

Common Equipment Worn by the Pacer

1 **Blind bridles** prevent horses from seeing directly behind them or to the side, which allows more anxious horses to focus only on what is happening in front of them.

2 **Head numbers** attach to the top of the bridle to designate the horse's number in the race program. The number and color will correspond to the racing saddle pad. Use of head numbers vary by racing jurisdiction.

3 An **overcheck** is a strap that attaches to a bit in the horse's mouth, goes over its head and between its ears, and hooks to the harness. The overcheck may be lengthened or shortened to allow the head to be raised or lowered to the height the trainer chooses.

4 **Saddle pads** (racing saddle pads) lie over the back of a horse and attach to the harness to identify its number in the race program. The number and color will correspond with the head number.

5 **Hopple hangers** consist of eight straps which hold the hobbles in place and at a certain height. Side hangers go down the sides of the horse's belly, while the rear hangers attach to the crupper on the horse's back and go down their back legs; front hangers loop over the horse's neck and buckle across the chest.

6 **Driving colors** are worn by the driver in a race. The designs are specific to each driver, so no matter what horse they may be driving, at whatever track, they always wear the same colors.

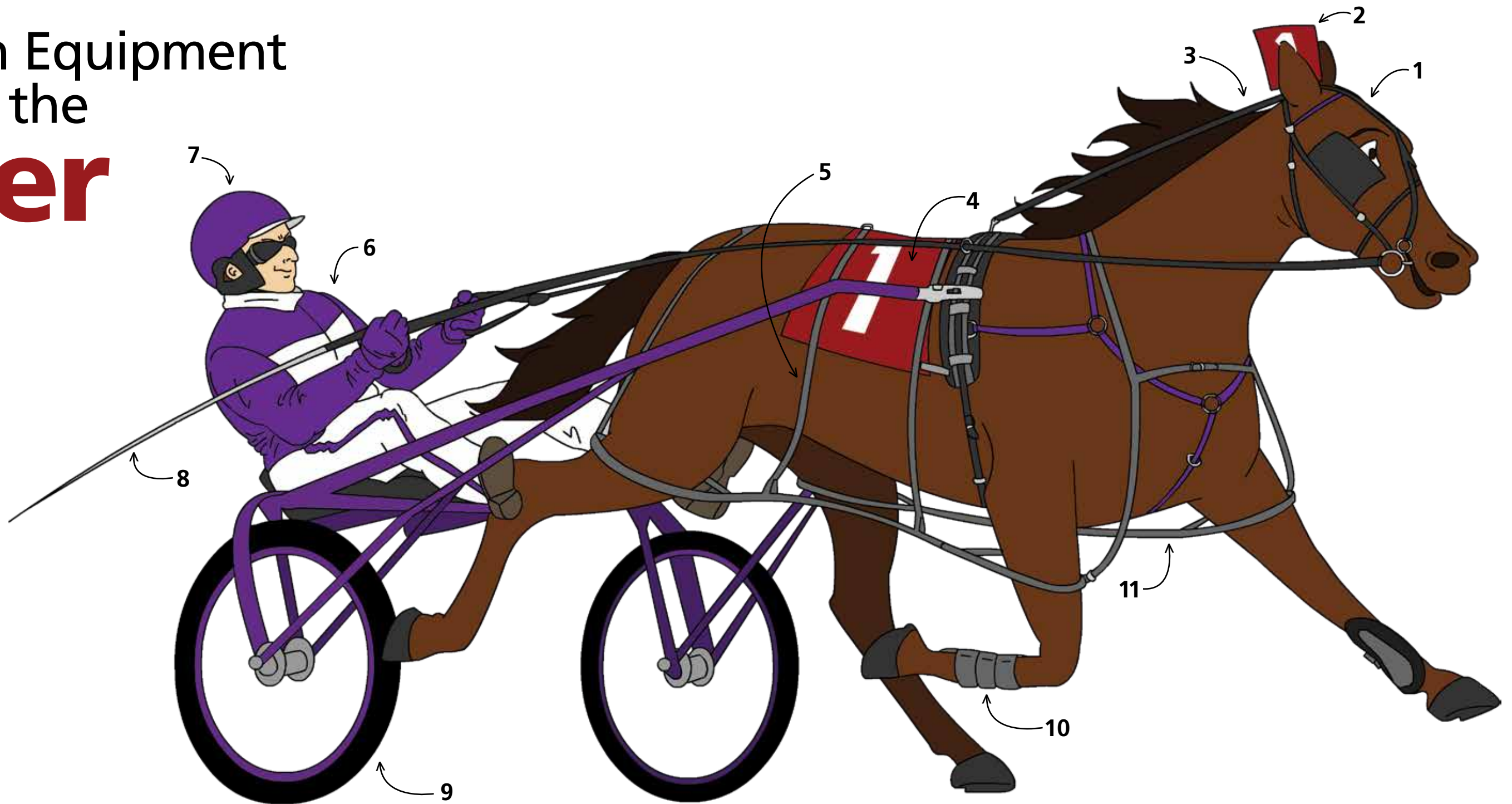
7 **Driving helmets** protect a driver's head, should they be involved in an accident. Helmets go through a rigorous approval process and are painted to match a driver's colors.

8 **Whips** are used to encourage horses to move forward, should they shy away from an object or think the race is done.

9 **Race bikes** (or sulkies) are lightweight and aerodynamic, used only for fast training, qualifying or racing. Drivers are extremely close to the horse, with their feet nearly touching their hind legs when a horse is in full stride.

10 **Tendon boots** guard against injury to the front legs between the knee and ankle and may be worn by trotters and pacers.

11 **Hopples** (pronounced *hobbles*) are loops that go around the horse's legs to keep them on stride. Kept at a specific height by the hopple hangers, they can be lengthened or shortened depending on the horse's size, stride and ability. The right front leg and right rear leg will be linked together with the same hopple as will the left front and left rear legs.



Provided courtesy of the United States Trotting Association