2006 Florida 4-H
Area and State Horse Show Rules
Bit Rule Examples

The following pages contain the text of the rules taken directly from the 2006 rulebook. The pictures show examples of bits that are acceptable (✓), are not allowed (✗), or may or may not be acceptable (🪙) depending on a measurement that cannot be judged by the picture. Understand that this supplement gives only some examples of legal and unacceptable bits. **In no way does it try to include every bit that is allowed or not allowed.** If there are any discrepancies between this and the printed rulebook text, the printed rulebook will have precedence.
Western Division

30. BITS - WESTERN AND SPEED EVENTS

A. 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.

B. Reference to snaffle bits in western performance classes 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 smooth or latex-wrapped. 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, with a maximum length of 2"), which lies flat in the horse's mouth is acceptable.
C. References to a bit in western performance classes 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:

1) 8 1/2" maximum length shank to be measured as indicated in the diagram illustrating legal bit. Shanks may be fixed or loose.

2) Curb bit mouthpieces must be round, smooth, and unwrapped metal of 5/16" to 3/4" in diameter, measured one inch from the cheek. They may be inlaid, but must be smooth or latex wrapped. 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 with a maximum length of 2"), which lies flat in the horse's mouth is acceptable.

3) The port must be no higher than 3 1/2" maximum, with rollers and covers acceptable. Broken mouthpieces, halfbreeds and spades are standard.

4) Slip or gag bits, and donut and flat polo mouthpieces are not acceptable. (See Speed Events section for exceptions.)
D. Except for hackamore/snaffle bit classes, speed event classes, or junior horses shown with hackamore/snaffle bit, only one hand may be used on the reins, and hand must not be changed. The hand is to be around the reins; index finger only between split reins is permitted. Violation of this rule is an automatic disqualification.

E. References to a romal means an extension of braided material attached to closed reins. This extension may be carried in the free hand with a 16 inch 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.

F. 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.

G. Junior horses (5 years old and under) competing in junior western pleasure, western horsemanship, reining, western riding, and trail that are shown with a hackamore or snaffle bit may be ridden with two hands on the reins.

H. Horses five-years old and younger may be shown in a snaffle bit, hackamore, curb bit, half-breed, or spade bit. Horses six-years old and older may only be shown in a curb bit, half-breed, or spade bit. In the speed events only, horses of any age may be shown with a snaffle bit.

I. Chain curb straps are permissible, but must meet the approval of the judge, be at least ½” inch in width, and lie flat against the jaw of the horse. Absolutely no rigid material will be permitted under the jaws, regardless of how padded or covered.
31. **BITS - HUNTER CLASSES**

Bits used in hunter classes must be at least 3/8" or larger in diameter. The mouthpiece may consist of one, two, or three pieces and must be smooth. Waterford bits are permitted. Any port may not be taller than 1 ½ " Slow or fast twist, corkscrew, twisted wire, double twisted wire, and triangle (knife edge) bits are not allowed. If a bit is used that requires two reins, it may not be used with a converter. True gag action and elevator bits are not allowed.

31. **BITS - BRIDOONS (Saddle Seat and Hunter)**

Design of the bridoon mouthpiece must conform with that of acceptable snaffles described in #30B and #31. However, smaller dimensions of the mouthpiece are permissible.
TACK: Western-type saddles will be used. A mechanical hackamore or other type bridles may be used. Use of two hands on the reins is allowed in speed events. Judge or appointed equipment official may prohibit the use of bits or equipment deemed too severe. Use of martingales, tie-downs and nosebands is permitted in these classes. Draw reins are not allowed in speed events. Bandages (leg wraps) are not permitted in any speed event class.

BITS: IMPORTANT - See Contest Rules, Regulations and Procedures (page 10) for description of legal bits for Western and Speed Events Divisions. In addition, for speed events only, slip or gag bits will be allowed provided the mouthpiece and shank requirements/limitations are met as described in the section referenced above. “Rutledge Roper” bits will also be allowed.

Speed Events Division

TACK: Flat English type saddles are required for trotting horses; hunter, forward seat, and dressage type saddles are prohibited. Dressage or breed specific saddles are required for non-trotting horses. Horses must be shown in full bridles (curb and snaffle) or pelham with two reins, standard walking horse bit, or bit appropriate for breed. Snaffle bridles will only be allowed in Saddle Seat Pleasure, Showmanship, and Conformation classes. Bits with shanks over 8” in length not permitted. Draw reins, martingales, hackamore, and similar equipment are all prohibited. (Pasos may show in hackamores as approved by PFHA for Pleasure classes.) Set tails, boots and/or artificial appliances including chains and rollers (pertaining to legs) are prohibited. See Contest Rules, Regulations and Procedures (page 122) for description of legal bridoon bits for the Saddle Seat Division.