Note regarding Tack Checking at Branch and Area competitions in Dressage, Show Jumping and Eventing

Please note that, although The Pony Club would like competitors to use plain tack and dress, there is nothing in our rule book to stipulate this.

There is a perception that The Pony Club only allows completely plain tack and dress. We do not want The Pony Club to be saddled with an ‘old fashioned’ label. We would rather retain members and educate them, than alienate them.

The most important aspect of the Tack Check is the safety element, i.e. checking that the stirrups are the correct size, that hats are tagged and that stitching is safe and secure etc.

**DRESS**

**Whilst it is not compulsory**, The Pony Club expects competitors to wear plain dress. Any extra detail will be marked down in a tack and turnout competition. New equipment is not expected, but what is worn must be clean, neat and tidy.

**a) Hats**

It is mandatory for all Members to wear a protective helmet bearing the CE mark **and** manufactured to one of the minimum standards listed below; the CE symbol on its own is not sufficient to ensure consistent standard of manufacture:

- American - Snell E2001* with the official Snell label and number.

Only with the BSI Kitemark

* The PAS 015:1998 or 2011 and the Snell E2001 meet higher impact criteria and therefore give more protection.

** The prefix ‘BS’ on the EN 1384 standard does not mean that the hat has undergone batch testing by the British Standards Institute – the hat must contain the BSI Kitemark as well.

- For cross-country riding (over fences 0.80m high and above), including Eventing, Tetrathlon and Horse Trials and also Pony Racing (whether it be tests, rallies or training) a jockey skull cap, with no fixed peak, must be worn. It is also strongly recommended that a jockey skull cap is worn for cross country riding over lower fences.

- **No recording device is permitted (e.g. hat cameras) as they may have a negative effect on the performance of the hat in the event of a fall.**

- The fit of the hat and the adjustment of the harness are as crucial as the quality. Members are advised to try several makes to find the best fit. The hat should not move on the head when the head is tipped forward. It is strongly recommended that second hand hats are not purchased.
• Hats must be replaced after a severe impact as subsequent protection will be significantly reduced. Hats deteriorate with age and should be replaced after three to five years depending upon the amount of use.

• Hats, must be worn at all times (including at prize-giving) when mounted with a chinstrap fastened and adjusted so as to prevent movement of the hat in the event of a fall.

• For Show Jumping and Mounted Games the cover, if applicable, shall be dark blue, black or brown only.

• For Dressage – hats and hat covers must be predominately black, navy blue or a conservative dark colour that matches the rider’s jacket for Area competitions or above. The Pony Club Hat silk is also acceptable.

• The Official Steward/Organiser may, at his discretion, eliminate a competitor riding in the area of the competition without a hat or with the chinstrap unfastened or with a hat that does not comply with these standards.

**Hat Checks and Tagging** - The Branch DC will appoint two Branch officials (one of whom may be the DC) who are familiar with The Pony Club rule for hats to carry out hat checks and tag each hat that complies with the above requirements with a Pony Club hat tag. Centre Members’ hats may also be tagged by Centre Proprietors and Co-ordinators. Hats fitted with a Pony Club tag will not need to be checked on subsequent occasions.

Tags may only be fitted by one of the two appointed Branch officials, Area Representatives, the Health and Safety Committee Chairman, Centre Proprietors or Centre Co-ordinators after they have personally checked the hat.

Tagging indicates that a hat meets the above standards, NO check of the fit and condition of the hat is implied. It is considered to be the responsibility of the Member’s parent or guardian to ensure that their hat complies with the required standards and is tagged before they go to any Pony Club event. Also, they are responsible for ensuring that the manufacturer’s guidelines with regard to fit and replacement are followed.

b) **Breeches** - Breeches must be white, cream or beige.

c) **Jackets** - Traditional jackets must be worn with a Pony Club tie or hunting stock. It is permitted to wear a Pony Club stock with any jacket. Jackets must be worn for the duration of the test. Jackets may be removed during riding in, provided the competitor is wearing a shirt with sleeves. Numbers should be worn at all times.

d) **Pony Club Badge** - The official metal membership badge should be worn on the left lapel of the rider’s jacket.

e) **Gloves** - All competitors must wear gloves.

f) **Hair** - In the interests of safety, long hair should be secured appropriately.

g) **Jewellery** - For safety reasons, no jewellery (including “sleepers”) may be worn, other than a wedding ring, a wristwatch, a stock pin worn horizontally, or a tie clip. Branch and Centre Members who are contemplating piercing their ears or any other part of their body should be aware that they will not be allowed to participate in Pony Club mounted activities until such time as the “sleepers” can safely be removed. The reason for this is that sleepers have in the past caused injuries following falls.

h) ** Spurs** - Spurs may be worn at Rallies and other events with the permission of the District Commissioner or Centre Proprietor. Members without the B Test should carry proof of this permission. Only blunt spurs, without rowels or sharp edges, may be worn. If the spurs are curved, the curve must be downwards and the shank must point straight to the back and not exceed 3.5cm in length. Sharp spurs may not be worn. Spurs that have a smooth rotating ball on the shank are permitted. The measurement is taken from the heel of the boot to the end of the shank. See also Rule 41.
i) **Footwear** - Standard riding or jodhpur boots with a fairly smooth, thin sole, and a well defined square cut heel should be worn. No other footwear will be allowed. Plain black or brown half chaps worn with standard riding or jodhpur boots of the same colour are allowed. Tassels and fringes are not allowed. Stirrups should be of the correct size to suit the rider’s boots. They must have 7mm (1/4”) clearance on either side of the boot. Boots and stirrups with interlocking treads are not permitted, nor are the boots or treads individually.

j) **Body Protectors** - may be worn.

If a rider chooses to wear an air jacket it must only be used in addition to a normal body protector. Parents and Members must be aware that riders may be permitted to continue after a fall in both competition and training rides. In the event of a fall, it must be fully deflated or removed before continuing after which the conventional body protector will continue to give protection. Air jackets must not be worn under any item of clothing, and number bibs should be fitted loosely or with elasticated fastenings over the air jacket.

k) **Button Holes** - Shall not be worn.

l) While dismounted in the collecting area, competitors must be tidily dressed but not necessarily in riding clothes.

m) At prize-giving, mounted or dismounted, competitors must be correctly dressed in their competition riding clothes. Only tack that falls within the rules of the competition will be allowed.

n) **Responsibility** - It is the responsibility of competitors that their dress and saddlery are in accordance with the Rules and that they present themselves for inspection. Contravention may incur elimination. (See also Rules 23, 43 & 58).

**WHIPS**

a) May be carried during the test. This includes Area Competitions and the Championships.

b) May be of any length.

c) May not be picked up if dropped during a test.

d) May be carried in either hand, but must be in the rein hand when saluting.

e) If misused, in the opinion of the Judge, the rider will be eliminated. (See also Rule 43.

f) Whips are not allowed in the Dressage phase of an Eventing competition at Levels 4 and 5.

**SADDLERY AND EQUIPMENT**

Whilst it is not compulsory, The Pony Club expects competitors to wear plain saddlery. Any extra detail will be marked down in a tack and turnout competition. New equipment is not expected, but what is worn must be clean, neat and tidy.

It is the competitors’ responsibility to ensure that their tack is in accordance with the rules and that they present themselves for inspection. Any competitor who presents to compete in the wrong saddlery/equipment will not be allowed to compete until they decide to re-present in the correct saddlery/equipment. Any competitor who then changes their tack after the Tack Inspection will be disqualified from the competition. The Official Steward has absolute discretion to forbid the use of any bit, gadget, spur or boot which he considers cruel or misused.

Any misuse of a bit/bridle will be reported to the DC/Centre Proprietor, Area Representative and Training Chairman. Any reported riders will be recorded and monitored.
Any equipment not covered in these Rules must be referred at least two weeks in advance of the competition to The Pony Club Office to allow time for the Chairman of the Dressage Committee to be consulted. All tack must be correctly fitted. Disabled riders are welcome to apply to The Pony Club Office to use special equipment.

a) Saddles - Brown or black saddles of plain English type with white, cream or dark coloured girths. Competitors wishing to use a side-saddle must notify the organiser of the competition at the time of entry.

b) Bridles - Black or brown bridles must be used. **Double bridles can be used at Open level Dressage only.** For safety reasons, leather bridles are recommended.

c) Numnahs, saddle cloths, pads - Only white, cream, navy, brown or black are permitted. White saddle clothes only, may carry a Branch logo no bigger than 200 sq. cms. This does not preclude the wearing of clothing for horses or riders that has been presented by sponsors of the Championships in the current or previous years. See also Rule 33.

d) Stirrups should be of the correct size to suit the rider’s boots and should have 7 mm (1/4”) clearance on either side. Where synthetic stirrup leathers are used, it is recommended that they are used in conjunction with safety stirrups.

e) Bitless bridles or hackamores - Are not allowed.

f) The use of a **Micklem Multibridle** is permitted.

g) Bitguards - Are not allowed.

h) Nosebands

i. Snaffle Bridles - one only of either the cavesson, drop or flash must be worn.

ii. **Double Bridles - must use a cavesson.**

iii. Grackle nosebands are permitted only for Eventing.

Nosebands must not incorporate chain or rope. Nosebands should be correctly fitted and should not cause discomfort.

i) Bits - Bits should follow the configuration of those illustrated (see page 17, 18, 19). Bits must be used in their manufactured condition without any addition to/on any part.

Snaffles:

Bits of rubber, nylon or other synthetic materials are permitted. The mouthpiece must be coloured black, brown or white. Only the bits that are illustrated are permitted, mouthpieces may be used with any of the cheeks or rings illustrated. A mix of metals in the mouthpiece is permitted. A plastic snaffle with a cylindrical rotating mouthpiece is permitted.

Double Bridles (at Open level Dressage only):

The lever arm of the curb is limited to 10 cm in length (length below the mouthpiece). The upper cheek must not be longer than the lower cheek. The ring of the bridoon bit must not exceed 8 cm in diameter. If the curb has a sliding mouthpiece, the lever arm of the curb bit below the mouthpiece should not measure more than 10cm when the mouthpiece is at the uppermost position. The diameter of the mouthpiece of the bridoon and/or curb must be such as not to hurt the horse. A mix of metals in the mouth is permitted.

Rigid bits coated in plastic are permissible in a double bridle however flexible rubber bits are not permissible.
The curb chain (including its cover) may be made of leather, metal, neoprene or rubber or a combination thereof and must be fitted in the conventional way.

**Bits - Snaffles**

Unless bits follow the configuration of those illustrated below they are not permitted. In doubt, guidance should be sought from Laura Armstrong at The Pony Club Office in writing with a diagram.

1. Loose ring snaffle
2. Egg-butt snaffle
3. Racing snaffle D-ring
4. Egg-butt snaffle with cheeks
5. Snaffle with upper cheeks only
6. Straight bar snaffle. Permitted also with mullen mouth & egg-butt rings
7. Double jointed with roller in the centre
8a, b, c Snaffle with jointed mouthpiece where middle piece is rounded (including French link)
9. Loose ring snaffle with cheeks (Fulmer)
10. Hanging cheek snaffle
11. Snaffle with rotating mouthpiece

a - d Rotary bit
Bits - Double bridle
Bits should follow the configuration of those illustrated below:

Bridoons:
Only the following illustrated bits are allowed.
1. Loose ring bridoon bit.
2. a, b, c Bridoon bit with jointed mouthpiece where the middle piece should be rounded. Eggbutt sides also allowed.
2. d Bridoon bit with rotating middle piece.
2. e Bridoon Rotary bit with rotating middle piece.
4. Bridoon bit with hanging cheeks.

Curbs:
Any of the illustrated mouthpieces may be used with any of the illustrated cheeks/lever arms.
5. Half-moon curb bits.
6, 7 Curb bit with straight cheeks and port.
8. Curb bit with port and sliding mouthpiece (Weymouth). A curb bit with rotating lever arm is also allowed.
9. Variation of bits No 6, 7 & 8.
10. Curb bit with S-curved cheeks.
11. Curb chain (metal or leather or a combination).
12. Lip strap.
13. Leather cover for curb chain.
NB. Curb chain hooks must not be fixed.

j) Reins - with elastic inserts are not permitted. Bridge reins are not allowed.
k) **Martingales** - and bearing, side, check or running reins of any kind are forbidden. Breastplates and cruppers are permitted.

l) **Bandages and Boots** - May be worn while riding-in, but not during a test.

m) **Neckstraps** - are allowed at all levels.

n) **Blinkers** of any kind are forbidden.

o) **Fly-fringes, nose gauzes and ear covers** - are permitted during riding-in and also for competitions held outdoors during the summer months, solely to protect the horse from insects. They may not be worn for competitions held indoors. The ear cover/fly fringe should be discreet, not brightly coloured and must not cover the horse’s eyes. Ear plugs are not permitted and spot checks maybe carried out immediately after competition to ensure that ear covers/fly fringes are not being used to muffle sound; any evidence of such would lead to elimination. Nose nets are permitted during competition and warm-up. Nose nets must be discreet, black, white or brown and cover the nose only leaving the mouth and bit visible.

p) Competitors using saddlery and gadgets which are not allowed in the competition may be eliminated, see Rule 23.

q) Lungeing in side reins, but NOT bearing, check or balancing reins is allowed when exercising or warming up.

r) Electronic devices (i.e. headphones, mobile phones etc. enabling another person to communicate with the rider) are not allowed whilst the rider is competing. No recording device is permitted (e.g. head/bridle cameras etc.).