

PCAV Snaffle Bits

PCAV Gear Rules require that only snaffle bits be used for dressage, games, show rings, flat teams and musical ride teams.

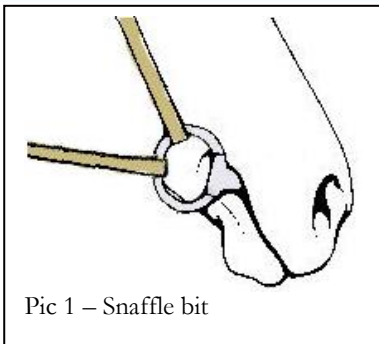
Pictures of the permitted snaffle bits can be found in the *PCAV Gear Rules* publication, which can be obtained from the PCAV web site or state office. These are the only bits permitted to be used where a snaffle bit is required for competition.

What is A Snaffle Bit

A snaffle consists of a mouthpiece with a ring on either side. It applies direct pressure to the bars of the mouth without leverage or poll pressure.

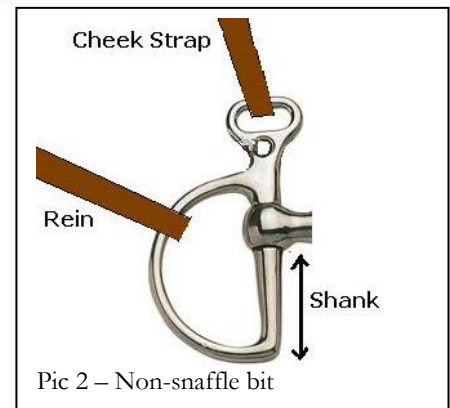
This means one ounce of pressure applied by the reins will apply one ounce of pressure on the mouth. Whereas, some other bits create additional pressure on the mouth and sometimes, other parts of the horses head such as the jaw or poll.

As can be seen by comparing Pic 1 and Pic 2 below, the snaffle bit in Pic 1, is distinguished by the fact that both the cheek strap of the bridle and the reins, connect to a ring without any fixed points on the ring.

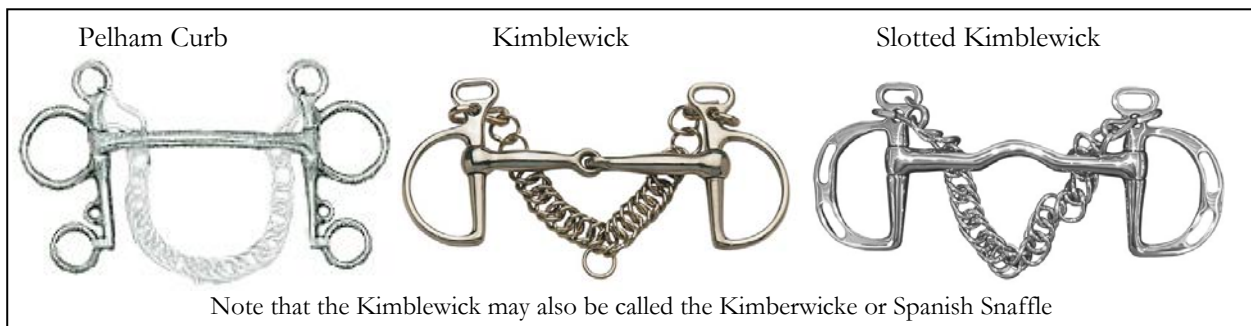


Whereas, in the example of Pic 2, the cheek strap is fitted to a different fixed part of the bit to create leverage.

Also notice that there is a shank which hangs down. The shank also increases the leverage.



Bits such as the pelham curb bit and the kimblewick pictured below cause pressure to be applied to the jaw and poll. One ounce of pressure applied by the reins will apply more than one ounce of pressure on the mouth.



Dr. Bristol Bit V's the French Link Snaffle Bit

Whilst both bits look similar the Dr Bristol is not permitted to be used where a snaffle bit is required for competition. However, the very similar looking French Link Snaffle is permitted.

What Is The Difference?

The Dr. Bristol bit is a severe form of a snaffle bit, whereas the French-link is the most gentle form.

It is easy to mix them up if you are unfamiliar with these bits. Especially since some tack shops have staff who are unfamiliar with the difference and may put the incorrect label on these two bits. To the untrained eye, they look the same. However, there is a key difference, which is the centre link.

The Dr. Bristol bit has a flat link in the centre of the mouthpiece, which is long, thin, not rounded and lays at an angle to the bit. When the reins are pulled back, the angled link presses down on the horse's tongue, this creates an artificial aid by causing the horse to drop his head to avoid discomfort.

The French Link also has a center link but it has smooth rounded edges and looks a little like a flattened peanut. This link is set at the same angle as the rest of the mouthpiece. When the reins are pulled back, the non-angled link lies flat on the horse's tongue and prevents the nutcracker action of a single jointed bit.

Dr Bristol



French Link Snaffle



Remember, refer to the *PCAV Gear Rules* for further specific details.