



Mounted Games Association of Ireland

Members Code of Conduct

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1. Background

This Code of Conduct applies to all activities regarding a participant's involvement with MGAI including but not limited to training sessions/clinics, travel and competitions.

MGAI recognises the important role that young people play in our organisation. Every young athlete should be encouraged to realise that they have responsibilities to treat everyone with fairness and respect.

Representing MGAI is a huge honour and each young person is in a privileged position and one that many athletes aspire to.

MGAI does not have its own games rule book. All competitions are run under current IMGA games and event rules.

This document will be referenced as terms and conditions as part of membership applications on the Its Plain Sailing booking system.

2. Definitions

- **'Appeal'** means an appeal referred to the MGAI Commission pursuant to Section 5.8
- **'Association'** means the Mounted Games Association of Ireland (MGAI)
- **'Association Secretary'** means and includes any person nominated to discharge a part of the disciplinary administration of the Association as well as its actual secretary.
- **'Breathalyser'** means a device used for measuring the amount of alcohol in a sample of breath
- **'Child'** means a person who at the date of the relevant incident was 16 years of age or under.
- **'Chairperson'** means the Chairperson for the time being of the Association
- **'Competition'** means any Competition held within the sanction of the Association and also includes any Competition held under the jurisdiction of the International Mounted Games Association.
- **'Disciplinary Commission'** means a commission set in accordance with the provisions of section 5 of this Code.
- **'Event'** means any event held within the sanction of the Mounted Games Association of Ireland and includes, but is not limited to, any Competition, social event, training or practice session or any event held under the jurisdiction of the International Mounted Games Association
- **'General Committee'** means the General Committee of the Association as constituted under its constitution
- **'Ground Jury'** means a ground jury set up in accordance with the provisions of Section 5 of this Code
- **'Hearing'** means a meeting of the Disciplinary Commission.
- **'Horse'** means any horse or pony which is at a Competition or Event.
- **'Member'** means any person who has paid a subscription and been accepted into the Association whether they be a rider (Riding Member) or parent or other supporter (Non-Riding Member)
- **'Misconduct'** includes minor Misconduct and serious Misconduct
- **'Minor Misconduct'** includes, but is not limited to, fits of pique, immediate dissent by word or action to any decision made, or abuse of equipment such as deliberate throwing to the ground and any form of unsporting behaviour or language (whether verbal, written or on social media) of a minor nature as determined by the Ground Jury)
- **'Official'** means any person who at the time was performing a function to ensure the smooth running of an Event.
- **'Prohibited Substance'** means a prohibited or restricted substance as set out in the FEI list of banned substances and the World Anti-Doping Code Prohibited List which can be found online at <http://prohibitedsubstancesdatabase.feicleansport.org>
- **'Rider'** means any rider or competitor as an individual or part of a pair or team or reserve rider as specified on the declaration form for the Competition.
- **'Serious Misconduct'** includes, but is not limited to, cases alleging assault, making a physical attack, hitting, aiming blows at, punching, brawling, intimidation, indecency, dishonesty, criminal damage, unlawful use or possession of any prohibited substance unsportsmanlike behaviour and offensive insulting or abusive behaviour or language (whether verbal, written or on social media) or of bringing the Association into disrepute.

- **'In writing'** means written, printed or lithographed or partly one and partly another and other modes of representing or reproducing words in a visible form sent by hand, by post or by agreed electronic means.
- A **'season'** lasts for 12 calendar months and commences on the first day of January.
- **'Working days'** do not include Public Holidays, Saturdays or Sundays.
- Wherever a **gender** is referred to in this Code, either shall be inferred, as relevant.
- The singular shall include the plural and vice versa.

3. Agreement to be bound by this Code and Association Rules

- All Members, by their application for membership of the Association, agree to be bound by this Code the MGAI Memorandum and Articles of Association and all rules, regulations and bye-laws made under them.
- It is the responsibility of all Members to ensure that they are aware of and familiar with this Code and all Members competing under it shall be deemed to have knowledge of the Code as amended from time to time.
- It is expected that common sense shall prevail at all times. This Code can never cover every eventuality. Matters which cannot be solved by interpreting the Code to the letter should be resolved by following as nearly as possible the spirit of the text to obtain a solution which is fairest to all participants.
- Parent(s) or any person(s) having care of a child are responsible for the behaviour of that child and may be charged with minor misconduct or serious misconduct in the event of misconduct by the child.

4. Conduct of Members

No Member shall:

- Contravene either any rule set by the MGAI or IMGGA
- Conduct themselves at any Event in a manner which is offensive to the public.
- Conduct themselves in a manner which is detrimental to the character and/or prejudicial to the interests of the Association.
- Use offensive, insulting, abusive or threatening behaviour towards any other Member or person.
- Argue at an Event with an Official or use abusive or threatening language or behave with incivility or contempt towards an Official.
- Compete knowingly or otherwise under the influence of any Prohibited Substance
- Allow, knowingly or otherwise, a Horse for which he/she is the person responsible to compete in any Competition under the influence of a Prohibited Substance.
- Refuse to allow a Horse which has competed or is about to compete in a Competition at an Event to undergo any properly authorised test, inspection or examination if requested.
- Unreasonably fail or refuse to assist the Ground Jury, Association Secretary or any Member of the General Committee in their investigations of complaints of Misconduct by Members of the Association.
- Make a statement on any matter covered by the rules, either orally or in writing, to an Official of the Association under any circumstances, which he/she does not or could not reasonably believe to be true.

Members shall:

- Respect all decisions made by MGAI and HSI, this includes the requirement to treat all officials with respect and courtesy and to follow all instructions issued by, and respond in reasonable time to requests from, any mounted games officials, including the Team Trainer.
- Respect your team trainer who is a volunteer, respect his / her decisions and respect all your team members. Parents of athletes must also respect the trainer and his / her decisions. Parents of athletes are expected to cooperate in every way with the trainer and respect and support all other team members and their families.
- While representing MGAI, participants must remember they are acting as ambassadors for the country and for Mounted Games.
- Alcohol - Under no circumstances shall any underage athlete consume alcohol. Participants who have reached the age of majority should ensure that they are in a position to perform to the best of their ability. In this regard, social activity including alcohol consumption should be commensurate with the requirement to compete at the top level.
- Drugs - athletes are strictly forbidden from using or being in possession of any form of prohibited drug or mood altering substance.

- Attend all training sessions and control competition/s as required
- Participate fairly, do your best and enjoy yourselves
- Represent yourself, your family, and MGAI with pride and dignity
- Respect Officials and accept their decisions gracefully
- Take appropriate and best care of your pony
- Respect fellow team members giving them support whether they do well or not so well
- Respect opponents and be modest in victory and gracious in defeat
- Set high standards of *FAIR PLAY* for others to follow
- Conduct yourself with the utmost professionalism and represent MGAI in a positive way. Never do, say or suggest anything that may bring MGAI and/or any of its members into disrepute. This also refers to any comments made on social media sites i.e. Facebook, Twitter etc
- Approach the team's Trainer or the appointed Child Welfare Officer at team competitions abroad with any concerns or questions you may have.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR PARENTS /SUPPORTERS SHOULD NOT:

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|---|--|
| <u>Cheat</u> – always participate by the rules | <u>Shout at or argue</u> with an official |
| Use <u>abusive language</u> | Spread <u>rumours</u> |
| <u>Bully</u> or use bullying tactics to isolate another young person or their family. This includes subtle, silent , negative actions or intimidation. | <u>Tell lies</u> about adults or other young people |
| <u>Harm</u> team members, opponents or their property | |

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE ENTITLED TO:

| | |
|--|---|
| Be <u>safe</u> and to feel safe | Be <u>believed.</u> |
| Be afforded appropriate <u>confidentiality</u> | Be treated with <u>respect</u> and <u>dignity</u> by everyone |
| Get help against <u>bullies</u> | <u>Protect</u> their own bodies |
| Be <u>happy</u> , have <u>fun</u> and experience a sense of <u>enjoyment</u> and fulfilment | <u>Comment</u> and make <u>suggestions</u> in a constructive manner |
| Make a <u>complaint</u> appropriately to the Head of Delegation (Chef d’Equip) and be <u>listened</u> to | Say <u>No</u> |

5. MGAI Events

5.1 Ground Jury

Before the commencement of each Competition, the organiser shall appoint a Ground Jury which will consist of a minimum of two executive officers of the association, riders representative as well as the chief referee.

The Ground Jury shall elect a Chairperson from within their number.

5.2 Procedures of the Ground Jury

Any Member charged with Misconduct may seek advice and guidance from any person they see fit and is entitled to have one person with them at any meeting with the Ground Jury.

In the case of a disciplinary matter where the complaint is against a Child or a Child is asked to make a statement or give evidence all meetings with that Child and any warnings or other penalties administered shall be done in the presence of a parent, guardian, or appropriate adult who shall be in addition to the person who they are entitled to have with them at any meeting with the Ground Jury.

The Ground Jury shall consider the complaint, interview the Member complained of and any witnesses and make a written record of the statements. They shall then decide if the conduct complained of is Minor Misconduct or Serious Misconduct

If the Ground Jury decide the conduct complained of is Minor Misconduct the matter will be dealt with under 5.3 of the Code

If the Ground Jury decide the conduct complained of is Serious Misconduct the matter will be dealt with under clause 5.4 of the Code

The Ground Jury may, at their discretion report the matter to the proper authorities.

Should any Misconduct occur in the Competition arena it is appropriate for the referee officiating to deal with the matter under the games rules but they must later report the incident and any action taken to the Ground Jury who may, at their discretion, take further action under this Code.

5.3 Minor Misconduct

If the Ground Jury decide the Misconduct alleged is Minor Misconduct they shall administer a verbal warning to the Member as soon as practicable and then report their decision in writing to the Association Secretary and send them copies of all statements made.

A Member will not be permitted to request a Hearing in respect of finding of Minor Misconduct by a Ground Jury except in the case of a claim of mistaken identity.

In the case of mistaken identity;

- Any such claim must be lodged in writing with the Association Secretary within 10 working days of the receipt of the written notification.
- This must be by the Member alleging mistaken identity (or by a parent or guardian in the case of a Child) and must give particulars upon which the claim is founded.
- If the relevant Ground Jury members or the Association Secretary are satisfied that the claim warrants further investigation, a Disciplinary Commission must be appointed to deal with the matter.
- If the members of the Commission are satisfied that mistaken identity has been proved, the record of the offence will be transferred to the appropriate offender where possible, who may then be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this Code,
- If the Commission is not satisfied that mistaken identity has been proved the warning will be recorded on the original Member's record.

5.4 Serious Misconduct

If the Ground Jury decides the Misconduct alleged is Serious Misconduct they shall notify the Member(s) verbally of their decision as soon as practicable and of the penalty they propose to administer

The Ground Jury shall report their decision including details of the penalty they propose in writing to the Association Secretary and send them copies of all statements made.

If the Ground Jury decides the Misconduct alleged is Serious Misconduct and it occurred at a Competition they must require the Member complained of to take no further part in that Competition.

If the Ground Jury decides the Misconduct alleged is Serious Misconduct and it occurred at a Competition unless there are extenuating circumstances, as accepted by the Ground Jury, that Member will be required to leave the Competition venue as soon as possible.

Upon receiving a report from the Chairperson of the Ground Jury of alleged Serious Misconduct the Association Secretary must within 15 working days

- send in writing an acknowledgement to the Ground Jury Chairperson and
- send to the Member concerned in writing a copy of the Ground Jury's report together with a letter offering a penalty in accordance with the recommendation of the Ground Jury. Copies of other reports and statements need not be sent.

In either case a Disciplinary Commission will be appointed to consider the matter further or to consider the mitigating plea made by the Member

5.5 Timing

In all cases of Misconduct the Chairperson of the Ground Jury must send a written report to the Association Secretary within 7 working days. Other than in cases of Minor Misconduct, this must be together with details of any known witnesses and other written reports he may have received.

In cases of Serious Misconduct, formal disciplinary procedures shall commence no later than 30 working days after the alleged incident or first report of the alleged incident, and the outcome determined as soon as is reasonably possible.

The Association must use due diligence to charge and/or finalise cases within a reasonable period of time.

In cases of Serious Misconduct, the Association Secretary will request written statements from known witnesses (if not already in his possession) requesting a response from them in writing as soon as reasonably possible

5.6 Failure to comply

Failure on the part of the Member to discharge any of the requirements set out at clauses in Sections 6, 7 10 and 11 may constitute Misconduct, which may result in a further charge against the Member. Any punishment imposed for failure to comply will include an automatic suspension of the Member until such time as compliance has taken place.

5.7 Procedure for a Hearing

The notification indicating a charge of serious Misconduct must inform the Member of the right to request a Hearing in respect of the alleged offence. It must also indicate that in the event of the charge being proved there may be a liability to be ordered to pay all or part of the costs of the Hearing, which costs may include a part of the overhead expenses of the Association attributable to the Hearing.

Similarly, in cases where the rules or regulations of the Association require the payment of a fee for a Hearing, the Member must be informed that the fee is liable to be forfeited in full or in part if the charge is proved. This is in addition to any fine that may be imposed.

In an unproved case neither a fee may be retained, nor may Commission costs be levied.

Upon receiving a request for a Hearing, the Chairperson of the General Committee will appoint a Disciplinary Commission.

The members of the Disciplinary Commission shall

elect a Chairperson from amongst their number

obtain copies of all statements and reports relating to the incident

interview witnesses to the incident including witnesses not interviewed by the Ground Jury.

seek expert advice on any matter they consider requires such advice

Any Member charged with Misconduct may seek advice and guidance from any person he sees fit and is entitled to have one person with them at the Hearing.

In the case of a Hearing where the complaint is against a Child or a Child is asked to make a statement or give evidence all meetings with that Child and any warnings or other penalties administered shall be done in the presence of a parent, guardian, or appropriate adult who shall be in addition to the person who they are entitled to have with them at the hearing

The Member must be given in writing the date, time and venue fixed for the Hearing and arrangements made for the attendance before the Commission of any witnesses.

The person charged and the witness(es) concerned should be given in writing a minimum 15 working days' notice of details of the Hearing

Any written request to the Commission for a postponement of the Hearing should be given consideration. If the reason submitted is considered valid, then a postponement should be granted, and in such circumstances costs may be charged. A request for a second postponement by the same party should not be granted.

At a Hearing the Disciplinary Commission may adopt such procedures as it considers appropriate and expedient for the just determination of the charge brought before it. A Commission shall not be bound by any enactment or rule of law relating to the admissibility of evidence in proceedings before a court of law.

If the charge is found not proved, any record of it will be expunged.

If the charge is found proved the Commission will decide what punishment, if any, is to be imposed. In so doing, members of the Commission must consider the overall nature and effect of the offence(s) and the Member's previous record and any plea for leniency.

Except when an Appeal has been lodged, any fines or costs that are ordered must be paid before the expiry of 15 working days from the date of the order. Failure to pay within such period is deemed to be Misconduct punishable by censure, further fine and/or suspension as determined by the Commission that made the order. The Member is responsible for payment of the fine and costs, except in the case of a Child where it is the responsibility of their parent or guardian.

The decisions of Commissions are final and binding on all parties subject only to a right of appeal to an Appeal Board.

The commencement date of any suspension imposed on a Member is at the discretion of the disciplinary commission.

5.8 Appeal Board

A Board of Appeal shall consist of not less than three Members appointed by the General Committee and where possible should include a Riding Member. The appointed members of such Board of Appeal should not consist of any Member who has sat on Ground Jury or the Disciplinary Commission who first heard the case.

The procedures set down in this Code for a Hearing shall also apply to Appeals but otherwise at an Appeal the Appeal Board may adopt such procedures as it considers appropriate and expedient for the just determination of the charge brought before it.

An Appeal Board shall not be bound by any enactment or rule of law relating to the admissibility of evidence in proceedings before a court of law.

6. Breaches of Code of Conduct - International Teams

Should an athlete, support person or the parent and/or guardian of an underage athlete act in breach of this Code of Conduct, the Chef d'Equipe/Trainer may withdraw the participant who has acted inappropriately or who is associated with the person(s) acting inappropriately from the competition.

Complaints procedure - If an athlete, (or parent/guardian where applicable) has a complaint to make about any aspect of the preparation for an International Event, including the training regime, or about a trip abroad to represent Ireland at an International Event, he or she must first address the complaint to the Chef d'Equipe/Team Manager, or designated CWO if appropriate. If he or she is unhappy with the response, he or she can raise the matter with the committee of MGAI after the trip. If he or she is unhappy with the response from the MGAI committee he or she can raise the matter with the CEO of Horse Sport Ireland. If he or she is unhappy with the response from the CEO of Horse Sport Ireland, he or she can raise the matter with the Chair of Horse Sport Ireland.

Any athlete, (or his/her parent or guardian) who does not follow this procedure by raising issues with other parties will be in breach of this code of conduct.

Sanctionable Offences

List of Offences that merit Sanctions

If a rider or trainer, participating as part of a team, commits an offence where an elimination would not be sufficient punishment, the referee will show that rider or trainer a red card. Any rider or trainer, participating as part of a team, pair or individual entry, shown a red **card will play no further part in the competition**, they will leave the arena immediately and the issue will be referred to the ground jury of the competition. What constitutes an offence is at the discretion of the referee and includes but is not limited to: abuse of equipment, use of foul language or abusive behaviour.

Pony Abuse. Abuse of ponies is not permitted at any time anywhere on the showground where a competition is held. The referee can eliminate a rider, pair or team from a race **or from the competition** or can refer the matter to the Ground Jury or disciplinary committee at his/her discretion if they are deemed to have abused a pony or allowed any other person to abuse a pony. Abuse is defined as intentionally acting in a way that may cause pain or unnecessary discomfort to a pony.

Breathalyser Checks:

If a rider/trainer blows positive based on competition rules and is prevented/banned to enter the arena (or practice arena) during the next 2 sessions after the infringement has been detected. This means that the rider **will miss the session he/she is in AND the 2 following sessions**. *Rider's Federation/home organisation will receive a letter describing the situation*

Sanctions

Where a MGAI team member has been given a Red Card or failed a breathalyser test and is prevented from competing for a number of sessions the sanctions are as follows;

- First offence: Prevented from trialling, team selection or representation on teams for the remainder of the current year and for the subsequent year.
- 2nd Offence: Lifetime ban from trialling or team selection / representation for all future Irish Teams.

Appeals

Where a MGAI team member has been sanctioned as described above, an appeal can be made to the MGAI committee for final consideration whose decision is binding

7. BREATHALYSER policy - MGAI Events

Who:

- Testing of all Open, and Junior (Under 18) riders (plus their trainer if he/she goes into the arena).
- Referees, and trainers of all age groups to take the breathalyser test also.
- U12 and U15 riders will only be breathalysed where the referee is concerned about riders having consumed alcohol.

Test Criteria: Breath test pass is set at zero alcohol.

When:

- Testing to be done every day for all riders' first session (unless suspicion of alcohol taken before second session).
- It is the responsibility of the trainers to present their teams at the correct time for breath testing.
- Rider to give her/his name to those doing breathalyser.

How:

- Underage riders should be accompanied by a parent / guardian.
- Attendance will be recorded as breathalyser tests are done.
- Parents/supporters needed to hold their ponies.
- Testing to be done near to warm up arena
- Nominated tester(s) to be shown how breathalyser works and how to implement policy before the competition starts.

Test Results

- If a rider blows positive (i.e., shows a reading above zero), they may not compete in that session. They may take a maximum of 2 re-tests before their session commences. A rider may not compete until he/she has blown a clear test. Likewise for trainers and referees they are NOT permitted in the ring until they show a clear test.
- A rider may not compete until he/she has blown a clear test. Likewise for trainers and referees they are NOT permitted in the ring until they show a clear test.
- In the event of a positive result any rider, trainer or referee must pass a test later to enter the arena (or practice arena) for a subsequent session.
- If the trainer blows positive she/he may direct operations from outside the arena or appoint a substitute trainer to go in the arena and who must also take the breath test.
- If a referee blows positive, then an alternative must be found.
- No electronic or paper records will be filed on personal data after the event

EQUIPMENT

- Breathalysers
- 1 clipboard
- 1 rain clipboard
- Programmes for the competition
- Pens.

8. Social Media Policy

This Social Media Policy is part of the Members Code of Conduct and whenever using any form of social media (whether existing now or in the future) and participating in, submitting or responding to any internet postings members shall comply with this Policy. Any members in breach of this Policy will be subject to disciplinary action. Civil and/or criminal proceedings could also be brought against members for breach of this Policy where applicable.

Policy Scope

MGAI recognises that the internet provides everyone with the ability to participate in interactive discussions and to share information on a wide variety of social media. This policy relates to the use of social media by MGAI members in so far as such use relates to or affects MGAI its members and volunteers.

In this policy, an MGA person, or people, means Committee, any Members of MGAI (in all categories), Show Organisers and All other Volunteers and members or other MGA organisations . Social media means all forms of social media that exist now or may exist in the future, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Vine, Tumblr, LinkedIn, Twitter, Wikipedia, Flickr, MySpace, Pinterest, Google+ and all other social networking websites, all other internet posting sites, all blogs and wikis and all other internet forums.

Responsible use of Social Media

Every member must be respectful of MGAI and they must;

- Be aware that publication of information and comment on social media carries the same obligations as any other kind of publication and should follow the same ethical and legal standards.
- Not post, share or otherwise submit on social media any statement, material, information or image which is; malicious, misleading, threatening, derogatory, obscene, indecent, seditious, offensive, pornographic, abusive, disparaging, racist, discriminatory, menacing, inflammatory, blasphemous, intimidating or defamatory.
- Not post, share or otherwise submit comments about sensitive business-related topics, such as MGAI performance, or do anything to jeopardise MGAI confidential information and intellectual property.
- Not post, share or otherwise comment on social media statements, material, information or images concerning, or which could directly or indirectly damage the name, business interests or reputation of MGAI or any MGA person.
- Not disclose on any social media, any personal information or images relating to any other MGA person that have been provided in confidence.
- Only post comments about an MGA person that are respectful and which the poster would say directly to that person.
- Show proper respect for the laws governing copyright and fair use of copyrighted material. MGAI accepts no liability for legal breaches by MGA people on social media.

- Make it clear if disclosing their MGA membership status in any way on social media that they are speaking on their own behalf and that their views do not represent those of MGAI.
- Not use social media in a way that breaches any other rules, codes and policies in the MGAI code of conduct.

MGAI reserves the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, social media postings and activities that include references to it and/or its members, to ensure that its rules and this Policy are being complied with and for legitimate purposes.

All members consent to such monitoring through acceptance of their membership form.

MGAI may remove posts, threads and any other form of submissions from its own platforms, including but not limited to Facebook/Twitter/Website, which are in breach of this Policy without explanation and the MGA person responsible could be liable for disciplinary action as outlined in the Members Code of Conduct.

MGAI may require members to remove postings, comments or any other submissions made using social media that are deemed to be in breach of this Policy. Failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action as outlined in the Members Code of Conduct.

MGAI will comply with any law or request by any governmental or other regulatory authority, or order by a court or other authority of competent jurisdiction, requiring MGAI to disclose the identity or location of any Member posting any material in breach of this Policy. MGAI may share an MGA person's private information with the police or any other governmental authority if it is asked to do so in connection with the investigation of suspected illegal activities.

If you as a user identify potentially damaging content or content that is in breach of the Policy, please contact MGAI confidentially. If you have a personal grievance with someone on social media regarding the sport of Mounted Games, take it up with them directly, if this is unable to be resolved and involves MGAI directly please contact a your local MGAI Area representative, contact details on the website www.mgaireland.com

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9. Drugs Testing Policy

- The organisers of any Competition have the right to request a drug test from any member at any time.
- Any testing will be in line with IMGA guidelines and HSI guidelines

Document Approval

| Author | Date | Version | Change Reference | Committee Approval |
|-----------|---------------------------|---------|--|--------------------|
| Ted Creed | 31 st Oct 2022 | V1.0 | Existing version taken and change control added, Title change from Riders to members code of conduct. References to Chairman changed to Chairperson, Breathalyser section updated, Social Media Policy added | ?????????? |
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