth will be taken into effect when approving or denying these applications
- 3.4. **Recruitment of participants, and any conduct circumstances which may give rise to the appearance thereof, is to be strongly discouraged and any application presented with that intent will be denied**
- 3.5. **Definitions:**
  - 3.5.1. **Applying School:** The school that does not offer a NHHSET program and is applying to compete with another school that does offer a NHHSET program
  - 3.5.2. **Sponsoring School:** The school that will compete under its own name, and wishes to integrate the applying school's students for NHHSET competitions
- 3.6. **Co-Op Procedures:**
  - 3.6.1. Students attending a public, charter, non-public school that does not offer a NHHSET program, or who are home educated, may request to compete with a school that does offer a NHHSET program.
    - 3.6.1.1. The student must **FIRST** approach the public school located within the public-school attendance boundaries of the student's legal residence.
    - 3.6.1.2. If the public school does not offer a NHHSET program, they may approach a public, charter, or non-public school that does offer a NHHSET program
  - 3.6.2. The Principal, Athletic Director or authorized school official of the applying and sponsoring schools must sign the application
    - 3.6.2.1. If the officials deny cooperation, the NHHSET Officers may follow through to ascertain the reasons for this decision
  - 3.6.3. Team co-ops will be approved for one (1) year at a time and must be renewed annually
- 3.7. Exceptions to NHHSET's cooperative sponsorship process may be made due to specific circumstances. In no case shall an exception be granted deemed a precedent on which to base future decisions on cooperative sponsorship
  - 3.7.1. Team co-op applications must be submitted by January 10th
  - 3.7.2. The application is brought to the NHHSET Officers and will be approved or denied at the January state meeting
  - 3.7.3. The following will be considered when approving or denying an application:
    - 3.7.3.1. Geographical Proximity
    - 3.7.3.2. Economic Impacts
    - 3.7.3.3. References from School Leaders
  - 3.7.4. Application forms can be found on the NHHSET website

## 4. SCHEDULING

- 4.1. All dates are subject to change at any time

- 4.2. The Rulebook will be enacted on September 30<sup>th</sup>
- 4.3. Season begins October 1<sup>st</sup> and ends on June 30<sup>th</sup> the following year
- 4.4. Team registration will open October 1<sup>st</sup> and close January 10<sup>th</sup>
- 4.5. Team Co-Op applications close January 10<sup>th</sup>
- 4.6. Participant registration will open February 1<sup>st</sup> and close March 1<sup>st</sup>
- 4.7. Patterns will be posted January 1<sup>st</sup>
  - 4.7.1. Patterns will not be final until March 1<sup>st</sup>
- 4.8. Class registration will be due with participant registration, open February 1<sup>st</sup> and closed March 1<sup>st</sup>
  - 4.8.1. Coaches, for safety reasons, can change participants' division and class selection for a period after the participant registration deadline. The deadline to complete coaches' changes will be designated by the NHHSET Board of Directors annually.
  - 4.8.2. Participants unable to compete in a registered class (individual, pair or team) for any reason at any time during the season will not be allowed to replace that class with a different class
- 4.9. The state will hold three (3) competitions between the March NHHSET State Board of Directors Meeting and two (2) weeks prior to the State Championship Show
- 4.10. Double judged shows and/or classes are allowed but not recommended and should only be used as a last resort
- 4.11. It is not required, but highly suggested that a "rain date" show be scheduled in case of inclement weather and a show must be canceled
- 4.12. NHHSET State Board of Directors may limit number of teams and size of teams if needed
- 4.13. Teams shall not hold practices prior to February 1<sup>st</sup> or after June 30<sup>th</sup>. Practices shall be any gathering with coaches, participants and equines with the purpose of preparing for competition.
- 4.14. No equine practices shall occur prior to submission of team registration.
- 4.15. NHHSET members may gather at any time without equines
- 4.16. NHHSET clinics or other NHHSET equine related functions may be held outside the scheduled season provided they are open to all schools. The NHHSET Chairperson will be notified prior to the clinic/event to communicate with all teams and obtain appropriate NHHSET insurance

## **5. COMMUNICATION EXPECTATIONS**

- 5.1. NHHSET's goal is to have a process of communication that follows established guidelines as well as encouraging program improvement
- 5.2. The NHHSET State Board of Directors will hold a monthly open board meeting via ZOOM. Any NHHSET participant can attend and share their input and views at any these meeting.
- 5.3. Outside of designated open NHHSET State Board of Directors meetings, participants, parents and guardians should bring any issues or questions to their coaches or advisor who then report to NHHSET State Board of Directors

- 5.4. The basic process of communication flows in both directions
  - 5.4.1. Participant/Parent ↔ Team Advisor/Coach/School ↔ NHHSET Chairperson
- 5.5. Democratic process utilizing the rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall govern NHHSET in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the bylaws and any special rules of order the organization may adopt
  - 5.5.1. Democratic process ensures individuals they will have a voice, it does not ensure individuals will get what they want
- 5.6. Only NHHSET Officers and Judges Committee members are permitted to communicate with NHHSET judges at shows
  - 5.6.1. Contact with judges for the purposes of discussing future NHHSET competitions by participants/parents/coaches/advisors before any competition is inappropriate and could result in elimination for a participant or team from the show or shows being officiated by that judge

## **6. NHHSET OPEN BOARD MEETING ATTENDANCE POLICY**

- 6.1. A coach, advisor or other designated representative from every registered team must attend all regularly scheduled NHHSET State Board of Directors meetings
- 6.2. If there is not a team representative at these meetings as required, the school forfeits the ability of obtaining the information discussed at these meetings before the minutes from the meeting are published

## **7. INSURANCE POLICY**

- 7.1. NHHSET will follow State and Federal laws to reduce physical and financial risk to NHHSET participants and the NHHSET State Board of Directors and the organization as a whole
- 7.2. The NHHSET State Board of Directors will maintain a Commercial General Liability insurance policy that insures NHHSET against the risk of injury to spectators during NHHSET activities
- 7.3. The NHHSET State Board of Directors will maintain a Director's and Officer's (D&O) insurance policy to protect against potential risk of wrongful acts and/or errors & omissions brought against the board, which does not involve bodily injury or property damage
- 7.4. Any paid personnel that are not covered under NHHSET insurance and must sign a release of liability waiver.
- 7.5. Participants ride at their own risk
  - 7.5.1. Each NHHSET participant will maintain health insurance to cover any personal injury
- 7.6. Every NHHSET participant will be familiar with NHHSET rules and sign the NHHSET Code of Conduct & Release Form prior to participating in NHHSET events

- 7.7. Any equipment now owned by the NHHSET State Board of Directors will not be covered under NHHSET insurance
- 7.8. All NHHSET competitions are covered by NHHSET insurance
  - 7.8.1. If a practice barn and/or school requests to be named as an additional insured on the NHHSET insurance policy, the school will be responsible for the additional cost associated with being added to the policy
- 7.9. Any NHHSET event where participants are participating will require NHHSET additional event insurance to be purchased prior to the event
  - 7.9.1. The team hosting the event will be responsible for the cost of additional event insurance
- 7.10. Each team has the option to have practice barn(s) named on the NHHSET insurance policy
  - 7.10.1. NHHSET Chairperson must be informed of practice barn request to be an additional insured on the NHHSET insurance
  - 7.10.2. The team will be responsible for the additional cost associated with adding a practice barn to the policy
- 7.11. NHHSET does NOT authorize or insure parades
- 7.12. NHHSET does NOT allow dogs at any of their events
- 7.13. NHHSET does NOT allow any grills or open fires
- 7.14. NHHSET volunteers are covered by the Federal Volunteer Act (refer to [http://www.doi.ne.gov/shipp/volunteer/pl\\_105.19.pdf](http://www.doi.ne.gov/shipp/volunteer/pl_105.19.pdf))
- 7.15. Transportation of team members and equine reverts to individual personal liability and is not covered by NHHSET insurance

## **8. INSURANCE PROCEDURE**

- 8.1. Team registration must be complete with Team Advisor, Coach and Assistant Coach(es) named
- 8.2. Individual participant registration must be complete
- 8.3. Team approval by the high school must be on file with the NHHSET State Board of Directors
- 8.4. Practice barns are only added as additional insured upon request with a \$40 charge/barn
- 8.5. Certificate of insurance requests
  - 8.5.1. Must be requested at least two (2) weeks prior to the date needed
- 8.6. Incident reporting
  - 8.6.1. Any incident that results in an injury or may result in a claim being filed against the NHHSET insurance policy requires the completion of an incident report form and returned to the NHHSET Chairperson.
  - 8.6.2. The NHHSET Chairperson must be notified of any incident within 48 hours
  - 8.6.3. Forward the incident report from the NHHSET Chairperson
    - 8.6.3.1. The incident report form may be found on the NHHSET website.

## 9. NHHSET CODE OF CONDUCT STANDARDS

- 9.1. All team participants, coaches, advisors, volunteers and persons contracted with NHHSET during the NHHSET season, will comply with NHHSET Code of Conduct Standards throughout the NHHSET season.
  - 9.1.1. Each team shall take reasonable measures to ensure supporters (friends, relatives, volunteers) of their team conduct themselves according to NHHSET Code of Conduct Standards.
- 9.2. NHHSET will honor any requests from participating schools or team officials to suspend or terminate a participant from NHHSET sanctioned events due to violations of the school's code of conduct
- 9.3. Advisor/coaches may in their discretion impose additional conduct requirements upon their team members during the NHHSET season. Any additional requirements may not conflict with NHHSET rules
- 9.4. It is encouraged that expectations be written, discussed with participants, parents and volunteers and included as part of signing the NHHSET Code of Conduct & Release Form
- 9.5. **NHHSET ENDORSES THE VALUES AND CONDUCT:**
  - 9.5.1. High expectations for students, school staff, advisors, coaches, parents, families, volunteers, community and spectators
  - 9.5.2. Strong leadership
  - 9.5.3. Teamwork
  - 9.5.4. Clear expectations and communications
  - 9.5.5. Accountability
  - 9.5.6. Appropriate attire
  - 9.5.7. Lifelong learning and skill building
  - 9.5.8. Recognition of and reward for excellence
  - 9.5.9. Community and family participation and support
  - 9.5.10. Safe and orderly learning environments
- 9.6. **MISCONDUCT INCLUDES BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO:**
  - 9.6.1. Failure to comply with rules as stated in this Rulebook, Code of Conduct or the directions of NHHSET Officers and other officials
  - 9.6.2. Failure to treat other participants in a courteous manner
  - 9.6.3. Profane or abusive language, written or verbal. This will include inappropriate posting of information on any social media platforms, for example: sites such as Facebook ©, Twitter ©, Instagram ©, Etc.
  - 9.6.4. Theft, cheating, damage or destruction of property during the NHHSET season
  - 9.6.5. Unlawful addictive behaviors including but not limited to the use of narcotic, alcohol, tobacco, etc. (use of a prohibited substance by any individual on the grounds of a NHHSET event will result in immediate expulsion from the location)
  - 9.6.6. Directions from anyone while participant is performing patterns

- 9.6.7. Abuse, misuse, or neglect of any equines. NHHSET follows the definition stated in [USEF GR838](#) regarding Unethical Treatment of the Horse. Behaviors that may constitute Unethical Treatment of a horse may include, but are not limited to:
- 9.6.7.1. Excessive use or misuse of a whip, spur, or bit, including use for punishment, rather than as a training aid used properly to provide encouragement;
  - 9.6.7.2. Misuse of any equipment or device including tack;
  - 9.6.7.3. Creating of hyper or hypo-sensitization of any physical part of a horse to enhance performance;
  - 9.6.7.4. Any practice or use of devices or objects to enhance a horse's performance base on fear or intimidation rather than educating or entertaining the horse by engaging its natural curiosity;
  - 9.6.7.5. Restricting a horse's access to food or water (except under the guidance of a licensed treating veterinarian for health reasons);
  - 9.6.7.6. Withholding medical treatment for a prolonged period;
  - 9.6.7.7. Training, riding, or competing a horse with raw, bleeding, or irritated skin or welts consistent with excessive, persistent, or inappropriate use of equipment, including spurs; and
  - 9.6.7.8. Continued riding, driving, or lunging an obviously exhausted, lame, or injured horse.
  - 9.6.7.9. If cruelty is reported, it will be investigated. Appropriate action will be taken and if cruelty or abuse persists, will be reason for elimination at that event/class. See Violation Procedure
  - 9.6.7.10. Anyone present at a NHHSET event, practice, or show may report abuse, misuse, or neglect of equine as well as any questionable soundness of an equine. Reports shall be made to any NHHSET Officers, gate keeper and/or ring stewards.
  - 9.6.7.11. Whenever abuse, misuse, neglect or questionable soundness of equine is reported it will be discussed by the NHHSET Officers to decide what, if any, action will be taken.

## 10. NHHSET VIOLATION PROCEDURES

- 10.1. Failure to abide by this Rulebook, Code of Conduct standards or regulations of NHHSET by anyone affiliated with the program including participants, coaches, advisors, parents and volunteers will lead to a process of confidential investigation and potential disciplinary actions
- 10.2. **INVESTIGATION:**
  - 10.2.1. NHHSET Officers will launch an investigation into any allegations of violations of the NHHSET Rules and/or Code of Conduct.
  - 10.2.2. Upon receiving allegations of a violation NHHSET Officers will make an effort to notify a team coach or advisor of the nature of the allegations

- 10.2.3. Team coaches and advisors are expected to cooperate with NHHSET Officials by promptly providing any information or documentation requested to facilitate the investigation
- 10.2.4. NHHSET Officers in their discretion may involve the person or persons alleged to have violated the Rules or Code of Conduct in the investigation
- 10.2.5. If NHHSET needs to employ a disciplinary process, the action should fit the misconduct.
- 10.2.6. NHHSET organizational goals include providing an “opportunity to achieve in a fair, positive and educational format”
- 10.2.7. If the investigation warrants disciplinary action more than elimination of a participant from the current event, then NHHSET Officers shall notify the affected parties in writing
- 10.3. **DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS**
  - 10.3.1. Documentation of disciplinary actions is required and must include the following information:
    - 10.3.1.1. Prevent misconduct
    - 10.3.1.2. Disciplinary action
    - 10.3.1.3. Plan for improvement
    - 10.3.1.4. Future disciplinary action if misconduct occurs again
    - 10.3.1.5. Signatures of immediate parties: participant(s), participant(s) parent(s)/guardian(s) if appropriate, Registered Team Advisor/Coach and NHHSET Chair
    - 10.3.1.6. Give copies to the involved parties and the State Chair
  - 10.3.2. It is required that disciplinary actions that include removing of points, elimination or suspension from a Show, and expulsion are approved by the NHHSET Officers
  - 10.3.3. Violations during the NHHSET season may include:
    - 10.3.3.1. Discussion, plan of action from improvement
    - 10.3.3.2. Loss of points for participant(s) or team(s)
    - 10.3.3.3. Elimination of participant(s) or team(s) from the show
    - 10.3.3.4. Elimination of participant(s) or team(s) from a class or classes
    - 10.3.3.5. Elimination of participant(s) or team(s) from a future show
    - 10.3.3.6. Removal from event grounds
    - 10.3.3.7. Expulsion from NHHSET
- 10.4. **REINSTATEMENT CONSIDERATION:**
  - 10.4.1. Reinstatement consideration requires receipt by the NHHSET State Board of Directors of the following documentation:
    - 10.4.1.1. Letter of request for reinstatement for participant(s) and/or team(s) which includes the acknowledgement of violation and plan of action for improvement
    - 10.4.1.2. Letter of support of reinstatement from Registered Team Advisor/Coach and/or NHHSET Chair
  - 10.4.2. The NHHSET State Board decision will be final

## **11. JUDGING**

- 11.1. Non-carded judges may be chosen for regular meets, but not for the State Championship Show
- 11.2. Carded judges are required for all events at the State Championship Show
  - 11.2.1. Judges shall be considered for the NHHSET State Championship Show if they are carded by any of the following: USEF, USDF, 4-H and other State and/or National Associations deemed appropriate by NHHSET
- 11.3. All NHHSET Judges must be 21 years of age or older
- 11.4. Efforts will be made to ensure judges do not officiate at a regular show and State Championship Show in the same year, however exceptions may be made based on availability of qualified judges.
- 11.5. A judge will only be allowed to officiate in the divisions they are qualified in and should let the judges committee know of any areas where qualification is lacking
- 11.6. When hiring a judge, the packet for events to be judged will be sent with the contract so that each judge can evaluate their responsibilities prior to signing the contract
- 11.7. The packets will include contract, patterns and a copy of our Rulebook.
- 11.8. Judges are required to sign or initial each scorecard after class is completed. The scribe will ensure the judge's signature is obtained prior to scorecards being submitted to the show secretary.
- 11.9. Any financial relationship between a judge and participant, parent/guardian, coach, advisor or board member within 30 days immediately preceding or following a NHHSET event must be disclosed to the NHHSET Board of Directors for evaluation and consideration.
- 11.10. Judges are not to touch an equine while it is in the show ring

## **12. RULE INTERPRETATION**

- 12.1. Should a conflict or question arise, the following will occur in order to interpret the rules as needed with the goals and vision of the organization in mind and to settle any disputes or conflicts brought forward at the NHHSET events
  - 12.1.1. Anything, outside the code of conduct, that occurs during a class inside the judging area, is up to the judge's discretion.
  - 12.1.2. Outside of the ring, rule interpretation will be left NHHSET Officers
- 12.2. Issues that arise at the NHHSET events resolved by the time the judge leaves that competition
  - 12.2.1. The NHHSET Officers have the authority to disqualify a participant or remove points in conjunction with/or without the judge if the issue warrants
- 12.3. If a conflict occurs in interpretation of a rule or guideline, the NHHSET rulebook will be used followed by USEF rules where specified
- 12.4. All issues need to be communicated in a timely manner
  - 12.4.1. If concerning a class, communicate prior to completion of the class

- 12.4.2. Other issues communicated prior to completion of the show
- 12.5. No video may be used as evidence
- 12.6. Confidentiality is highly recommended
- 12.7. All decisions of the judges and NHHSET Officials are final
- 12.8. The basic process of communication at shows flows in both directions as follows:
  - 12.8.1. Participant/Parent ↔ Team Advisor/Coach/School ↔ NHHSET Chairperson
  - 12.8.2. Team members should bring any issues or questions to their coaches who then report to state representatives
  - 12.8.3. Communication with NHHSET judges will be limited to designated NHHSET Officers.
  - 12.8.4. Judges'/Timed Event Supervisors' decisions are final in all cases under the scope of their responsibility
- 12.9. **INVESTIGATION PROCESS**
  - 12.9.1. The Team Coach or delegate brings the issue to the NHHSET Chairperson
  - 12.9.2. The NHHSET Chairperson investigates the situation by gathering the facts from appropriate persons, including the judge if needed
  - 12.9.3. NHHSET Officers are then called together by the Chair at the time of the competition to present the situation.
  - 12.9.4. Once the situation is presented, the NHHSET Officers will have the opportunity to ask questions of any parties involved in the situation
  - 12.9.5. The NHHSET Officers will then review the applicable rules, discuss the situation, considering all the issues and ramifications of the decisions
  - 12.9.6. A motion will be made and vote taken with majority ruling
  - 12.9.7. The NHHSET Chairperson will then present the decision to the involved parties

# NHHSET SHOW PROCEDURES

## 13. SCORING/PLACING

### 13.1. Individual and Team Point System

| PLACING         | POINTS | PLACING          | POINTS |
|-----------------|--------|------------------|--------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> | 20     | 10 <sup>th</sup> | 7      |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 18     | 11 <sup>th</sup> | 6      |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> | 16     | 12 <sup>th</sup> | 5      |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> | 14     | 13 <sup>th</sup> | 4      |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> | 12     | 14 <sup>th</sup> | 3      |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> | 11     | 15 <sup>th</sup> | 2      |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> | 10     | Disqualification | 1      |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> | 9      | Elimination      | 0      |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> | 8      |                  |        |

### 13.2. Method of scoring will remain consistent at the regular meets and the State Championship Show

- 13.2.1. Team and individual points, including participation points, are as according to the point system above
- 13.2.2. In the event of a tie score in any class, the overall horsemanship score will be the tiebreaker. In timed events where time is the only scoring mechanism, the time will be used to break a tie
- 13.2.3. If a tie is unavoidable all participants/teams with tied scores will receive full points for the position they are tied at
- 13.2.4. The points for placing below the ties are awarded as usual after the number of tied positions has been subtracted from the placing:
  - 13.2.4.1. Example Tie for 1<sup>st</sup>, no 2<sup>nd</sup> place points awarded (Rider 1: score 90, 1<sup>st</sup> place and receives 20 points; Rider 2: score 90, 1<sup>st</sup> place and receives 20 points; Rider 3: score 89, 3<sup>rd</sup> place and receives 16 points; Rider 4: score 88, 4<sup>th</sup> place and receives 14 points; Rider 5: score 87, 5<sup>th</sup> place and receives 12 points)

### 13.3. Scratches

- 13.3.1. To avoid team penalty scratches must be emailed to the Chair for regular meets or the State Championship Show prior to 11:59pm the day before the Show.

- 13.3.2. Scratches not received by the deadline will count toward the total team points available for that Show
- 13.4. Disqualification (one (1) point awarded)
  - 13.4.1. If a participant is disqualified from a class for any reason, that participant will receive one individual participation and team point for that class and one team point
  - 13.4.2. For any class, a participant may be disqualified for the following reasons:
    - 13.4.2.1. Fall of an equine and/or rider
    - 13.4.2.2. Equine and/or rider leaving the arena before finishing course
    - 13.4.2.3. Starting before Judge's signal to proceed
    - 13.4.2.4. Dismissal from arena by Judge
    - 13.4.2.5. Off course or off pattern.
  - 13.4.3. In addition to the reasons for disqualification listed in Section 13.4.2, individual class descriptions throughout [Section 20: Classes of Competition](#) may specify additional disqualification criteria applicable to that event.
  - 13.4.4. Individual participant will not receive points for the elements of the pattern that are "off course" or not attempted
- 13.5. Elimination (0 points awarded)
  - 13.5.1. Participants could be eliminated for prohibited equipment by the NHHSET Officers or the judge
- 13.6. Team Points
  - 13.6.1. Total team points earned will be divided by total possible points to determine each team's percentage for the day
  - 13.6.2. Total team points possible are the sum of the maximum points that could be awarded to each team for each class
    - 13.6.2.1. Example: A team will three (3) riders in a class would have possible points of 54 [20 (1<sup>st</sup> place) + 18 (2<sup>nd</sup> place) + 16 (3<sup>rd</sup> place) = 54 (total possible points for that team for that class)]
  - 13.6.3. Teams will be ranked at the end of each show by percentage for the day
  - 13.6.4. End of Season
    - 13.6.4.1. The sum of the total team points earned from all regular season shows will be divided by the sum of total possible team points from all regular season shows to determine each team's percentage for the season
    - 13.6.4.2. Total team points possible are the sum of the maximum points that could be awarded to each team for each class
    - 13.6.4.3. Teams will be ranked at the end of the season by percentage for the season
- 13.7. Individual Points
  - 13.7.1. An accurate point count must be kept for every in the competition and points compiled at the end of the regular competition season
  - 13.7.2. All competing participants will receive individual points for their respective placing in individual and team classes

- 13.7.3. In a team event, each participant shall be awarded individual and team points for their placing
- 13.7.4. End of Season
  - 13.7.4.1. Individual points for all three (3) regular season shows will be added together for ranking
  - 13.7.4.2. Riders may qualify for a maximum of five (5) individual year-end awards
  - 13.7.4.3. Ties in year-end point totals will be broken using total (all 3 meets) overall horsemanship scores in the class

## **14. STATE CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW QUALIFICATIONS**

- 14.1. State Championship Show qualifying participants will be determined by year-end individual point totals
- 14.2. The top eight (8) placing participants/teams in each class will qualify for the State Championship Show
  - 14.2.1. If there is a true tie for second place from the regular season shows a maximum of nine (9) entries per class may compete at the State Championship Show.
- 14.3. Participants must have competed in two (2) of the three (3) regular season shows to qualify for the State Championship Show
- 14.4. Participants must have competed in a class two (2) or more times and earned at least four (4) points in that class during the season
- 14.5. Two (2) alternates will be named in place of qualifiers in descending order of total points for a class
- 14.6. If an alternate will be used the NHHSET Officers must be notified 48 hours prior to the State Championship Show

## **15. AWARDS**

### **15.1. REGULAR SEASON AWARDS**

- 15.1.1. Individual awards will be presented to the top six (6) places at the end of each regular season show.
- 15.1.2. End of season awards will be presented at the State Championship Show.
- 15.1.3. End of Season Awards are as follows:
  - 15.1.3.1. High Point Team
  - 15.1.3.2. Reserve High Point Team
  - 15.1.3.3. Individual High Point WTC
  - 15.1.3.4. Individual Reserve High Point WTC
  - 15.1.3.5. Individual High Point Open Beginner WTC
  - 15.1.3.6. Individual Reserve High Point Open Beginner WTC
  - 15.1.3.7. Individual High Point WT
  - 15.1.3.8. Individual Reserve High Point WT
  - 15.1.3.9. Individual High Point In Hand

15.1.3.10. Individual Reserve High Point In Hand

15.1.3.11. Individual High Point Spirit

15.1.3.12. Individual Reserve High Point Spirit

**15.2. STATE AWARDS**

15.2.1. Awards will be presented for the top six (6) places in all events in the State Championship Show

15.2.2. Team placing at the State Championship Show will be determined using the same scoring system used to place teams at the regular season shows

15.2.3. For Team points to be awarded in any class at the State Championship Show, there must be a total of four (4) riders/teams in the respective class

**16. GENERAL SHOW RULES**

16.1. All requirements and provisions of the insurance policies outlined in [Section 7: Insurance Policy](#) must be strictly adhered to.

16.2. NHHSET does NOT allow smoking of any kind while on the property including legal and illegal substances

16.2.1. Unlawful addictive behaviors including but not limited to the use of narcotic, alcohol, tobacco, etc. (use of a prohibited substance by any individual on the grounds of a NHHSET event will result in immediate expulsion from the location)

16.3. Contact with judges by riders/parents/coaches/advisors before any competition is inappropriate and could result in removal of a rider or team from the show being officiated by the judge

16.4. All NHHSET participants will follow the Code of Conduct as outlined in [Section 9: NHHSET Code of Conduct Standards](#)

16.5. The NHHSET cannot access any student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan. NHHSET does not employ qualified special education or paraprofessional personnel and cannot interpret or implement a student's IEP or 504 Plan. If a student's school determines it is within the scope of the student's educational needs to participate in NHHSET and participate is a part of the student's IEP or 504 Plan, the school is responsible for determining what accommodations need to be made for that student and the school is responsible for providing said accommodations. Consultation with the NHHSET Officers is recommended if a school is interested in including participation in NHHSET as a part of a student's IEP or 504 Plan.

**17. GENERAL ATTIRE**

**17.1. REQUIRED COORDINATED TEAM ATTIRE**

17.1.1. Same uniform consisting of a team shirt, vest and/or jacket must be worn by all team members while competing. Coordinated pants optional.

17.1.2. Participants with long hair should wear it neatly pulled back so number is visible

17.1.3. Horse and handler should follow same discipline in attire and tack

17.1.4. Appropriate footwear when on or near equine

- 17.1.5. Coordinated team colors, appropriate riding pants or trousers to follow discipline
- 17.1.6. Team uniforms must have team name clearly printed on all shirts/vests/jackets
- 17.1.7. Shirts may be long or short sleeved, collars not required
- 17.1.8. Shirt must be tucked in
- 17.1.9. Western style pants or jeans (no torn, frayed, faded, jeans) or English breeches or jodhpurs
- 17.1.10. ASTM/SEI regulation helmet properly adjusted must be worn at all times while mounted
- 17.1.11. Appropriately corresponding boots for the style of riding and tack used
- 17.1.12. NHHSET Officers have the final decision if safety is an issue
- 17.2. **OPTIONAL ATTIRE**
  - 17.2.1. Gloves
  - 17.2.2. Half chaps must be brown or black with no fringe, embroidery or other embellishments
  - 17.2.3. A safety vest may be worn by any participant in any event that he/she so chooses. Safety vest may be worn under or over the uniform as long as the participant's number is clearly visible
  - 17.2.4. Participant name
  - 17.2.5. American flag
  - 17.2.6. Belts
  - 17.2.7. Clear rain jacket
  - 17.2.8. One sponsor logo no larger than 3"X 5" may be placed on one of the following items
    - 17.2.8.1. Helmet cover
    - 17.2.8.2. Saddle Pad
    - 17.2.8.3. Uniform
- 17.3. **PROHIBITED ATTIRE**
  - 17.3.1. Neckline below collar bone
  - 17.3.2. Dangling earrings- nothing hanging below earlobe
  - 17.3.3. No adornments are allowed (pinned, sewn, glued, or otherwise artificially attached) on uniform

## 18. GENERAL CLASS RULES

- 18.1. All equines entering any class must be serviceably sound at either the judge's or NHHSET Officers' discretion
- 18.2. The team advisor/coach must be informed of any health issues that would affect the participation of an equine participant
- 18.3. No stallions of any age will be allowed to participate
- 18.4. NHHSET will use the *New England 4-H Horse Show Bit & Spur Rules and Guidelines* as its baseline for rules and requirements. In the event of a conflict between the 4-H

guidelines and this document, the rules and requirements stated in this document will take precedence.

- 18.4.1. NHHSET will use the February 2026 edition of *New England 4-H Horse Show Bit & Spur Rules and Guidelines* for the 2026-2027 season, which is attached as [Appendix E](#) in this document.
- 18.4.2. Please note, NHHSET does not own *New England 4-H Horse Show Bit & Spur Rules and Guidelines*, and it is subject to change at any time. We will continue to follow the edition listed above through the completion of the 2026-2027 Season.
- 18.5. At the judge's discretion, a horse may be penalized or disqualified for the use of non-conventional bits, nosebands, or spurs.
- 18.6. For Games participants, the bit requirements outlined in the *New England 4-H Horse Show Bit & Spur Rules and Guidelines* will not be enforced. However, the judge retains sole discretion to prohibit the use of any bit. The judge's decision regarding bit use is final.
- 18.7. Any participant exhibiting any equines five (5) years of age and under may use a regulation snaffle or rawhide bosal and ride with two hands
- 18.8. Any WT participant may use a regulation snaffle and ride with two hands
- 18.9. An equine cannot compete against itself (except in introduction to horsemanship)
- 18.10. An equine cannot compete in more than 15 classes at one show and may not compete in more than 10 mounted classes
- 18.11. Participants must enter and exit the show rings at a walk
- 18.12. Participants must wait for acknowledgement from the judge before beginning all classes
- 18.13. Participants will be allowed a scheduled course to walk for their over fence classes and their trail course
- 18.14. The same patterns will be used for all competitions
- 18.15. A participant may not receive directions or coaching of any kind by anyone while they are competing
- 18.16. Participants may only register for and compete in one division
- 18.17. Participants may register for up to five (5) classes

## 19. DIVISIONS OF COMPETITION

- 19.1.1. Spirit (non-rider)
- 19.1.2. In-Hand
- 19.1.3. Walk/Trot, Jog (WT)
- 19.1.4. Open Beginner Walk/Trot, Jog/Canter, Lope (WTC)
- 19.1.5. Walk/Trot, Jog/Canter, Lope (WTC)
- 19.2. Once a rider has competed in the WTC division, they may not compete in the WT or the Open Beginner WTC division
  - 19.2.1. If a participant has competed in NHHSET in the WTC Division in a previous season and the rider, parent, coach, advisor and administrator for the current team feel

that the rider should compete this year in the WT or Open Beginner WTC Division – a request must be emailed to the Chair no later than the rider registration deadline. The request will be accepted or denied at the discretion of the NHHSET Officers. If the request is not postmarked or received by the registration date, the rider will not be eligible to change divisions and must compete in the WTC division again.

- 19.2.2. Any exceptions to this rule will be made on a case-by-case basis.
- 19.3. Any WT rider may not canter at any NHHSET practice, competition or event

## 20. CLASSES OF COMPETITION

### 20.1. WT/WTC/In Hand/Into to Horsemanship Showmanship

#### 20.1.1. Tack and Equipment

- 20.1.1.1. Any participant may choose to ride in either English or Western attire
- 20.1.1.2. Must have discipline appropriate tack and attire

#### 20.1.2. Prohibited Equipment

- 20.1.2.1. Spurs
- 20.1.2.2. Chaps/Chinks
- 20.1.2.3. Equine boots of any kind

- 20.1.3. Conformation of the equine is not to be considered
- 20.1.4. Participants may not touch their equine
- 20.1.5. Participants will be judged on 9 elements with element 10 being Overall Horsemanship
- 20.1.6. A participant may use a whip or crop no longer than 4 feet

### 20.2. WT/Open Beginner WTC/WTC English/Western Equitation

#### 20.2.1. Tack and Equipment

- 20.2.1.1. Properly fitted saddle- English or Western type
- 20.2.1.2. Properly fitted bridle- English or Western type
- 20.2.1.3. Regulation Girth

#### 20.2.2. Optional Equipment

- 20.2.2.1. Breastplate- English or Western type
- 20.2.2.2. Spurs - appropriate to discipline, refer to [Appendix E](#) for more detail
- 20.2.2.3. A bridle that has no bit attached to it and has no leverage action (example: Dr. Cook's Bitless Bridle) see appendix
- 20.2.2.4. Hackamores
- 20.2.2.5. Chaps/Chinks only in Western Equitation
- 20.2.2.6. Equine protective boots, wraps or bandages

#### 20.2.3. Prohibited Equipment

- 20.2.3.1. Martingales
- 20.2.3.2. Draw Reins
- 20.2.3.3. Figure 8, Flash, or dropped nose cavesson

#### 20.2.4. Class Routine

- 20.2.4.1. To be judged on seat, hands, suitability of equine to rider, and the performance of the horse as it reflects the riding skill of the exhibitor. To be judged on the rider's position, use of aids and cues, and control of the equine
- 20.2.4.2. Will consist of elements to be judged on the rail or in line-up
- 20.2.4.3. Riders may be split up to complete elements at the Judge's discretion
- 20.2.4.4. Elements can be any of the following: Walk, Trot/Jog, Extended Trot/Jog, Canter/Lope, Halt, Back
- 20.3. **WT/Open Beginner WTC/WTC English/Western Suitability**
  - 20.3.1. **Tack and Equipment**
    - 20.3.1.1. Properly fitted saddle- English or Western type
    - 20.3.1.2. Properly fitted bridle- English or Western type
    - 20.3.1.3. Regulation Girth
  - 20.3.2. **Optional Equipment**
    - 20.3.2.1. Breastplate- English or Western type
    - 20.3.2.2. Spurs - appropriate to discipline, refer to [Appendix E](#) for more detail
    - 20.3.2.3. A bridle that has no bit attached to it and has no leverage action (example: Dr. Cook's Bitless Bridle) see appendix
    - 20.3.2.4. Hackamores
    - 20.3.2.5. Chaps/Chinks only in Western Equitation
    - 20.3.2.6. Equine protective boots, wraps or bandages
  - 20.3.3. **Prohibited Equipment**
    - 20.3.3.1. Martingales
    - 20.3.3.2. Draw Reins
    - 20.3.3.3. Figure 8, Flash, or dropped nose cavesson
  - 20.3.4. **Class Routine**
    - 20.3.4.1. To be judged on manners, and performance and suitability of the horse. The smoothness, obedience and consistency of the performance will be considered rather than the brilliance and animation.
    - 20.3.4.2. Elements can be any of the following according to the discipline: walk, trot/jog, extended trot/jog, canter/lope, halt, back
- 20.4. **Open Beginner WTC/WTC Equitation Over Fences**
  - 20.4.1. **Tack and Equipment**
    - 20.4.1.1. Properly fitted all purpose or close contact saddle
    - 20.4.1.2. Properly fitted English bridle
  - 20.4.2. **Optional Equipment**
    - 20.4.2.1. Breastplate
    - 20.4.2.2. Standing or running martingale
    - 20.4.2.3. A bridle that has no bit attached to it and has no leverage action (example: Dr. Cook's Bitless Bridle) see appendix
    - 20.4.2.4. Hackamores

- 20.4.2.5. Cavesson, Figure 8, flash, crank, drop, gackle, or kinton nosebands
- 20.4.2.6. Spurs - appropriate to discipline, refer to [Appendix E](#) for more detail
- 20.4.2.7. Equine protective boots, wraps or bandages
- 20.4.3. **Prohibited Equipment**
  - 20.4.3.1. Whips that are weighted on the end
  - 20.4.3.2. Tied stirrups
  - 20.4.3.3. Draw reins
  - 20.4.3.4. Studded nosebands
  - 20.4.3.5. Tack in boots or poling
- 20.4.4. **Class Routine**
  - 20.4.4.1. To be judged on the rider's ability to perform and communicate with the horse through the defined course. The rider should demonstrate his/her ability in controlling the horse while going over fences such that a balanced, even pace is maintained while also maintaining a safe and suitable position.
  - 20.4.4.2. Riders may not enter more than one (1) over fences height
  - 20.4.4.3. Riders in the Open Beginner WTC Division may only compete in the 18" Equitation over Fences class
  - 20.4.4.4. Riders will be judged on their opening circle and 8 jumps with element ten being Overall Horsemanship
- 20.4.5. **Additional Disqualification Criteria (1 Participation Point Awarded)**
  - 20.4.5.1. Three (3) cumulative refusals
  - 20.4.5.2. Horse resisting for 45 consecutive seconds
  - 20.4.5.3. Taking more than 45 seconds to jump the next obstacle on course
  - 20.4.5.4. Jumping an obstacle before it is reset
  - 20.4.5.5. Jumping an obstacle before crossing the state line unless said obstacle is designated as a practice obstacle or after crossing the finish line, whether forming part of the course or not
  - 20.4.5.6. Leaving the enclosure of a closed obstacle incorrectly
  - 20.4.5.7. Any participant at the end of his/her round who does not leave the arena through a designated gate (i.e. jumping out of the arena)
- 20.5. **WTC Jumper Class**
  - 20.5.1. **Tack and Equipment**
    - 20.5.1.1. Properly fitted all purpose or close contact saddle
    - 20.5.1.2. Properly fitted English bridle
  - 20.5.2. **Optional Equipment**
    - 20.5.2.1. Breastplate
    - 20.5.2.2. Standing or running martingale
    - 20.5.2.3. A bridle that has no bit attached to it and has no leverage action (example: Dr. Cook's Bitless Bridle) see appendix
    - 20.5.2.4. Hackamores

- 20.5.2.5. Cavesson, Figure 8, flash, crank, drop, gackle, or kinton nosebands
- 20.5.2.6. Spurs - appropriate to discipline, refer to [Appendix E](#) for more detail
- 20.5.2.7. Equine protective boots, wraps or bandages
- 20.5.3. **Prohibited Equipment**
  - 20.5.3.1. Whips that are weighted on the end
  - 20.5.3.2. Tied stirrups
  - 20.5.3.3. Draw reins
  - 20.5.3.4. Studded nosebands
  - 20.5.3.5. Tack in boots or poling
- 20.5.4. **Class Routine**
  - 20.5.5. The class will consist of a preliminary timed round of a maximum of nine (9) jumps
  - 20.5.6. There will be no set time limit but time will be recorded for placing of riders who do not qualify for the jump-off
  - 20.5.7. Riders with clean rounds (no faults) in the preliminary round will qualify for the jump-off round
  - 20.5.8. Riders with faults will be placed after the jump-off riders by number of faults
  - 20.5.9. If there is a tie in the number of faults, fastest time will determine placing
  - 20.5.10. Clean rounds will be placed by fastest time
  - 20.5.11. Riders with faults in the jump off will be placed by least amount of faults below the riders with clean rounds but ahead of the riders not qualifying for the jump-off. Riders with no faults in jump off will mark above any rider with faults regardless of time
  - 20.5.12. Faults will be assessed as follows:
    - 20.5.12.1. Knockdown of an obstacle, standard, rail, automatic timer, or other designated marker on the start or finish line by any portion of the horse, rider or equipment - four (4) faults
    - 20.5.12.2. First disobedience anywhere on course - four (4) faults
- 20.5.13. **Additional Disqualification Criteria (1 participation point awarded)**
  - 20.5.13.1. Second cumulative disobedience anywhere on course
  - 20.5.13.2. Horse resisting for 45 consecutive seconds
  - 20.5.13.3. Taking more than 45 seconds to jump the first obstacle after the time of the round has begun
  - 20.5.13.4. Taking more than 45 seconds to jump the next obstacle on course
  - 20.5.13.5. Jumping an obstacle before it is reset, or without waiting for signal to proceed
  - 20.5.13.6. Jumping an obstacle before crossing start line unless said obstacle is designated as a practice obstacle or after crossing the finish line, whether forming part of the course or not
  - 20.5.13.7. Leaving the enclosure of a closed obstacle incorrectly

- 20.5.13.8. Any participant at the end of his/her round who does not leave the arena through the designated gate (i.e. jumping out of the arena)
- 20.5.14. No cross entering different heights for equitation over fences and/or jumper classes
- 20.6. **WT/Open Beginner WTC/WTC/ Trail**
  - 20.6.1. **Tack and Equipment**
    - 20.6.1.1. Properly fitted saddle- English or Western type
    - 20.6.1.2. Properly fitted bridle- English or Western type
    - 20.6.1.3. Regulation Girth
  - 20.6.2. **Optional Equipment**
    - 20.6.2.1. Breastplate- English or Western type
    - 20.6.2.2. Spurs - appropriate to discipline, refer to [Appendix E](#) for more detail
    - 20.6.2.3. A bridle that has no bit attached to it and has no leverage action (example: Dr. Cook's Bitless Bridle) see appendix
    - 20.6.2.4. Hackamores
    - 20.6.2.5. Chaps/Chinks only in Western Equitation
    - 20.6.2.6. Equine protective boots, wraps or bandages
  - 20.6.3. **Prohibited Equipment**
    - 20.6.3.1. Martingales
    - 20.6.3.2. Draw Reins
    - 20.6.3.3. Figure 8, Flash, or dropped nose cavesson
  - 20.6.4. **Class Routine**
    - 20.6.4.1. To be judged on the rider/handler's ability to maneuver their horse through a series of obstacles
    - 20.6.4.2. Participants will be judged on 9 elements with the 10<sup>th</sup> element being Overall Horsemanship
    - 20.6.4.3. Each element is judged individually, if a participant does not complete an element, that will result in a score of 0 for that element
  - 20.6.5. **Additional Disqualification Criteria (1 Participation Point Awarded)**
    - 20.6.5.1. Crops/Whips longer than 4 feet
- 20.7. **WT/Open Beginner WTC/WTC Working Team**
  - 20.7.1. **Tack and Equipment**
    - 20.7.1.1. Properly fitted saddle- English or Western type
    - 20.7.1.2. Properly fitted bridle- English or Western type
    - 20.7.1.3. Regulation Girth
  - 20.7.2. **Optional Equipment**
    - 20.7.2.1. Breastplate- English or Western type
    - 20.7.2.2. A bridle that has no bit attached to it and has no leverage action (example: Dr. Cook's Bitless Bridle) see appendix
    - 20.7.2.3. Hackamores
    - 20.7.2.4. Spurs - appropriate to discipline, refer to [Appendix E](#) for more detail

- 20.7.2.5. Chaps/Chinks only in Western Equitation
- 20.7.2.6. Equine protective boots, wraps or bandages
- 20.7.3. **Prohibited Equipment**
  - 20.7.3.1. Martingales
  - 20.7.3.2. Draw Reins
  - 20.7.3.3. Figure 8, Flash, or dropped nose cavesson
- 20.7.4. **Class Routine**
  - 20.7.4.1. To be judged on the coordination of mounts performing the pattern
  - 20.7.4.2. May be ridden as a pair or a quad
  - 20.7.4.3. The team may of a western discipline rider and an English discipline rider, however the participant and horse must have discipline appropriate tack and attire
  - 20.7.4.4. Both hands may be used on the reins for English or Western style
  - 20.7.4.5. Working Team may be ridden in an arena using dressage symbols for orientation
- 20.8. **Spirit Practicum**
  - 20.8.1. Practicum will be graded and participants will be placed based on number of correct answers
  - 20.8.2. Individual and team points will be awarded based on placing
  - 20.8.3. Additional tests may be used to break ties
- 20.9. **Spirit Team Groom Box Challenge**
  - 20.9.1. To be scored as a team
  - 20.9.2. Maximum 4 participants per team
  - 20.9.3. Scoring will include:
    - 20.9.3.1. Grooming (30 points possible)
    - 20.9.3.2. Teamwork (30 points possible)
    - 20.9.3.3. Equipment (5 points possible)
    - 20.9.3.4. Safety (35 points possible)
  - 20.9.4. See [Appendix D](#) for Grooming Box Challenge Score Card and Rubric
- 20.10. **WT/Open Beginner WTC/WTC Dressage**
  - 20.10.1. **Tack and Equipment**
    - 20.10.1.1. Properly fitted English type saddle
    - 20.10.1.2. Properly fitted English type bridle
    - 20.10.1.3. Regulation Girth
  - 20.10.2. **Optional Equipment**
    - 20.10.2.1. Whips no longer than four (4) feet including snapper or lash
    - 20.10.2.2. Spurs- appropriate to discipline, refer to [Appendix E](#) for more detail
    - 20.10.2.3. A bridle that has no bit attached to it and has no leverage action (example: Dr. Cook's Bitless Bridle) see appendix
    - 20.10.2.4. Hackamores
    - 20.10.2.5. Dropped flash, crescent, Figure 8, and regular or padded nosebands

- 20.10.2.6. Dressage Saddle
- 20.10.2.7. Equine protective boots, wraps or bandages
- 20.10.3. **Prohibited Equipment**
  - 20.10.3.1. Martingales
  - 20.10.3.2. Draw Reins
- 20.10.4. **Class Routine**
  - 20.10.4.1. To be judged on the rider/handler's ability to guide their horse through a series of maneuvers
  - 20.10.4.2. Will be ridden in a dressage ring
  - 20.10.4.3. Participants will not be allowed to ride their equine around the outside of the dressage ring before their judged class
- 20.10.5. **Additional Disqualification Criteria (1 Participation Point Awarded)**
  - 20.10.5.1. Stepping on, out, or knocking over the dressage ring
- 20.11. **WT/Open Beginner WTC/WTC Western Dressage**
  - 20.11.1. **Tack and Equipment**
    - 20.11.1.1. Properly fitted western type saddle
    - 20.11.1.2. Properly fitted western type headstall
    - 20.11.1.3. Regulation Girth
  - 20.11.2. **Optional Equipment**
    - 20.11.2.1. Western cavesson- braided or plain
    - 20.11.2.2. A bridle that has no bit attached to it and has no leverage action (example: Dr. Cook's Bitless Bridle) see appendix
    - 20.11.2.3. Hackamores
    - 20.11.2.4. Slobber guard
    - 20.11.2.5. Western breastplate
    - 20.11.2.6. Crupper
    - 20.11.2.7. Whips no longer than four (4) feet including lash
    - 20.11.2.8. Spurs - appropriate to discipline, refer to [Appendix E](#) for more detail
    - 20.11.2.9. Chaps/chinks
    - 20.11.2.10. Equine protective boots, wraps or bandages
  - 20.11.3. **Prohibited Equipment**
    - 20.11.3.1. Martingales
    - 20.11.3.2. Draw Reins
    - 20.11.3.3. Flash, Figure 8, or dropped nosebands
    - 20.11.3.4. No metal, studs, or harsh substances on cavesson
    - 20.11.3.5. Gag bits, half cheeks, donut or flat polo mouth pieces, kimberwicks
    - 20.11.3.6. Roping bits with reins attached to a single ring at the center of cross bar
  - 20.11.4. **Class Routine**
    - 20.11.4.1. To be judged on the rider/handler's ability to guide their horse through a series of maneuvers
    - 20.11.4.2. Will be ridden in a dressage ring

- 20.11.4.3. Participants will not be allowed to ride their equine around the outside of the dressage ring before their judged class
- 20.11.5. **Additional Disqualification Criteria (1 Participation Point Awarded)**
  - 20.11.5.1. Stepping on, out, or knocking over the dressage ring
- 20.12. **In Hand Trail**
  - 20.12.1. **Tack and Equipment**
    - 20.12.1.1. Halter with lead rope or shank
    - 20.12.1.2. May choose to show either with English or Western tack and attire. Must have discipline appropriate tack and attire
  - 20.12.2. **Prohibited Equipment**
    - 20.12.2.1. Whips longer than four (4) feet
    - 20.12.2.2. Spurs
    - 20.12.2.3. Chaps/Chinks
  - 20.12.3. **Class Routine**
    - 20.12.3.1. To be judged on the rider/handler's ability to maneuver their horse through a series of obstacles
    - 20.12.3.2. Participants will be judged on 9 elements with the 10<sup>th</sup> element being Overall Horsemanship
    - 20.12.3.3. Each element is judged individually, if a participant does not complete an element, that will result in a score of 0 for that element
- 20.13. **In Hand Discipline Rail**
  - 20.13.1. **Tack and Equipment**
    - 20.13.1.1. Halter with lead rope or shank
    - 20.13.1.2. May choose to show either with English or Western tack and attire
    - 20.13.1.3. Must have discipline appropriate tack and attire
  - 20.13.2. **Prohibited Equipment**
    - 20.13.2.1. Whips longer than four (4) feet
    - 20.13.2.2. Spurs
    - 20.13.2.3. Chaps/Chinks
  - 20.13.3. **Class Routine**
    - 20.13.3.1. This class is to show the ability of a highly trained equine to perform the requested gait or movement promptly and obediently. Judge shall work the entries adequately but must not overwork them. This is not a game or a fault and out class and **shall not be judged on an elimination basis**. Final judging shall be based on the best overall disciplined rail performance including responsiveness, manners, and quality of movements. At all times, the safety of the horses and exhibitors is to be the first concern
    - 20.13.3.2. The class routine shall be to perform work on the rail, and may include, but is not limited to: Walk, Trot, Back (at least 5 steps), Turn on forehand, Turn on hindquarter, Stop and stand quietly

20.14. **In Hand Obstacle Race**

20.14.1. **Tack and Equipment**

20.14.1.1. Halter with lead rope or shank

20.14.1.2. May choose to show either with English or Western tack and attire.  
Must have discipline appropriate tack and attire

20.14.2. **Prohibited Equipment**

20.14.2.1. Whips longer than four (4) feet

20.14.2.2. Spurs

20.14.2.3. Chaps/Chinks

20.14.3. **Class Routine**

20.14.3.1. Class to be judged on the manner of the equine's performance through the course and on responsiveness, willingness and general attitude

20.14.3.2. Class is placed based on time to complete course

20.14.3.3. Time starts when both rider and equine cross through the cones and stops when both rider and equine cross through the cones

20.14.3.4. Any element that is not completed will result in a five (5) second time penalty

20.14.4. **Additional Disqualification Criteria (1 Participation Point Awarded)**

20.14.4.1. Baiting to encourage equine to perform one of the obstacles

20.14.4.2. Not attempting an element

20.15. **In Hand Suitability**

20.15.1. **Tack and Equipment**

20.15.1.1. Halter with lead rope or shank

20.15.1.2. May choose to show either with English or Western tack and attire.  
Must have discipline appropriate tack and attire

20.15.2. **Prohibited Equipment**

20.15.2.1. Whips longer than four (4) feet

20.15.2.2. Spurs

20.15.2.3. Chaps/Chinks

20.15.3. **Class Routine**

20.15.3.1. Handlers will enter the ring at a walk while going the first way of the ring. Entries will be asked to follow given commands on the rail both ways of the ring that may include walking, trotting, stopping, backing and turning at any gait. Handlers and equine will also be asked to execute a pattern. Patterns may include any of the above gaits as well as ground tying

20.15.3.2. To be judged on suitability as a team in communication and execution of rail work, pattern completion, and overall horsemanship

20.16. **WT/Open Beginner WTC/WTC Mounted Games**

20.16.1. NHHSET will offer 5 individual mounted games to be determined by the patterns committee and outlined in the patterns book.

20.16.2. Additionally NHHSET will offer Team Turn and Burn

- 20.16.2.1. Each participant will be issued a 30 second penalty if two (2) participants are determined to be on the course at the same time
- 20.16.2.2. Team Turn and burn is a four (4) person team event. The team may compete in this event with three (3) participants using four (4) different equines.
- 20.16.2.3. Maximum of two (2) coaches are allowed in the arena to hold equines if there are only three (3) participants. Only equines without a rider are to be held
- 20.16.2.4. In Turn and Burn if the barrel is knocked over it will receive no time and only participation points will be awarded to the participants

20.17. **Mounted Games Safety Rules**

- 20.17.1. A second equine may be used to encourage an equine into the arena. Second equine should then leave the arena
- 20.17.2. An advisor, coach, or another participant may help equine into arena
- 20.17.3. Equines may not run in or out of the arena at full stride
- 20.17.4. No encourage of forward motion by whipping or pushing by anyone to help an equine start the course is allowed
- 20.17.5. Halters are not allowed
- 20.17.6. As soon as participant takes the course, arena staff must close all arena gates
- 20.17.7. Participants must enter and leave the arena at a walk demonstrating control

20.17.8. **Tack and Equipment**

- 20.17.8.1. Properly fitted saddle- English or Western type
- 20.17.8.2. Properly fitted bridle- English or Western type
- 20.17.8.3. Reins that are joined or tied together without extreme excess rein
- 20.17.8.4. Regulation Girth

20.17.9. **Optional Equipment**

- 20.17.9.1. Hackamores
- 20.17.9.2. Cutback Saddles
- 20.17.9.3. Roping reins
- 20.17.9.4. Gaming reins
- 20.17.9.5. Noseband
- 20.17.9.6. Spurs - appropriate to discipline, refer to [Appendix E](#) for more detail
- 20.17.9.7. Over and under or hand quirt
- 20.17.9.8. Martingales or Tie Downs fitted properly so as not to pose a danger if equine or participant loses control
- 20.17.9.9. Half Chaps, Chaps, Chinks
- 20.17.9.10. Protective boots, leg wraps, or bandages

20.17.10. **Prohibited Equipment**

- 20.17.10.1. Split reins not joined together
- 20.17.10.2. Halters

20.18. **Penalties (Time)**

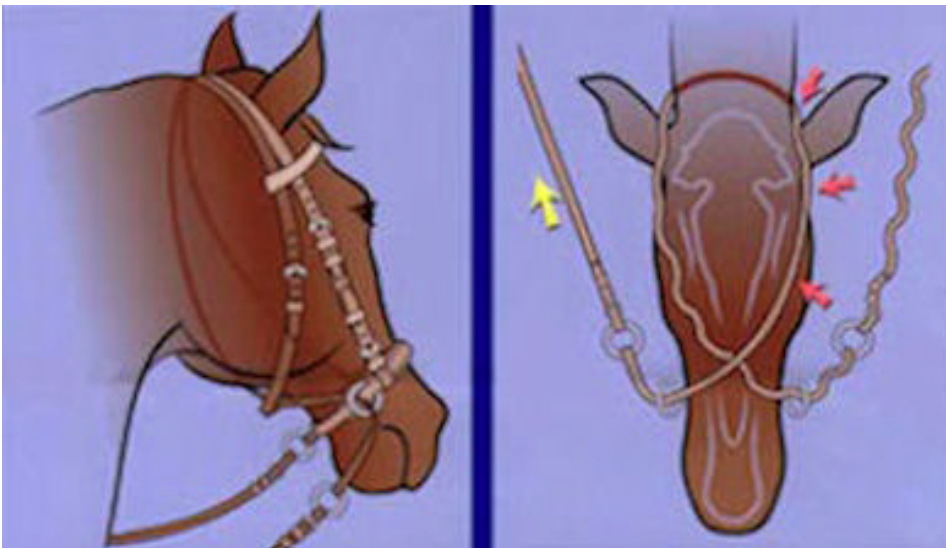
- 20.18.1. Walk/Trot mounted games events will have a 5 second penalty for every canter stride under three (3).

20.19. **Additional Disqualification Criteria/No Time (1 Participation Point Awarded)**

- 20.19.1. Three (3) or more canter strides in a W/T Gymkhana event. Canter strides do not have to be consecutive
- 20.19.2. Leaving the course
- 20.19.3. Run outs
- 20.19.4. Refusals
- 20.19.5. Knocking over timers
- 20.19.6. Fall of equine or participant
- 20.19.7. Taking more than thirty (30) seconds to cross the starting line. Judge/timed event supervisor will be responsible for determining whether or not the participant starts the course within thirty (30) seconds
- 20.19.8. Participant has one (1) minute to enter the ring after previous participant has left the exiting gate

## 21. APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: Dr. Cook's Bitless Bridle



## APPENDIX B: Emergency Response Procedure

### New Hampshire High School Equestrian Teams Emergency Response Procedure

**Codeword:** ART (Active Response Team)

This is the Emergency Response Procedure for NHHSET events

The intent of this procedure is to provide guidelines to the volunteers in the event an accident/incident occurs. It is only a guideline and shall hopefully streamline reactions and minimize any confusion if an incident classified as an emergency happens.

#### **Emergency Response Team:**

These volunteers are the people who must react to an emergency. You must understand that the emergency could be minor or major, so please be aware of what you may be exposed to.

The procedure is developed to assist in:

- Maintaining calm
- Alerting the needed officials
- Order of duties to help expedite a response to emergency
- Evacuations of rings and/or facility
- Arrival of emergency response personnel
- The safe evacuation of the injured

ERT 1 Chair of State

ERT 2 Safety Coordinator

ERT 3 Emergency Response Team Coordinator

ERT 4 All Gatekeepers

ERT 5 Announcer

ERT 6 Parking Attendant

Emergency Response:

In the event of an incident and to minimize any panic among NHHSET participants, judges, and spectators, the call word to use will be ART. Therefore, whenever the incident has happened, volunteers shall be notified by radio or other means. As an example...ART at Main Ring or ART at Parking Lot, or ART at Warm-up ring etc. This system would alert the entire team listed about to go into action.

When this code is announced, only the response team needs to react. They may call upon assistants as needed to expedite their duties to handle the incident. The response team needs to react calmly and professionally.

When any incident happens inside the ring all riders in that ring will dismount quickly and quietly leave the ring.

**ERT 1** shall immediately be informed of any incident, no matter how small and needs to get to the scene ASAP to offer assistance then the emergency team has been activated.

**ERT 1** shall be responsible for contacting Fire, Ambulance, Police, and/or Vet

**ERT 1 and ERT 2** shall interview witnesses and fill out and file any necessary paperwork for NHHSET and/or Police as well as contact facility owners

**ERT 2** shall be responsible for bringing a tarp, NHHSET incident forms and any other safety materials necessary for a show

**ERT 3** shall be responsible for tending to any needs of the injured

**ERT 4** shall open the gate, move spectators away from any exiting riders and keep the alleyway open for emergency responders and/or provide assistance erecting any protective tarps that may be needed to shield the injured horse or rider from public view

**ERT 5** shall immediately alert all spectators to move from the scene and will redirect them to another area, such as the other competition ring, the secretary ring, or anything to catch their attention to protect the privacy of the injured.

**ERT 6** shall immediately clear the driveway and parking lot for any emergency vehicles required to answer the incident and greet and direct emergency vehicles where they are. They should advise vehicles to turn off sirens upon arriving at the showgrounds.

**Materials needed for emergency response procedure:**

1. An appointed safety coordinator (ERT 2) trained on the use of NHHSET form and be very familiar with this procedure
2. Accident and incident report forms - found in the "forms" section of the Rulebook
3. Phone numbers for local Police, Fire Department, Ambulance, Service/Hospital, Vet, Farrier (if desired), and Facility owner easily accessible for ERT 1 and ERT 2. Make sure your safety coordinator has notified the local authorities of the show dates in advance
4. ERT 3/First Aid responder on site - either volunteer from within or hired by the state for the show
5. Enough walkie-talkies for all members of ART
6. Tarps for screening off an accident site
7. Access up to and into every ring large enough for an emergency vehicle
8. A tractor available to tow away an injured animal if necessary (contact facility owners)

**Types of Incidents:**

Motor vehicle with no bodily harm - This type of incident should be handled by the local police department only. Most everyone has insurance and the professional staff at the Police Department know the information they need. **ERT 6** should contact the police and this type of incident should only involve **ERT 1, ERT 2 and ERT 6**.

Minor bruises, bumps, falls - The parent of the rider and/or First Aid Responder (**ERT 3**) shall determine what action is necessary. If they wish for an ambulance for transport, then **ERT 1** shall call for the ambulance. **ERT 1 and ERT 2** will determine if accident/incident paperwork needs to be filled out for the situation.

Major human injury - **ERT 1** is to immediately contact ambulance and police departments. The entire Emergency Response Team to follow the emergency procedure listed above.

Minor equine injury - In the event of a minor equine injury, the decision to call in for medical assistance shall be by the rider and/or horse owner and/or coach. **ERT 2** shall contact whomever the rider/owner/coach wants to treat the animal.

Major equine injury - In the event that a major equine incident has happened (horse down) then the Emergency Response Team goes into effect. As quickly as possible, the protective screen shall be erected for the privacy of the equine by **ERT 2**. **ERT 1** shall contact the veterinarian immediately. In the event a tractor is needed, then **ERT 2** shall contact the facility owner for assistance.

## APPENDIX C: Privacy Policy

### Privacy Policy

New Hampshire High School Equestrian Teams (NHHSET) is committed to respecting privacy. This privacy policy governs our collection and use of personal and business information collected from NHHSET participants and visitors to our website, as well as through our email and regular mail correspondence, telephone calls, faxes, and all other means of gathering and disseminating information.

Our policy is to use any and all information collected by any means, whether through NHHSET registration forms, the internet, email, or online database and/or any interactive forms or surveys, only for such uses that are important to NHHSET and its mission, in light of the standards required and expected of New Hampshire not-for-profit organizations.

NHHSET reserves the right to change this privacy policy whenever deemed necessary, without prior notification. Should changes be made, they will be posted on the NHHSET website with the date of revision.

Information posted about NHHSET participants on the website consists only of the names of participating high schools, the names and email addresses of NHHSET State Board of Directors members, and the names of student representatives. We do, however, maintain internal lists of members and contacts. Because your physical mail and email addresses are confidential, we never share either type of list with outside parties, and only key NHHSET personnel and certain technical contractors are allowed access to the areas of the computer systems in which we store our lists. Lists are accessed only for the purpose of upgrading our computer systems or of distributing information about NHHSET events or other NHHSET matters.

#### Visitors to the Website and Website Security

The NHHSET website collects information about each visitor to our website in these ways:

1. Through your IP address
2. Through cookies
3. Through any correspondence you send us via email to our online posted mailing address, our online listed emails

Details about these methods of information collection follow:

#### IP Addresses

Your IP address does not reveal any personal information about you or your activities. Our web server host logs all IP addresses of all visitors to automate information collection concerning web traffic, usage, length of time visitors stayed, new visitors, entry and exit points, and the like. It is also used as statistical information for reporting and to find ways to improve web usability.

#### Cookies

Our website uses cookies to gather information about traffic and to enhance your visit to our site. A cookie is: a message given to a Web browser by a Web server. The browser stores the message in a text file. The message is then sent back to the server each time the browser requests a page from the server. Cookies are used to customize web pages to provide the user with preferences. They can be deactivated in your browser if you wish by configuring your browser's preferences not to accept them. No information gathered by any cookies we have on our site is used to disseminate information about your personal use of the internet, nor is it ever used for any marketing or advertising purposes.

#### **Registration Forms**

Registration forms are downloaded from our website, printed, and filled out by participants, and submitted to NHHSET. NHHSET currently does not offer online registration. None of the information disclosed on registration forms is shared with third parties.

#### **Correspondence**

None of your contact information or any of your correspondence that you send via regular mail, through registration forms, through email, or by any other means is ever sold to third parties under any circumstances, and is used only to conduct our daily business in accomplishing our mission under our policies as a not-for-profit entity.

#### **NHHSET Sharing Practices**

None of the information we collect is shared with any third party except as aggregated statistics for organizational performance reporting purposes, capturing and defining web traffic patterns, and website improvement. Information of this kind is never used to track or monitor individual users. We gather information about NHHSET participants in order to facilitate communication with participants and volunteers, to enable NHHSET to deal with any medical or safety issues that may arise in connections with NHHSET activities, and to implement safety protocols necessary or advisable in connection with equestrian sport.

If you send us questions about our website content or any of our areas of operation, we may forward your request for information to parties who would be able to assist you, or we may respond to you with that information in kind. You may at any time request us not to do so, and we will comply with that request, except as we are required by legal regulations or a court order to do so. It is unlikely we will contact you for verification, but we reserve the right to do so, should it become necessary. If you contact us by email or phone, we may ask you to verify your personal information so that we may respond to your inquiry with an assurance of your identity. Our online database is protected by security put in place to safeguard data integrity and to prevent unauthorized access and/or use of its systems. These security measures have been designed to provide the user with reasonable protection of private information entrusted to our possession. [Links to Other Websites](#)

NHHSET's website links to certain other websites. Although we work hard to make sure we are linking to appropriate sites, and take full responsibility for the content of our site and our own privacy policy, we are not responsible for the privacy practices or the content of sites in which we link.

**Online Surveys**

Occasionally we may ask you to participate in online surveys in the interest of accomplishing our mission. Such surveys are always on a volunteer basis, and it is not necessary for you to fill them out. Should you decide to fill a survey out, the types of information that are collected may include demographics such as zip codes, age group, services received or provided, etc. However, none of this information will be collected on anyone individual or that can be used to identify anyone individual. Survey information is used in the aggregate to improve our organizational and online services.

**Corrections to Personal Information**

If your personal or information needs to be updated, please contact NHHSET by emailing the State Chair.

**Online Purchases**

NHHSET may provide you with links to affiliate sites to allow you to purchase items related to nonprofit concerns and activities. Any transaction conducted as a result of those links is not conducted on our site, but is conducted on the site of the seller or the company managing the transaction through their online ecommerce functions. Therefore, NHHSET does not either see or collect any personal information about you, your transaction, and/or your credit card. All transactions and transaction details are between the purchaser and the company, and NHHSET makes no guarantee about these transactions. Buyers are responsible to be fully informed about sellers and/or companies managing online transactions policies, and will hold NHHSET harmless from all disputed between the buyer and the seller/transaction management company. Should NHHSET offer products and services for online purchase directly on NHHSET's website in the future, NHHSET will update this policy as necessary.

**Contacting Us**

If you believe that your personal and/or private information is being used for a purpose other than its intended purpose, or if you have any questions about our privacy policy or the practices of our site, contact NHHSET by emailing, Karrie Bernier and NHHSET volunteers will use their best efforts to address your concerns promptly. Updated January 23, 2015.

## APPENDIX D: Grooming Box Challenge Score Card and Rubric

### NHHSET Grooming Box Challenge

#### **Objective:**

The objective of the Grooming Box Challenge is to engage NHHSET's spirit members in an activity that expands their knowledge of the horse and horse showing. The structure of the Challenge is designed to encourage participation even if a participating school team has a limited number of spirit members.

#### **Overview:**

To participate in the Grooming Box Challenge, spirit member teams will prepare a team-selected horse of their choice for presentation to a judge. The selected horse will be groomed appropriate for the purpose of the presentation. Based on the criteria on the scoresheet, the spirit team will demonstrate and discuss their preparation tools and techniques used to get the horse ready to show. Teams will be judged on their knowledge of the tools and techniques, their presentation and teamwork, and safety when working around the horse.

Teams will be composed of at least one but not more than four spirit members. Where schools may have more than four spirit members, they may form more than one Challenge team. For teams having only one spirit member, that spirit member may be supported by an in-hand or under-saddle exhibitor. The basis for scoring a team with only one spirit member should place emphasis on the spirit member's presentation. Any in-hand or under-saddle exhibitor should have a limited role in the presentation outside of holding the horse to allow the spirit member to focus on the presentation.

Excess reliance on the in-hand or under-saddle exhibitor should be penalized accordingly.

#### **Judging:**

Teams will be ready for their presentation at a predetermined time during the course of the show day, at the discretion of the district show management (ie - beginning of the show before classes start, after lunch break, at the conclusion of classes, etc). Districts will determine this time individually and communicate it before the start of the show to provide proper notice to participants.

To complete the Challenge, spirit teams will enter the ring with a horse and a grooming box outfitted with tools deemed necessary and appropriate to prepare for a show. The team will present their protocol to the judge one at a time. Only one team should be in the ring or designated presentation area at a time. Once completed, the judge will dismiss the team and complete scoring and notes accordingly before asking for the next team to present. The team's presentation should not exceed 10 minutes.

Teams should organize their presentation to cover the process of show preparation and the required tools. Teams should reference the attached scoresheet for direction in developing their presentation. If the Challenge occurs after showing has commenced, judges are not to consider or deduct points for sweat and tack marks if a horse has competed during the course of the show day.

#### **Scoring:**

At each district meet, teams are ranked in order of points awarded by the judge to determine placings. To accumulate points and determine the two district teams that will move on to the State meet, districts should follow scoring used for classes, as detailed in the "Scoring" section of the NHHSET rulebook. At the conclusion of district meets, the top two teams in the district will move on to the State meet.

## NHHSET Grooming Box Challenge Scoresheet

**Team (maximum 4 participants per team):**

### **Grooming: 30 points possible**

**Score: .**

Minimum: Use tools correctly, and in correct sequence on the body: Nearside: neck, back, girth, barrel, hindquarters, then Offside: neck, back, girth, barrel, hindquarters

- a. Tote or bucket to put tools in
- b. Curry combs - Use in a circular motion to lift dirt, flicking motion to remove dirt. Never use it on ears, or on legs below knees or hocks, or on mane and tail.
- c. Hard brushes (Dandy Brush) and Soft brushes (Body Brush) - Use short, brisk, flipping motion to remove dirt.
- d. Mane and tail comb or brush - Start brushing at bottom of hair and work up towards roots. Never start at the top.
- e. Hoof pick- Use on hooves from heel to toe to remove dirt and rocks.
- f. Rags - For use on the head and finishing touches on the coat.
- g. Presentation and discussion of grooming steps to prepare the horse.
- h. Excessive tools or steps deemed unnecessary should be penalized accordingly.

### **Teamwork 30 points possible**

**Score: .**

Based on how well the team is organized, each member has his own task to perform, each team member participating equally, and if the total job is finished in the allotted time.

- a. Be well organized. Each team member should have his own tasks.
- b. Space out to work. Never cluster around one area.
- c. Be pleasant to fellow team members.
- d. Do not talk with friends or parents in the audience or other teams. Excessive talking within a team may be marked down.

### **Equipment 5 points possible**

**Score: .**

Tack is clean, well-oiled, free from defects and in good condition. Tack is appropriately fitted to the horse

### **Safety 35 points possible**

**Score: .**

Points awarded for properly following the rules of safety for working around a horse.

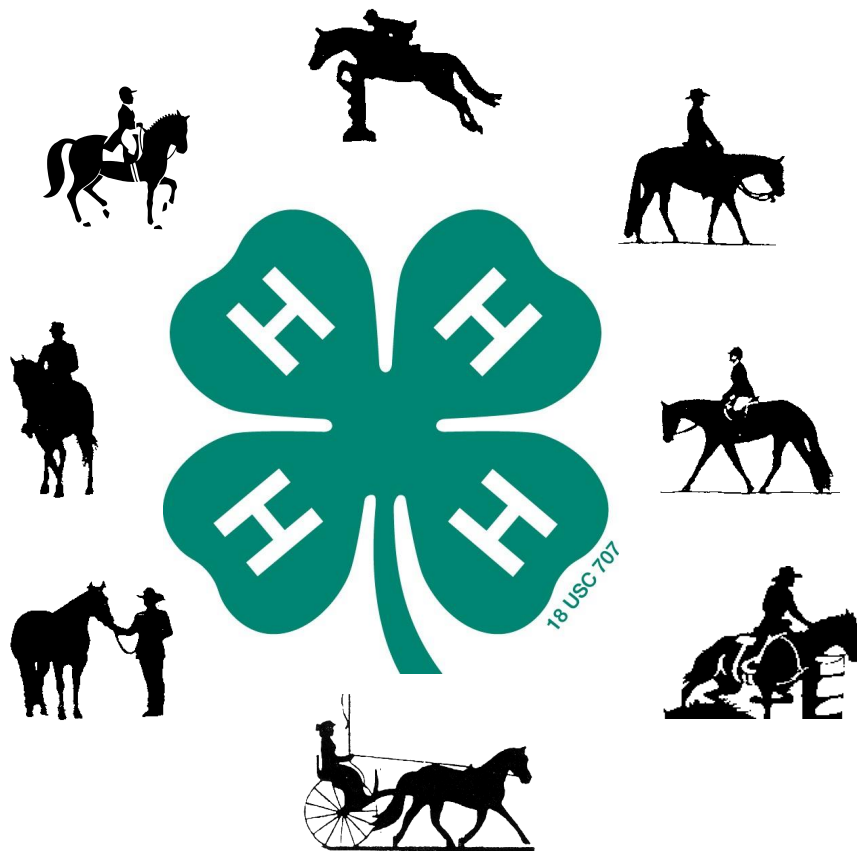
Never stand or work in the "Danger Zone" which is directly in front and directly behind the horse.

- a. All team members will work on the same side of the horse.
- b. Never kneel or sit near the horse. When grooming legs, squat down so you can move quickly away if the horse moves. Never have all team members squatting at the same time.
- c. When crossing behind the horse, either cross out of range of hind legs or pass close with a hand on the horse.
- d. Never cross under lead rope between handler and horse.
- e. Work quietly. Any abuse or harsh treatment of the horse will result in disqualification of the team.

**Total Score .**

APPENDIX E: New England 4-H Horse Show Bit & Spur Rules and Guidelines (rev 2026)

# New England 4-H Horse Show Bit & Spur Rules and Guidelines



Basic guide to local, county, and state/regional 4-H Horse shows as well as for those classes in open shows limited to 4-H membership entry. This rules manual is for organizers, officials, exhibitors, parents and judges.

Revised February 2026

These guidelines should be used in conjunction with the current *New England 4-H Horse Show Rulebook*. See rulebook for additional details involving bits and equipment for respective classes.

Because the New England 4-H Horse Program is diverse in both its divisions and in the breeds that compete, it is difficult to generate a complete list of acceptable bits. Bits that are permitted by respective breed associations may be acceptable at the judge's discretion. A judge at his/her discretion can penalize a horse with non-conventional types of bits. Please understand that this supplement gives only examples of legal and acceptable bits. In no way does it try to include every bit that is allowed or not allowed.

If exhibitors have questions concerning a bit they wish to use, and that specific bit is not mentioned in the current rules or these guidelines, then exhibitors should ask the show stewards and/or the judge if the bit is acceptable for that show. Exhibitors should have alternative bits available so that they can make a change if it is determined by show officials that their preferred bit is unacceptable for that show.

Each county, district or regional, and state show is officiated by different stewards and judges. Therefore, exhibitors must seek approval from show officials at each show before using the questionable bit. Members should consult with professionals in their riding discipline or contact the appropriate breed association for guidance in selecting a bit in order to find one that is both appropriate and acceptable for use in New England 4-H shows.

We would like to acknowledge the Florida 4-H State Horse Program for the creation of the content in this guide. It is the most comprehensive guide of bits available to the 4-H community and has been adopted for our use, with their permission. Credit is given to developers Wendy DeVito, Sandra TenBroeck, Joel McQuagge. It has been slightly modified for use in New England.

Pictures show examples of bits that are labeled as either:



-Acceptable



-Acceptable, as long as measurements that cannot be judged by the picture meet allowances



-Not allowed

-No symbol on an illustration is an indication that the bit is "allowed, but may be penalized."  
It is neither "acceptable" or "not allowed."

## Western, Ranch, and Speed Events Divisions

1. Reference to snaffle bits mean the conventional O-ring, egg-butt, or D-ring with ring no larger than 4". The mouthpiece should be round, oval, or egg-shaped, smooth and unwrapped metal. It may be inlaid, but must be smooth. The bars must be a minimum of 5/16" in diameter, measured one inch in from the cheek with a gradual decrease to center of the snaffle. The mouthpiece may be two or three pieces. A three-piece connecting ring of 1 1/4" or less in diameter, or a connecting flat bar of 3/8" to 3/4" (measured top to bottom), which lies flat in the horse's mouth, or rollers are acceptable. **Horses five-years-old and younger may be shown in a snaffle bit, hackamore, curb bit, half-breed, or spade bit.**

### What does it mean? ... Snaffle Rings

The shape of the snaffle ring outside of the horse's mouth is unrelated to the style of mouthpiece on the inside. I.e., you cannot determine what is in the mouth by the shape of the ring. The acceptable shapes are O-ring, egg-butt, and D-ring. And regardless of which shape, the ring may not be more than 4 inches across at it's widest point.



O-ring



Egg-butt



Offset D-ring

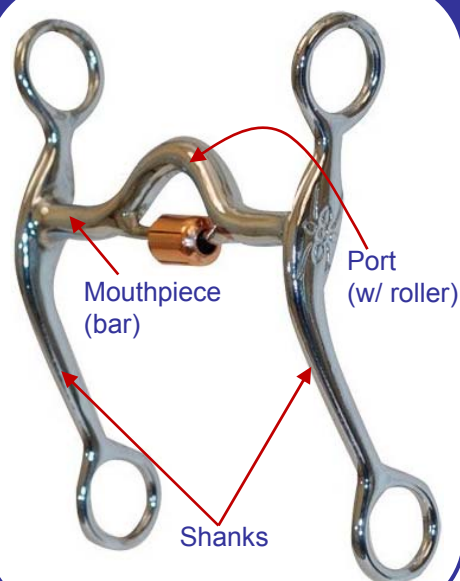


Full Cheek  
Not appropriate  
for Western

More on mouthpieces after the next rule...

2. References to a bit mean the use of a curb bit that has a solid or broken mouthpiece, has shanks, and acts with leverage. All curb bits must be free of mechanical device and should be considered a standard western bit. A description of a legal, standard western bit includes:
  - A. 8 1/2" maximum length shank to be measured as indicated in the diagram illustrating legal bit. Shanks may be fixed or loose.
  - B. Curb bit mouthpieces must be round, smooth, and unwrapped metal of 5/16" to 3/4" in diameter, measured one inch in from the cheek. They may be inlaid, but must be smooth. Nothing may protrude below the mouthpiece (bar), such as extensions or prongs on solid mouthpieces. The mouthpiece may be two or three pieces. A three-piece, connecting ring of 1 1/4" or less in diameter, or a connecting flat bar of 3/8" to 3/4" (measured top to bottom), which lies flat in the horse's mouth, or rollers are acceptable.
  - C. The port must be no higher than 3 1/2" maximum, with rollers and covers acceptable. Broken mouthpieces, halfbreeds, and spades are standard.

### Standard western curb bit (one style of many)



# Western, Ranch, and Speed Events Divisions, continued

## What does it mean? ... Mouthpieces

Many of the parameters for mouthpieces are the same regardless if it is a snaffle or a curb. They need to be the same minimum diameter ( $5/16"$ ), be smooth, may be broken into two or three pieces, and if there is a connecting flat bar or ring, those connectors must meet the same respective measurements. It does not mean the connecting piece has to be a ring or flat bar. The connecting piece could also be a roller or hinged port. Much of the determination of whether a mouthpiece is acceptable or not comes down to if it is smooth.

### What is "smooth"?

Smooth simply means that there are no bumps or ridges that will press into the bars of the horse's mouth or the pressure points on the tongue when pressure is applied. Things that make it not smooth may include (but are not limited to) any kind of twist, a wire wrap, carvings into the metal that create ridges, chain, etc.

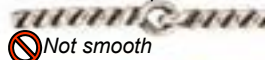
### Mouthpiece examples (applies to both snaffle and curb bits):



✓ Simple jointed, smooth



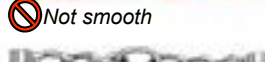
★ If connecting bar is  $3/8$ - $3/4"$  top to bottom



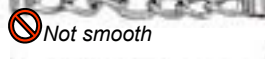
✗ Not smooth



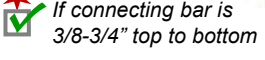
✗ Not smooth



✗ Not smooth



★ If connecting bar is  $3/8$ - $3/4"$  top to bottom

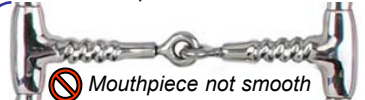


✗ Wire wrapped; "must be unwrapped metal", not smooth

Connecting O-ring (aka "Lifesaver") → can be a maximum of  $1\frac{1}{4}"$  diameter.



★ Connecting ring acceptable if  $<1\frac{1}{4}"$  across



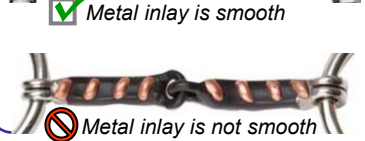
✗ Mouthpiece not smooth



✗ Mouthpiece not smooth



✓ Metal inlay is smooth



✗ Metal inlay is not smooth

Top is a fast twist or "corkscrew." Below is a slow twist. Both create numerous sharp pressure points.

Twists and loose links = not smooth.

← If the center link is a connecting flat bar, it must be  $3/8"$  to  $3/4"$  top to bottom.

Both have metal inlay, but only the top example is inlaid flat and smooth. The sample below has protruding links.

← Rule states "must be unwrapped metal." This includes wire-wrapped.

### Curb mouthpiece examples:



Half-breed



Prong bit  
Metal protruding below the bar causes sharp pressure points



Port should measure  $\leq 3\frac{1}{2}"$  high and shanks  $\leq 8\frac{1}{2}"$  long



All three of these examples have acceptable 3-piece mouthpieces.



## Western, Ranch, and Speed Events Divisions, continued

- References to a romal means an extension of braided material attached to closed reins. This extension may be carried in the free hand with an approximate 16" spacing between the reining hand and the free hand holding the romal. The rider's hand shall be around the reins with the fingers closed, thumb on top, and no fingers between the reins.
- The romal shall not be used forward of the cinch or to signal or cue the horse in any way. Any infraction of this rule shall be penalized severely by the judge.

### Examples: Romal Reins



Romal reins



✓ Correct romal hold



✗ Incorrect romal hold

- A curb bit must be used with a curb strap or curb chain properly attached so as to make contact with horse's chin. Chain curb straps must be at least 1/2" in width, and lie flat against the jaw of the horse. No wire curbs, regardless of how taped or padded. Absolutely no rigid material will be permitted under the jaws, regardless of how padded or covered.

### Examples: Curb Straps



✓ All of the above curb straps are acceptable



★ OK if  $\geq \frac{1}{2}$ " wide

The curb straps below are NOT acceptable



✗ Chain altered to create lumps; does not lie flat against the jaw.

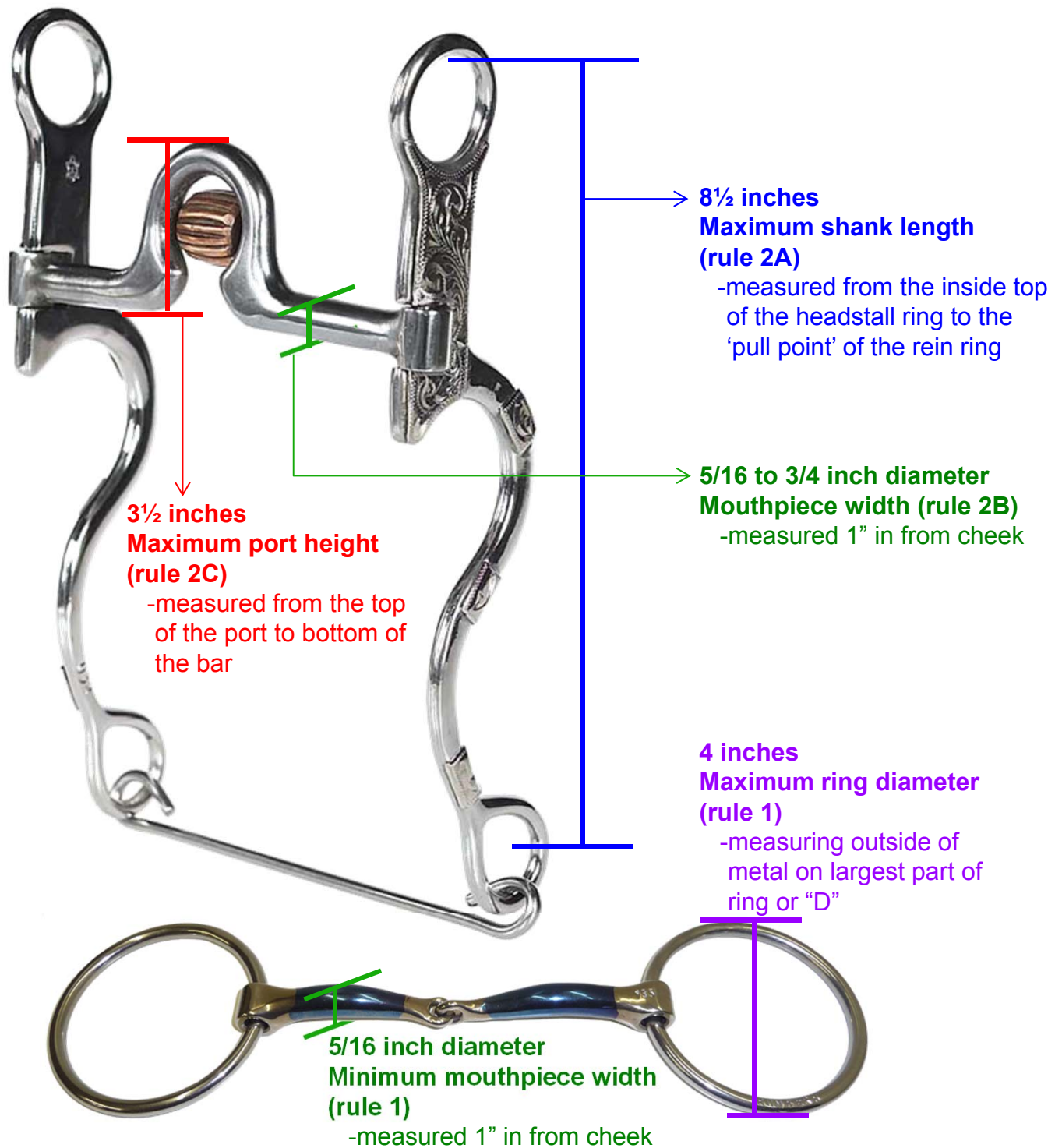


✗ Chain  $< \frac{1}{2}$ " wide



✗ Rigid bar added to chain.

## Western, Ranch, and Speed Events Bit Measurement



### Connecting ring or flat bar on either curb or snaffle (rule 1 and 2B):

Connecting ring, 1¼ inch maximum diameter

Connecting flat bar, 3/8 – 3/4 inch maximum, measured top to bottom

## Western and Ranch Divisions

- References to hackamore mean the use of a non-mechanical flexible, braided rawhide or leather, or rope bosal, the core of which may be either rawhide or flexible cable. Absolutely no rigid material will be permitted under the jaws, regardless of how padded or covered.

### What does it mean? ... Western Division Hackamores

Bosals are the only type of hackamore allowed in the Western Division. These are simple, flexible hackamores with no metal or working parts. Nothing over the nose or under the jaw may be rigid.



Rawhide bosal



Easy/Fast stop  
*Rigid material under jaw*



Mechanical Hackamore



Fast stop  
*Rigid material over nose; & mechanical*

- Slip or gag bits, and donut and flat polo mouthpieces are not acceptable.

### What does it mean? ... slip/gag, donut, and polo mouthpieces

Slip bits allow the mouthpiece to slide up the shank when pressure is applied, thereby increasing the leverage action in the mouth. With gag bits, the reins (attached directly to the headstall) slide through the bit rings and pull the mouthpiece up in a similar fashion. Neither type of 'gag action' is allowed.

Flat polo mouthpieces are functionally the same as a Rutledge Roper. Neither are allowed in the Western division.



Slip mouthpiece  
*Gag action AND not smooth*



Gag bit  
*Gag action not allowed*



Donut mouthpiece



Flat polo mouthpiece

## More Examples – Western/Ranch – Slip mouthpiece or not?

Rules for Western and Ranch state that slip or gag bits are not acceptable. But there is a fine line between mouthpieces that can move slightly up or down on the shank and those that move enough to be considered slip or gag-action mouthpieces. The key feature that officials will look for is if the portion of bit which the mouthpieces slides over is straight or rounded. Straight connections give very little ( $\leq \frac{1}{4}$  inch) allowance for motion – just enough to give the horse some flexibility to carry the mouthpiece in a comfortable position. The rounded connectors have more room for the mouthpiece to slip around the curve resulting in a gag-like action.

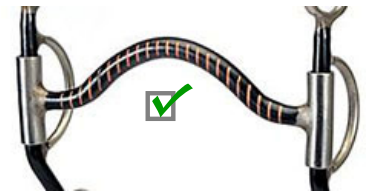


*Jr Cowhorse bits*



← The first two bits on the left have a rounded mouthpiece attachment which allows it to slide up (tighter) in the horse's mouth when pressure is applied. Even though the movement may appear minimal, it still fits within the slip/gag parameters in its action.

The four bits on the right have a variety → of mouthpiece styles attached to a straight portion of the shank in a way that allows minimal up & down movement, and no rotation. This is allowed as long as the mouthpieces meet the rules.

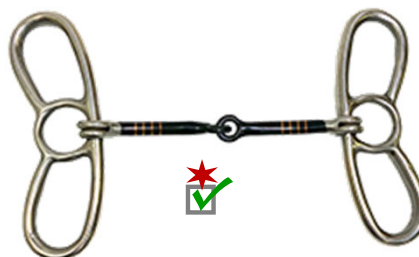


← Even though the mouthpiece slides on a nearly straight connection, it is long enough to clearly act as a slip mouthpiece with gag-like action.

.....

The mouthpieces of the two bits below move very little – not enough to be considered a slip or gag mouthpiece. Therefore, both styles are acceptable in Western and Ranch.

*As a reminder, these rules and examples apply to the Western and Ranch Divisions. All of these mouthpiece attachments and actions are allowed in Speed Events.*



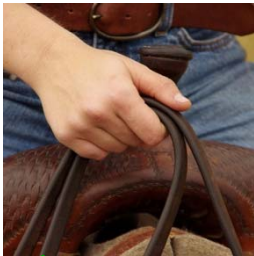
*If mouthpiece diameter is  $\geq 5/16$ "*



## Western and Ranch Divisions, continued

3. Horses five-years-old and younger may be shown in a snaffle bit, hackamore, curb bit, half-breed, or spade bit.
  - A. When using a snaffle bit, a loose hobble strap is optional (leather or nylon only, no chain). Reins to be attached above the hobble strap, if used.
  - B. Leather or woven split reins or mecate reins are acceptable with a snaffle bit.
  - C. Junior horses (5 years old and under) that are shown with a hackamore or snaffle bit may be ridden with two hands on the reins. The rider's hands should be carried near the pommel and not further than 4" out on either side of the saddle horn. Rider's hands must be steady with very limited movement. Rider's hands should be visible to the judge(s) at all times.

### Examples ... holding curb reins



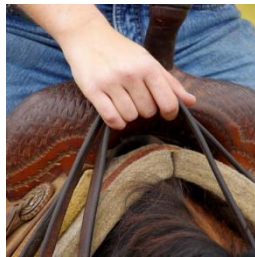
✓ Correct hold



✗ Incorrect hold



✓ Correct hold



✗ Incorrect hold



✓ Correct hold

★ Note: as stated in 4B, any of these holds are acceptable in Ranch classes.

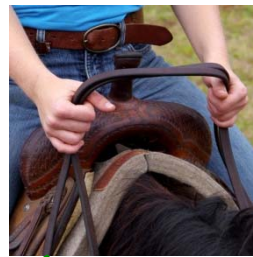
### Examples ... holding snaffle/bosal reins



✓ Mecate rein – one-piece continuous rein; separate rope attached to saddle or belt



✗ Incorrect hold



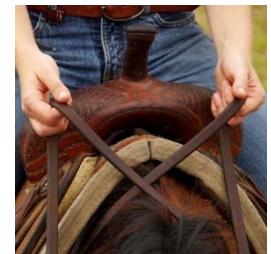
✓ Correct hold



✗ Incorrect hold



✓ Correct hold



✗ Incorrect hold

4. Horses six-years-old and older may only be shown in a curb bit, half-breed, or spade bit. They may also be shown in a hackamore or bitless bridle with a veterinarian's note.
  - A. Only one hand may be used on the reins, and hand must not be changed. When using split reins, the hand is to be around the reins, and if desired only the index finger may be between the reins. Violation of this rule is an automatic disqualification.
  - B. In ranch classes when showing in a curb bit, reins must be held in one hand, but may be held in any manner.

## Speed Events Division Only

1. References to hackamore mean the use of either a mechanical or non-mechanical hackamore.
  - A. Non-mechanical: Flexible, braided rawhide or leather, or rope bosal, the core of which may be either rawhide or flexible cable. **This type is allowed.**
  - B. Mechanical: The core may be any flexible cable, rawhide, or metal material, and must be covered with leather, soft plastic tubing, or similar material for padding. **This type is allowed.**
  - C. For either type of hackamore, absolutely no rigid material will be permitted over the nose or under the jaws, regardless of how padded or covered. **This type is not allowed.**

### What does it mean? ... Speed Events Hackamores

Bosals and mechanical hackamores are allowed in the Speed Events Division. Regardless of what type of hackamore is used, The materials over and under the nose must be flexible.



Rawhide bosal



Mechanical Hackamore  
*OK in Speed Events*



Easy/Fast stop  
*Rigid material under jaw*



Stop & Turn  
*Rigid material under jaw*



Fast stop  
*Rigid material over nose*

2. Slip or gag bits will be allowed provided the mouthpiece and shank requirements/limitations are met as described in the Western & Speed Events section. "Rutledge Roper" bits will also be allowed.

### What does it mean? ... Slip/gag bits and Rutledge Roper

Slip bits allow the mouthpiece to slide up the shank when pressure is applied (reins pulled), thereby increasing the leverage action in the mouth. With gag bits, the reins (attached directly to the headstall) slide through the bit rings and pull the mouthpiece up in a similar fashion. Bits with this kind of 'gag action' are allowed in Speed Events.

In Speed Events, flat mouthpiece Rutledge Roper bits are also acceptable. The mouthpiece of which should rotate freely on the shanks so it remains flat on the tongue when pressure is applied.



Rutledge Roper  
*Speed events only*



Wonder Bit  
*Gag action OK*



Gag action OK, BUT  
Mouthpiece not smooth

3. Horses of any age may be shown with a snaffle bit.
4. Riders may use two hands on the reins regardless of type of bit and age of horse.
5. Judge or appointed equipment official may prohibit the use of bits or equipment deemed too severe.

## More Examples – Western/Ranch Curb Bits

All five bits below are acceptable curb bits for Western, Ranch, and Speed. #1 is a simple wide, low port which allows space for the tongue. #2 and 3 have flattened portions of the port, which is fine since only the bar needs to be round. #4 applies leverage and pressure slightly differently than a traditionally shaped bit, but its specifications fit within the rules. #5 has materials protruding below the mouthpiece, but they are not fixed and will not press into the tongue.



## More Examples – Speed Event Hackamores

For the purposes of these rules, a mechanical hackamore includes any with metal components and a curb strap/chain, even if there are no hinges or mechanical appearing parts. The nose piece of combination bits (those with a mouthpiece and a nose piece) should follow the same material rules as those of the mechanical hackamore. The core of any nose piece may be flexible cable, rawhide, or metal material, and must be covered with leather, soft plastic tubing, or similar material for padding. Lariat-rope type nose bands are acceptable without covering.

All of these hackamores and nose pieces have acceptable materials & action for Speed Events.



*Lariat-rope type nose bands are acceptable.*



*Plain, flexible leather is acceptable..*



*Mouthpiece is not smooth.*



← On these combination bits, the nose pieces are acceptable materials, and the slip mouthpiece action is allowed. However, the mouthpiece also needs to meet the requirements of curb mouthpieces.

*As a reminder, these rules and examples apply to the Speed Events Division.  
The only hackamore allowed in Western and Ranch Divisions is a Bosal.*

## Western Spurs

1. Spurs must have blunt rowels or no rowels and straps. Bluntness is at the discretion of the judge. No slide on western spurs is allowed.
2. The following images are examples of spurs that are allowed in all western events.



3. The following images are examples of spurs that are NOT allowed in western events due to sharpness or being slip on style.



4. The following are examples of Gymkhana specific spurs.



Allowed – uses strap



NOT Allowed – Slip on

## Hunter Division, all classes except Dressage

1. An English snaffle (no shank), kimberwick, pelham, or full bridle (Weymouth) must be used.  
The use of a bit converter (a U-shaped piece of leather that fastens between the snaffle ring and the curb ring at the end of the shank on the Pelham) is not illegal, however, it is not considered correct amongst most judges, and therefore may be penalized. Snaffle bit rings may be no larger than 4" in diameter. No figure 8, flash, drop, or any other style of nose band that includes a strap which fastens in front of the bit are allowed in hunter Classes.

**Snaffles:** The shape of the snaffle ring outside of the horse's mouth is unrelated to the style of mouthpiece on the inside. I.e., you cannot determine what is in the mouth by the shape of the ring. The acceptable shapes are O-ring, egg-butt, D-ring, and full cheek.



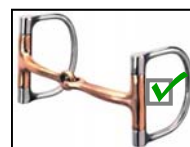
O-ring/Loose ring



Egg-butt



Offset D-ring



D-ring



Full Cheek

**Pelhams and Kimberwicks** use a snaffle and/or curb action. A pelham has a shank and requires reins to be attached to both the snaffle ring and curb ring. Kimberwicks have 'cut-outs' where a rein can be attached to either location – one resulting in more snaffle action and one with more curb action. Full bridles (Weymouths) have separate curb & snaffle (bridoon) bits and require two reins.



Kimberwick  
2 location options to  
attach one rein



Either rein attachment  
location is acceptable.



Pelham w/two reins  
Correct use of pelham



Pelham w/converter  
allowed but may be penalized

(#2 A&B rules and examples on next page.)

3. Any bit having a fixed rein requires use of a curb chain. Curb chain must be at least 1/2" wide and lie flat against the jaw of the horse.
4. -Triangle (knife edge), true gag action, and elevator bits are not allowed.

### What does it mean? ... gag and elevator bits

Gag bit, *True gag action*

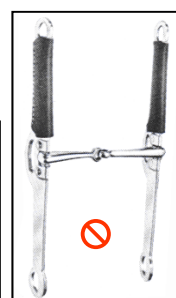


With gag bits, straps connect the reins directly to the headstall, sliding through the bit rings. When pressure is applied, it pulls the mouthpiece up higher in the mouth. Elevator bits have an exaggerated height headstall attachment, or mouthpieces that slide up & down on the cheek rings, and create a mouthpiece-lifting gag action when pressure is applied.



European or  
3-ring Elevator bit

Elevator Bit



## Hunter Division, continued

2. In reference to mouthpieces, nothing may protrude below the mouthpiece (bar). Solid and broken mouthpieces must be between 5/16" to 3/4" in diameter, measured 1" from the cheek and may have a port no higher than 1 1/2".
  - A. Smooth round, oval or egg-shaped, and straight bar or solid mouthpieces are allowed. They may be smooth inlaid, synthetic wrapped (including rubber or plastic), or encased. Waterford bits are allowed. Snaffle bits with slow twist, corkscrew, or single twisted wire mouthpieces are allowed.
  - B. On broken mouthpieces, connecting rings of 1 1/4" or less in diameter or connecting flat bar of 3/8" to 3/4" (measured top to bottom), which lie flat in the horse's mouth, or rollers are acceptable.

### What does it mean? ... Mouthpieces

Regardless of the type of bit (snaffle, pelham, kimberwick, etc.), mouthpieces must meet the same requirements – have a diameter of 5/16" to 3/4", may be solid (1 piece) or broken (2 or 3 pieces), and if there is a connecting ring or flat bar, those connectors must meet the same respective measurements. It does not mean the connecting piece has to be a ring or flat bar.

**Hunter Division Only:** Because snaffle bits are the 'norm' for Hunters, mouthpieces with more and/or smaller contact points are allowed. So please keep in mind that many mouthpieces that are acceptable here are not allowed in the other divisions (nor Dressage).



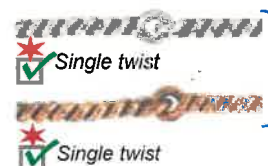
Waterford bit is specifically listed as acceptable. →  
Three smooth, round balls linked together.



← Three-piece with connecting flat bar or roller.  
Smooth and within rules.



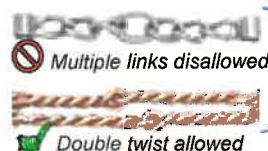
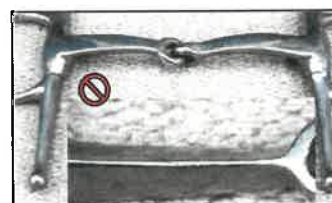
Top is a fast twist or "corkscrew."  
Below is a slow twist.  
Both are acceptable snaffles in Hunter.



Single twisted wire is acceptable snaffles in Hunter, as long as minimum diameter is met.



Triangle or knife-edge bit. →  
Sharp edge is very sharp on the bars & tongue.



Double twists are allowed, loose links not allowed.



Multiple rollers set in the mouthpiece →  
result in many pressure points.



← Three piece with port as connector – within rules.

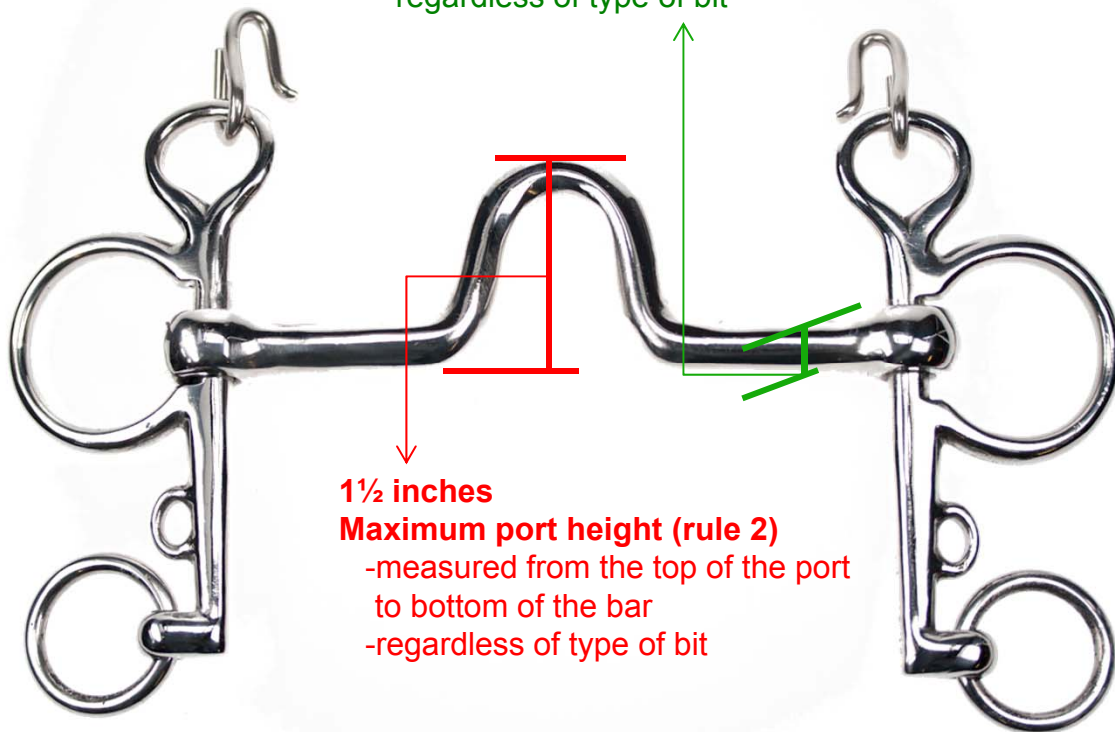
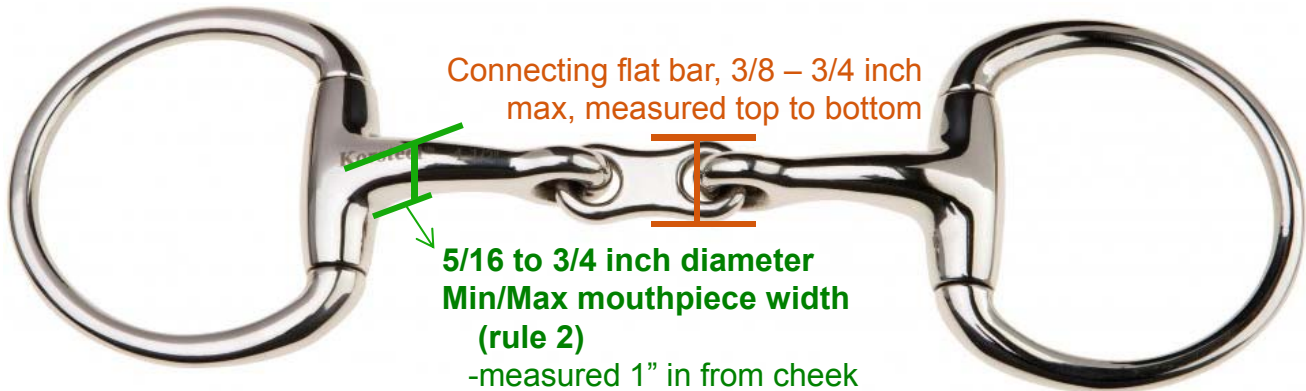


← One piece with wide port – within rules.

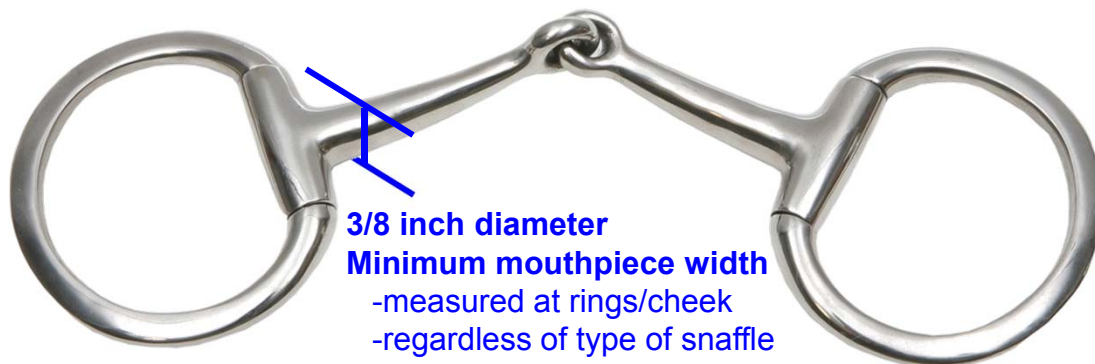
Mouthpiece made of a series of rollers. →  
Results in allowable smooth round shape.



## Hunter Bit Measurement



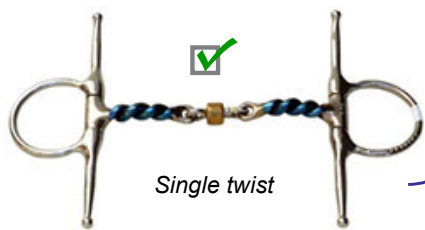
## Dressage Bit Measurement



## More Examples – Hunter

Most of the questions regarding Hunter bits involve either the mouthpiece style or the various versions of headstall and rein attachments which create some leverage. As far as the mouthpieces, the keys to remember are that only mouthpieces of direct pressure snaffle bits may be a style that is not smooth – and only slow twist, single twist, and corkscrew are allowed. Those mouthpieces still have to meet the minimum diameter described in #2 of the Hunter bit rules. A bit that has any kind of leverage option must have a smooth mouthpiece.

If a bit's rings are designed to attach to the bridle and reins in a way that creates leverage (fixed rein), a curb chain must be used.



Type of Kimberwick – either rein attachment would be “fixed rein” and require curb chain use. →

All three of these twists are acceptable snaffles in Hunter, as long as minimum diameter is met.

Pelham is a leverage bit and → therefore must have a smooth mouthpiece (no twists)

A version of an elevator bit. Reins attached to the bottom ring will create a gag action which is not allowed. Reins attached to the center ring effectively results in a loose-ring snaffle, which is allowed. →



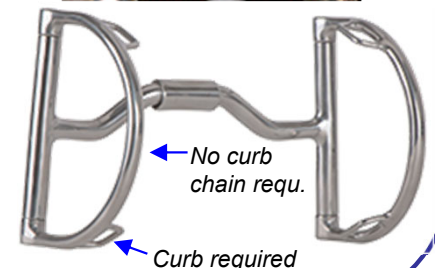
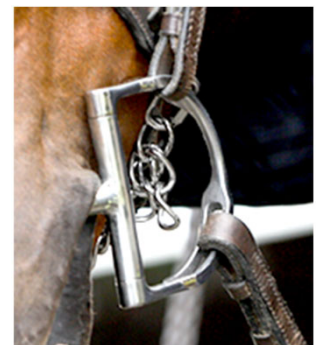
← Small, jointed ports like this are allowed. However, it would have to be seen in person to evaluate if the points under the port are blunt enough to be considered smooth, or come to too much of a point.



Both of these have projections that are not the acceptable twists nor are smooth.



The correct use of this bit is shown → in the picture – headstall through the top zone, reins in the bottom zone, and used with a curb chain. Reins attached directly to the “D” would result in direct pressure, and a curb chain is not necessary.



# Dressage

Even though Dressage is in the Hunter Division, it has different rules for bits allowed. Some bits that are allowed in other Hunter classes are not acceptable in the Dressage classes.

All bits must be smooth and with a solid surface. Twisted, wire and roller bits are prohibited. A bushing or coupling is permitted as the center link in a double jointed snaffle; however, the surface of the center piece must be solid with no moveable parts. The mouthpiece of a snaffle may be shaped in a slight curve, but ported snaffles are prohibited.

Bits must be made of metal or rigid plastic and may be made with a rubber, plastic or leather covering; flexible rubber bits are not permitted as bridoons. Bits may not be modified by adding latex or other material. Bits with mouthpieces made of synthetic material are permitted, provided that the contours of the bit conform to the contours of one of the bits pictured. The diameter of the snaffle mouthpiece must be minimum 3/8 inch diameter at rings or cheeks of the mouthpiece.

Numbers 1, 2, 6, 10, 11, and 12 describe mouthpieces that can be with any acceptable ring/cheek.

Numbers 3, 4, 5, 7, and 9 describe rings/cheeks that can be with any acceptable mouthpiece.

**Acceptable mouthpiece + acceptable ring/cheek = Legal Bit for Dressage**

|                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1. Ordinary snaffle with single-jointed mouthpiece.</p>  | <p>3. Racing snaffle (D-ring).</p>                                                                                                          |
| <p>2. Ordinary snaffle with double-jointed mouthpiece.</p>  | <p>4. Snaffle: with cheeks, with or without keepers. -without cheeks (Egg-butt).</p>                                                       |
| <p>6. Unjointed snaffle (Mullen-mouth).</p>               | <p>5. Snaffle with upper or lower cheeks.</p>                                                                                             |
| <p>8. Dr. Bristol.</p>                                    | <p>7. Snaffle with cheeks. (Hanging or drop cheek; Baucher). This may be a D-ring or other ordinary snaffle as pictured in Nos. 1-6</p>  |
| <p>10. French snaffle.</p>                                | <p>9. Fulmer.</p>                                                                                                                         |
| <p>11. Snaffle with rotating mouthpiece.</p>              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <p>12. Rotary bit.</p>                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

Dr. Bristol: connecting bar is more rectangular and rests at an angle to the tongue. Not allowed.

French link: connecting bar is a rounded-corner dog bone shape and rests flat on the tongue.

Both #11 and #12 rotate forward and back from the center joint.



**Ported snaffles prohibited**



**No rollers/moveable parts in center link**



**No flexible rubber bits used as a Bridoon**

## English Nosebands

The following are guidelines and images of nosebands that are allowed and NOT allowed for Hunt Seat, Saddle Seat and Dressage classes.

1. A standard cavesson noseband is allowed in all Hunt Seat, Saddle Seat and Dressage classes. These are images of a standard cavesson.



2. These are images of nosebands that are NOT allowed in Hunt Seat or Saddle Seat events. Any style of noseband that includes a strap which fastens in front of the bit are not allowed in hunter or saddle seat classes. Non-traditional, unacceptable nosebands for these seats are: dropped, flash, and figure 8.



3. Dressage events DO allow a regular cavesson, dropped, flash and figure 8 noseband.
4. A Miklem bridle is a non-traditional bridle with a noseband that traditionally fastens in front of the bit. It is not allowed without permission of the judge.

## English Spurs

1. Spurs must be made of smooth metal or plastic. Spurs of the unrowelled type that are blunt, round or that include a smooth rolling rubber or stainless-steel ball are allowed. Rowel spurs with serrated edges are NOT permitted. Hammer spurs are allowed. The contact surface with the horse and all edges must be smooth and rounded. Athletes when mounted may wear only one spur on each boot.
2. The shank must be either curved or straight pointing directly back from the center of the spur when on the rider's boot. If the shank is curved, the spurs must be worn only with the shank directed downwards.
3. Metal spurs with round hard plastic knobs (metal or plastic) on the shank are permitted ("Impuls" spur) and the knobs may rotate. "Dummy" spurs (without shank) are permitted.
4. The following images are examples of spurs that are allowed in all English events.



5. The following images are examples of rowelled or serrated spurs that are NOT allowed in English events.



## Peacock Stirrups

Peacock stirrups are safety stirrups designed with an open outer branch, featuring a rubber band meant to release a rider's foot during a fall to prevent dragging. Traditionally used for children, they are now widely banned in many competitions due to safety risks where the metal hook can catch clothing or cause injuries.

As of December 1, 2025, USEF has found there are safety concerns with Peacock stirrups and similar safety stirrups with upward pointing projections and has prohibited their use. In light of this finding the continued use of them is not condoned and is at the exhibitor's own risk.

The New England 4-H Rule Book Committee strongly discourages the use of peacock stirrups and recommends use of other safety stirrups ( Bow stirrups, tech stirrups, etc.) Beginning June 1, 2026 the New England 4-H Rule Book Committee will ban peacock stirrups and any show participants using peacock stirrups in the practice or show ring will be disqualified.

This is an example of a Peacock stirrup.



# Saddle/Gaited Division

## Saddle Seat

1. Horses must be shown in full bridles (curb and snaffle) or pelham with two reins. Snaffle bridles will only be allowed in Saddle Seat & Gaited Pleasure, Showmanship, and Conformation classes. If a bit is used that requires two reins, it may not be used with a converter.
2. In reference to mouthpieces, nothing may protrude below the mouthpiece (bar). Solid and broken mouthpieces must be between 5/16" to 3/4" in diameter, measured 1" from the cheek and may have a port no higher than 1 1/2". Mouthpieces must be smooth.
  - A. They may be smooth inlaid, synthetic wrapped (including rubber or plastic), or incased. Waterford bits are allowed.
  - B. On broken mouthpieces, connecting rings of 1 1/4" or less in diameter or connecting flat bar of 3/8" to 3/4" (measured top to bottom), which lie flat in the horse's mouth, or rollers are acceptable. (Mouthpiece examples on next page.)
3. Any bit having a fixed rein requires use of a curb chain. Curb chain must be at least 1/2" wide and lie flat against the jaw of the horse.
4. Design of the bridoon mouthpiece must conform to that of acceptable snaffles in previous rule. However, smaller dimensions of the mouthpiece are permissible.
5. Bits with shanks over 8 1/2" in length are not permitted.

## What does it mean? ... Bit types

**Pelhams and full bridles (Weymouth)** use a snaffle and/or curb action, depending on which rein is pulled. A pelham has a shank and requires reins to be attached to both the snaffle ring and curb ring.



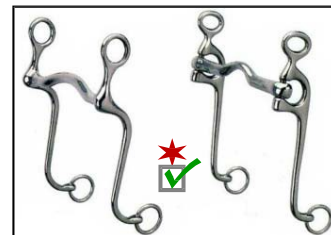
Pelham, Broken mouthpiece  
Must be used with 2 reins



Pelham w/two reins  
Correct use of pelham



Pelham w/converter  
Bit requires 2 reins, so can not be used with converter



Walking Horse Bits  
OK if shanks measure  $\leq 8\frac{1}{2}$ "

Full bridles (Weymouths) have separate curb & snaffle (bridoon) bits and require two reins.



### Bridoons:

← 3-piece mouthpiece

← Twisted mouth; not smooth

← single jointed mouth

# Saddle/Gaited Division, continued

## What does it mean? ... Mouthpieces

Regardless of the type of bit (snaffle, pelham, weymouth, etc.), mouthpieces must meet the same requirements – have a diameter of 5/16" to 3/4", may be solid (one piece) or broken (two or three pieces), and if there is a connecting ring or flat bar, those connectors must meet the same respective measurements. It does not mean the connecting piece has to be a ring or flat bar. The connecting piece could also be a roller or hinged port. After meeting the basic parameters, much of the determination of whether a mouthpiece is acceptable or not comes down to if it is smooth.

### What is "smooth"?

Smooth simply means that there are no bumps or ridges that will press into the bars of the horse's mouth or the pressure points on the tongue when pressure is applied. Things that make it not smooth may include (but are not limited to) any kind of twist, a wire wrap, carvings into the metal that create ridges, chain, etc.

### Mouthpiece examples:



Waterford bit is specifically listed as acceptable. →  
Three smooth, round balls linked together



← Three-piece with connecting flat bar.  
Smooth and within rules.



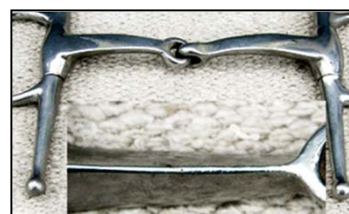
Top is a fast twist or "corkscrew."  
Below is a slow twist. Both create numerous sharp pressure points.



Twists and loose links = not smooth.



Triangle or knife-edge bit. →  
Sharp edge is very sharp on the bars & tongue.



← Three piece with port as connector.  
Smooth and within rules.

Multiple rollers set in the mouthpiece →  
result in many pressure points.

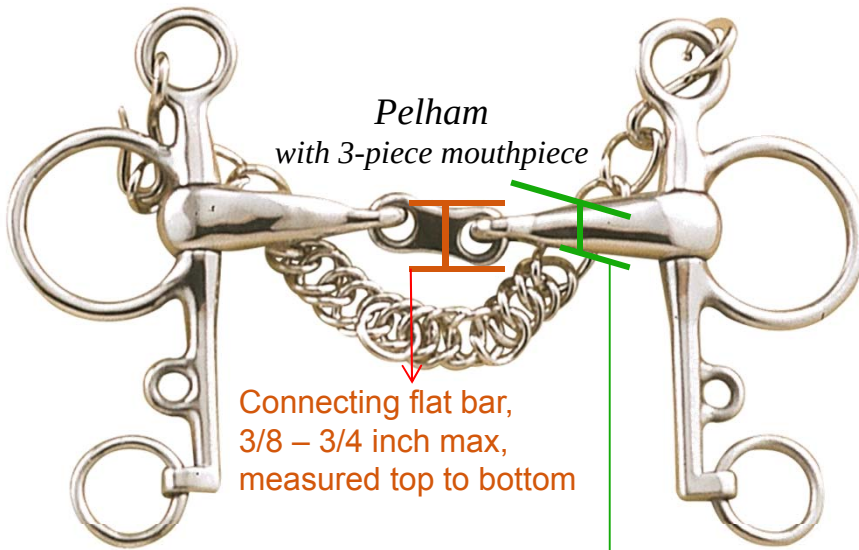


← One piece with port. Smooth and within rules as long as port is 1 1/2" or less.

Mouthpiece made of a series of rollers. →  
It is still smooth against the bars & tongue.



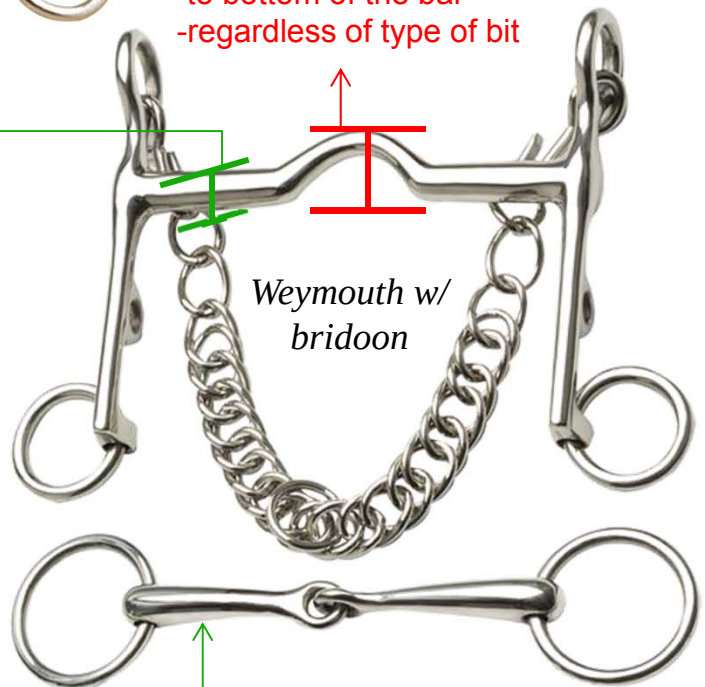
## Saddle/Gaited Bit Measurement



Connecting flat bar,  
3/8 – 3/4 inch max,  
measured top to bottom

**1½ inches**  
**Maximum port height (rule 2)**  
-measured from the top of the port  
to bottom of the bar  
-regardless of type of bit

**5/16 to 3/4 inch diameter**  
**Min/Max mouthpiece width (rule 2)**  
-measured 1" in from cheek  
-regardless of type of bit



**Bridoon mouthpiece (rule 4)**  
-may have smaller diameter than  
5/16 inch  
-Weymouth (curb) portion must  
still be 5/16 inch minimum



**8½ inches**  
**Maximum shank length (rule )**  
-measured from the inside top of  
the headstall ring to the 'pull  
point' of the rein ring

## Saddle/Gaited Division, continued

### Gaited

1. Bridles/bits should coincide with the style of riding chosen. See the appropriate section (Western, Hunter, or Saddle Seat) for bit requirements.
2. Paso Finos may show in hackamores as approved by PFHA for Pleasure classes.
3. Tennessee Walking Horses may be shown in a curb bit typical for the breed as long as the mouthpiece and shanks comply with the parameters described above for Saddle Seat.

#### What does it mean? ... Bits for Gaited

Gaited horses may be shown in Western, Hunter, or Saddle type tack, depending on the breed of the horse and/or the preferences of the exhibitor. Follow the bit rules for the style of riding used.

Tennessee Walkers are typically shown in long shanked curb bits. This is an allowable bit for the TWH for both Western and Saddle Seat tack.

Paso Finos often show in types of hackamores not described in this section. See the PFHA rules for Paso bridles.



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## APPENDIX F: GR838 – Unethical Treatment of the Horse



### UNITED STATES EQUESTRIAN FEDERATION GR838 - UNETHICAL TREATMENT OF THE HORSE IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

The Unethical Treatment of a Horse rule (formerly titled Cruelty to and Abuse of a Horse) was amended to ensure the safety and well-being of horses on and off competition grounds. As part of the rewrite of this rule, the United States Equestrian Federation ("Federation") focused on creating a rule that meets the needs of equestrian sport and provides clarity for its members and community.

This document is intended to serve as a guide to the implementation of the Federation's newly revised [General Rule 838, Unethical Treatment of the Horse](#), and is not intended to supersede the rule.

#### Scope and Jurisdiction of the Rule

Currently, GR838 applies to abuse and neglect of a horse that occurs on competition grounds.

- Beginning December 1, 2024, GR838 applies anywhere, regardless of whether the Unethical Treatment occurs on or off the grounds of a Federation competition, including home facilities.
- The Federation does not have the authority to make site visits to private property.

#### Definition of Unethical Treatment of a Horse

The Unethical Treatment of the Horse involves any action or inaction that may compromise the horse's health, safety, or wellbeing, including those that may cause a horse pain, a state of obvious distress, or unnecessary discomfort. It may include any action(s) or inaction(s) that causes or is likely to cause a horse pain, a state of obvious distress, or unnecessary discomfort.

#### Unethical Treatment of the Horse

Behaviors that may constitute Unethical Treatment of a horse may include, but are not limited to:

- Excessive use or misuse of a whip, spur, or bit, including use for punishment, rather than as a training aid used properly to provide encouragement;
- Misuse of any equipment or device including tack;
- Creating of hyper or hypo-sensitization of any physical part of a horse to enhance performance;
- Any practice or use of devices or objects to enhance a horse's performance base on fear or intimidation rather than educating or entertaining the horse by engaging its natural curiosity;
- Restricting a horse's access to food or water (except under the guidance of a licensed treating veterinarian for health reasons);
- Withholding medical treatment for a prolonged period;
- Training, riding, or competing a horse with raw, bleeding, or irritated skin or welts consistent with excessive, persistent, or inappropriate use of equipment, including spurs; and
- Continued riding, driving, or lunging an obviously exhausted, lame, or injured horse.

#### Definitions

- **Participant**
  - Any person who is or has been a USEF member;
  - Any person who has participated in a Federation Licensed or Endorsed competition as a rider, vaulter, driver, handler, owner, lessee, trainer, coach, groom, competition veterinarian or support personnel for any of these identified roles; or
  - Any person who is present on the grounds of a Federation Licensed or Endorsed competition.
- **Covered Horses**
  - Any horse that is or has been recorded with Federation;
  - Any horse that has participated or is entered to participate in a Federation Licensed or Endorsed Competition; or
  - Any horse that is on the grounds of a Federation Licensed or Endorsed Competition and in the care, custody, and control of a Participant.

### **Reporting Unethical Treatment of a Horse**

- At Federation Licensed competitions - Unethical Treatment of a horse at a Federation competition must immediately be reported to a licensed official at the competition.
- Outside of Federation Licensed competitions - Unethical Treatment of a horse outside of a competition should be reported to the local authorities and the Federation as soon as possible.
- Reports can be made by submitting a [Horse Abuse & Unethical Treatment Report Form](#), or calling [\(859\) 225-6954](#). Reports can be made anonymously by texting 2USEF (28733).

### **Filing a Report of Unethical Treatment of a Horse**

The Federation does not have governmental authority in its investigation and pursuit of rule violations. Therefore, we rely on the willingness of our licensed officials and witnesses to file reports with the Federation and to participate in the investigation and disciplinary process. When reporting an alleged violation of the Unethical Treatment of the Horse rule, the following information will be useful in the Federation's investigation:

- Unaltered photographs;
- Unaltered videos;
- Names and contact information of any individuals involved; and
- Names and relevant identification information for the horse(s) involved.

Reporting parties and participants in the process are protected from retaliation. Any person who knowingly files a false report will be subject to penalty.

### **Enforcement at Competitions**

Enforcement of this rule will rely on substantiated, fact-based, evidentiary reports received during the Federation's investigation.

- Federation Licensed Officials, Competition Management, and competition veterinarians at Federation Licensed or Endorsed competitions may issue an official written warning, elimination, or disqualification against any Participant they deem to have unethically treated a horse on competition grounds or directly related to a Federation Licensed or Endorsed competition and those found to have instructed another to Unethically Treat a horse.
- Additionally, anyone found to have Unethically Treated a horse on competition grounds may be removed from the grounds.
- A Participant may be subject to further penalty by the Federation.

### **Review Process**

Upon receipt of reported Unethical Treatment of a Horse, the Federation will undertake a review of the information received in the report and may contact individuals related to the reported Unethical Treatment, including eyewitnesses, reporting parties, Federation Licensed Officials, and others with information related to the reported Unethical Treatment. Upon conclusion of the review period, should the information support a possible violation of the Rule, the Federation may issue a Notice of Allegation to the person(s) involved in the Unethical Treatment of the Horse. At this point in time, those individuals will be provided an opportunity to respond to allegations. Prior to advancing to a hearing before the Federation's Hearing Committee, the Federation may offer the person(s) involved in the Unethical Treatment of the Horse an administrative penalty, including any of the penalties listed in the section below. If the administrative penalty is not offered or not accepted, the Federation may issue a Disciplinary Action Complaint and present its findings before a Hearing Panel for resolution. More information on the Regulatory Process can be found on the [Federation's website](#).

### **Penalties**

If found to have violated the Rule, the individual(s) will be subject to such penalty in accordance with the published Penalty Guidelines and Federation rules, which may be a censure, fine, suspension, expulsion, or permanent ineligibility.