



Code of Conduct of the International Mounted Games Association

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1. Introduction

The International Mounted Games Association can only define a Code of Conduct which is applicable to its members.

Those members are the national MGAs of the member countries, represented by their International Representatives, not individuals, but it is the conduct of individuals which is addressed by this Code of Conduct.

It is necessary, therefore, to bridge the gap between IMGA and the individuals whose conduct it seeks to define by means of an agreement by those individuals to be bound by the rules and guidelines of the IMGA Code of Conduct.

This can only be done with the agreement and cooperation of each national MGA, and the opinions of each of these organisations was considered in deciding to adopt the following procedure :

For each competition covered by the provisions of this Code of Conduct (see below 1.3.1), the entry or declaration form must be signed by every member of the group which will attend the competition (riders, trainers, officials, supporters) confirming that they agree to be bound by the IMGA codes.

1.1 Structure of Document

The title "Code of Conduct" has to be interpreted very widely.

It could be seen to cover the standards of conduct required by everyone involved in Mounted Games, from officials, through trainers and riders, to the spectators, friends, and supporters at events, wherever they may be and whatever Mounted Games related activity they are involved in.

If this were the case then the Code of Conduct would become a monster – a document impossible to understand, impossible to implement, and impossible to enforce.

To avoid this, the Code of Conduct has to be structured in a very precise way, and clear and easy-to-understand language has been used.

This "Introduction" section sets out the overall Objectives and the Scope.

It is followed by

- Part 2 : Standards of conduct
- Part 3 : Considerations of Health, Safety, and Welfare



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1.2 Objectives

The Code of Conduct presents a set of recommendations. Sometimes they are merely guidelines, to be followed as closely as possible but open to modification depending on current conditions, but there are also mandatory requirements, which must always be followed.

It aims to be easy to understand, and to be presented in a friendly way.

It aims to be easy to implement and enforce, but to still leave room for some interpretation and the application of "common sense". In this way it is important to appreciate the "spirit" of the code as much as the "letter".

It aims to set out a minimum set of standards, which may be extended in certain cases.

It aims to make allowances for differences of language, culture, and legal systems.

It is based on the acceptance that Mounted Games is an inherently dangerous sport, and that it is impossible to eliminate all risk. It is, however, possible to identify and minimise risk and to take sensible precautions to handle situations which may arise, while maintaining the ethos of the sport.

It is not currently definitive, and will evolve as cases arise.

1.3 Scope

1.3.1 Activities

This Code of Conduct covers Mounted Games activities at the international level, and is initially only applicable to World and Regional (European, North American, Southern Hemisphere, etc.) Championship competitions.

It is intended that the scope will be extended in future to cover all international competitions held under IMGA rules.

It is expected that local/national competitions will be covered by the rules and regulations of the organising or host club or the national MGA, but where these do not exist then this document may be applied.

Despite these conditions, it is recommended that the Code of Conduct should be applied at all levels. When this is the case, then it must be made clear to everyone concerned in advance, and they must signify their agreement.



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1.3.2 Geography

Mounted Games related activities take place in a very large number of different locations. Training at home could be considered as an activity covered by this Code of Conduct, but clearly this would be an intrusion into the privacy of members, and so falls outside the scope.

On the other hand, participation in a World Championship competition is clearly within the scope.

Between these two extremes are certain “grey areas”. For example, travel to and from competitions, social activities connected with a World Championship, but not strictly part of the competition.

Ideally, the Code of Conduct should be followed at all times by everyone concerned, but for the purposes of this document, the lines have to be drawn somewhere. Here are the current geographical limitations :

Included are locations which are a part of the competition site or associated organised entertainments :

- Showground
- Warming up/training area
- Stable area
- Camping area
- Vehicle parking area
- Specially organised discos, bars, BBQs
- Destinations of arranged visits

Excluded are :

- All private off-site locations, whether used for training, stabling, camping, accommodation, or parking
- travel to and from competitions

1.3.3 Timing

When does this Code of Conduct become applicable ?

In accordance with the activities and locations described above, this Code of Conduct is applicable from the time of arrival at the event site until departure.

1.3.4 Legal

This document *excludes* all activities which are covered under the law of the host nation. Any action which is illegal should be immediately reported to the local authorities and full cooperation given to them in any subsequent investigation or other official follow up.



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1.3.5 Individuals

Included in the scope of this Code of Conduct are the following individuals :

- Officials
- Trainers
- Riders
- Owners
- Supporters who are directly associated with riders or teams

Excluded are :

- Other spectators
- the General Public



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2. Standards of conduct

The standards of conduct described in this section are expected from everyone concerned with Mounted Games.

Where specific responsibilities fall on particular groups, then this is indicated.

This section also describes the procedures to be established for the implementation of this Code of Conduct, and the penalties which may be applied when its requirements are not met.

2.1 The People Involved

2.1.1 Officials

All elected, appointed, or employed officials of IMGA
All elected, appointed, or employed officials of national MGAs
(including International Representatives)

At competitions :

- Competition Organiser
- Chief Referee and other Referees
- Judges
- Assistant Referees
- Arena Party and others responsible for equipment
- Commentator
- Scorers and Writers

All officials have a special responsibility to ensure the overall good conduct of everyone concerned in the competition.

2.1.2 Trainers

Each rider, pair, or team usually has a trainer who may or may not be allowed into the arena, depending on the type of competition.

Trainers have a special responsibility to both their riders and their ponies.

2.1.3 Riders

All riding participants (including reserves and/or substitutes).

Riders have a special responsibility towards their ponies.

2.1.4 Owners

All owners of ponies participating or present at the competition (including reserves and/or substitutes and/or companions).



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Owners have a special responsibility to their own ponies and their riders.

2.1.5 Supporters

Supporters may be friends, family, or other MGA members who are considered to be part of the group associated with a team, pair, or individual rider. This is to distinguish them from supporters who are present as members of the general public.

Supporters have a special responsibility to ensure the good conduct of the group of which they are members.

2.2 Standards of conduct expected from everyone

Everyone concerned with Mounted Games is expected to follow these guidelines :

1. Comply at all times with all rules of his Team or Club, National MGA, and IMGA.
2. Conduct himself at all times in a manner which reflects positively on the sport of Mounted Games, and at no time in a manner which is which is offensive.
3. To behave with civility at all times.
4. Always comply with the reasonable instructions or requests of all officials.
5. Accept the decisions of officials at all times without argument or the use of abusive or threatening language or behaviour.
6. Not to ill-treat a pony in any way at any time, including the deliberate use of the bit as a means of punishment, and/or the misuse of any item of saddlery in a manner likely to cause pain or discomfort to the pony.
7. Allow, knowingly or otherwise, a pony to compete in any competition under the influence of a forbidden substance as defined in the IMGA rules.
8. Never to make, either orally or in writing, to any official, a statement on any matter covered by the rules which he does not or could not reasonably believe to be true.
9. Compete at events and/or transport ponies to events only when in possession all the necessary documentation, travel passports, licences, etc., which may be required.
10. Compete only at events for which both the rider and pony are fully qualified and eligible.



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2.3 Offences

An offence results from non-compliance with these expected standards of behaviour.

2.4 Procedures

Outline of the sequence of events :

1. The offence takes place.
2. The offence is immediately noticed by, or is later brought to the attention of, the Referee and dealt with according to the rules of Mounted Games and/or this Code of Conduct. If the Referee does not feel able to deal with the matter because of the gravity of the case or because of a conflict of interest, then it should be reported to the Chief Referee.
OR
The offence is later reported to the Chief Referee.
3. The Chief Referee decides whether there is a case to answer.
4. If there is, then the Chief Referee decides whether to :
 - Deal with the case immediately (in the case of a minor offence)
 - Refer the case to the Disciplinary Committee (in the case of a serious offence)
 - Inform the local police (in the case of an act which is illegal in the country of the competition)

A Disciplinary Committee is made up of the Chief Referee and at least two others, at least one of whom should be a representative of IMGA, and at least one whom is a representative of the host country. These members of the Disciplinary Committee may ask others (for example the International Representative for the home country of the alleged offender) to also participate, if they consider it to be necessary.

5. The Disciplinary Committee should, whenever practical, complete their deliberations and, having looked at all the evidence, reach a conclusion within 14 days of the offence taking place.

6. If any penalty is decided, then the offender has 28 days in which to appeal the decision. The appeal is considered by a panel of three International Representatives appointed by IMGA. Where possible, these three International Representatives should be one from Europe, one from North America, and one from the Southern Hemisphere.



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2.5 Penalties

The penalties which may be applied when offences occur are :

- Written and verbal warnings
- Elimination/Ban for a specified period, ranging from elimination for a race up to long-term bans (applied during the active competitive season)
- Life ban from membership of any MGA and participation in any Mounted Games related activity

2.5.1 Minor Offences

These are usually dealt with on-the-spot by the Referee or Chief Referee.

Penalties for minor offences include :

- Unrecorded verbal warning
- Recorded verbal warning
- Written warning
- Elimination from a race or session or competition
- Elimination from one or more subsequent competitions

Two minor offences in any twelve-month period add up to "persistent bad behaviour" and are reported to the Disciplinary Committee for consideration as a serious offence.

2.5.2 Serious Offences

These are usually dealt with by a Disciplinary Committee and carry heavier penalties.

Penalties for major offences include:

- All penalties for minor offences
- Suspension of membership from any national MGA for a specified period up to and including life

The Committee's decisions will usually be published (after the end of the appeal period), unless, in special circumstances, the Committee decides otherwise.

2.5.3 Application of Penalties

Decisions on penalties should be left to person(s) investigating the offence. They are expected to make their decision in a fair way, taking into account the circumstances of the offence and the offender's previous record, and make full use of appropriate and available punishments.



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However, to ensure consistency in the application of this Code of Conduct and the penalties it describes, the table in Appendix 1 gives some guidelines for recommended penalties.

A proper record of all offences and punishments awarded whenever the punishment involves a formal verbal or written warning, and/or elimination from a competition or subsequent competitions, and/or suspension of membership, should be maintained with a copy being held by the member's national MGA and by the Disciplinary Committee of IMGA.

In the event that the Disciplinary Committee, on receipt of details of the recorded offence and penalty applied, considers that a punishment is too severe or too lenient, then they have the right to undertake further investigations and adjust the penalty accordingly.

2.5.4 Enforcement

Due to the character of international Mounted Games events, it is usually not possible for either the Disciplinary Committee or IMGA to monitor and/or enforce the application of any penalty which may be imposed. Therefore, this becomes the responsibility of the offender's national MGA, and/or any other MGA where the offender may be involved in Mounted Games.



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3. Health, Safety, and Welfare

Mounted Games is an inherently dangerous sport, and it is impossible to eliminate all risk. It is, however, possible to identify and minimise risk and to take sensible precautions to handle situations which may arise.

These guidelines are not based on the current Health and Safety legislation in any particular country as they have to be applicable wherever Mounted Games competitions may take place. They are, however, based on "best practice" as found in other sports associations.

Mounted Games is a sport which requires close teamwork between riders and ponies. Therefore, the Health, Safety, and Welfare regulations set out in this document apply both to people and to ponies, and to the competitions where they all come together.

3.1 People

Everyone who is actively involved in Mounted Games is expected to be :

- Physically fit
- Fully aware of the risks of the Mounted Games environment
- Not under the influence of alcohol
- Not under the influence of any drugs which may impair their judgement and/or artificially enhance their performance

Young children must be supervised at all times, but especially when in areas where there are ponies, and in particular when arena-side.

Access to the playing area is restricted to (see Rule Book GR 7.1) :

- Riders participating in the games session taking place
- Competition organisers
- Chief Referee and other Referees
- Assistant referees
- Judge and his/her assistants
- Commentators
- Those responsible for equipment
- Competitors
- Trainers (team competitions only)

Plus, under special circumstances, and as required :

- Medical personnel
- Vet and Farrier
- Others involved in prize-giving

Everyone is expected to take all reasonable care to ensure their own personal safety and that of others.

When anyone observes something which is, or could be, unhealthy or unsafe, they are expected to take the appropriate action to deal with the problem. If this



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involves action beyond their capabilities or authority, then they must refer the problem to someone who does have the capability and authority to deal with it.

When in doubt, don't just walk away and forget about it, TELL SOMEONE !

3.2 Ponies

At all stages during the preparation and training of ponies for competition, welfare of the ponies must take precedence over all other demands. This includes good pony management, training methods, farriery and tack, and transport, as well as during the competition itself.

The following requirements apply to all ponies, whether actively participating in the competition, or not :

- Must be fit for competition, and in good health
- Must be equipped with approved tack
- Must comply with any size/height/weight restrictions
- Must not exhibit any unsafe behaviour
- Must not be under the influence of any prohibited substances (see Rule Book GR 11.1 & 11.2)

Every effort must be taken to ensure that ponies receive proper attention after they have competed and that they are still treated humanely even after their competitive careers are over. This includes proper veterinary care, treatment of injuries, and retirement.

3.3 Competitions

The people and ponies (see the sections above) come together at Mounted Games competitions.

The following regulations apply to the organisation of competitions.

- Games equipment must be safe and conform to the standard specifications.
- A vet and a farrier must be present or on emergency stand-by for fast response
- The following emergency services must be present or on emergency stand-by for fast response :
 - Medical first aid with ambulance support
 - Fire
 - Police



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- Access for these emergency services must be kept open and free at all times
- Emergency exits must be kept open and free at all times
- Precautions against fire and equipment to fight fires must be present in all stable areas
- Motor vehicles must be used on-site as little as possible and at all times be driven only at low speeds and be kept as far away as possible from ponies and spectators
- Toilets, showers, water, electricity, and other services must be permanently available within the practical limits imposed by the location
- All catering facilities must follow the basic requirements of food safety and hygiene

3.4 Responsibilities

Health and safety is the general responsibility of **everyone concerned**, but the following have specific responsibilities :

Competition organiser :

- Safety of games equipment
- Provision of vet and farrier on stand-by
- Provision of emergency services on stand-by
- Free access to, and exits from, the competition area
- Fire precautions
- Enforcement of control on use of vehicles
- Provision of sanitary and other services
- Food safety and hygiene

Chief Referee and other Referees :

- Ensure the ability of all officials to correctly carry out their assigned tasks
- Ensure the fitness of all riders to compete
- Ensure the fitness of all ponies and the correct use of tack
- Verification of the safety of games equipment



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Appendix 1

Guidelines for the application of penalties

Examples	Verbal Warning	Written Warning	Elimination or Ban				
			Race	Session	Event	Specified period	Life
Swearing at the referee	√		√				
Repeated swearing at the referee		√		√			
Refusal to accept the referee's decision		√			√		
Offensive behaviour towards spectators		√			√		
Ill treatment of pony		√			√		
Severe and/or repeated ill treatment of pony						Season ban	
Use of forbidden substances						Season ban	
Violent behaviour							√

These guidelines are given as examples of *minimum penalties*, and may be adjusted according to the circumstances.