

## Battle of the Bling Heats up in English World

**Sparkling decor is losing its place in the show ring.**

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Ah, remember just a couple of show seasons ago, when it was all the rage to decorate the glossy stripe that ran down the front of the Euro-style safety helmets? The first artistic touches were colorful strips of tape that allowed English riders to flaunt their barn colors or complement their attire. What followed next was the application of Swarovski crystals that bedazzled the helmets of hotshot junior riders. Alas, it got to the point where some horse show judges were allegedly shading their eyes from the sunlight sparkling off the riders' helmets. Fearful that the bling revolution was spiraling out of control, the United States Equestrian Federation passed an amendment to the apparel rules for huntseat equitation classes. As of December 1, 2006, the rule regarding safety helmets mandates "conservative colored headgear with no additional adornment." That amounts to a bling ban for equitation and medal class riders.

Hunter riders are also wise to beware of too much bling. Though there aren't any specific rules admonishing "adornments" in hunter classes, it's obvious that there's a push for a return to traditional, conservative attire and tack. For this upcoming show year, keep your bling back at the barn.