

Tip: Securing the Bridle

By Laurie M. Kasperek

The Friesian head and neck are often built so that when arched in work there is little room for the throatlatch of the bridle to be adjusted as tightly as we're used to doing on our other horses, especially a driving bridle. Although not necessary for a keuring if you're showing in white tack, the Friesian manner of securing the bridle is a very useful and practical tip, especially if you adopt the tradition of no bridle path.

Gerda Hakker of the Netherlands plaits a small, long braid from the hair in the poll area and attaches it to the bridle, thus allowing the throatlatch to be left at a very loose position. The braid is made from a finger's width or less of mane at the poll, just about where the crown of the bridle will sit. A rounded, black shoelace is tied in the braid about 2 inches from the crest, with about a two inch tail left. Then the shoelace is braided into the hair until this section is about 4-5 inches long. Leaving another 2-inch tail of shoelace. This takes some practice, but soon you'll get the feel for the appropriate length that worked for your horse's bridle. This braid is wrapped around the crown piece of the bridle just down from the center top line of the horse's poll-on the side the mane lays on! Leave the top shoelace tail hanging out and wrap the braid around again until the lower shoelace tail is hanging free on the otherside of the crown strap. Tie the two shoelace tails together in a bow and tuck the end of the braid in behind the flowing mane.

It works! I know because I forgot she had it in there and went to pull off the bridle in my normal fashion-and it would not budge! This braid is attached to all bridles, both riding and driving, whenever the horses are taken out, whether for practice or in the show ring.