

WHY MUZZLE SPEED?

by the late

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It is necessary for the high speed racing Whippet or Greyhound to wear a muzzle during the running of a race. The reason is simple. During the running of a race or at the end of a race, these hot blooded racers become so very excited during the chase that they would often tear each other to pieces, were it not for the protective "comfortable racing muzzle".

The race dog breathes both through his nose and mouth during the running of a race. He must inhale and exhale great amounts of air during this stress period, thus a muzzle that is too narrow or too short limits the intake and exhaling of air, which greatly limits the over-all performance of the race dog. Many race animals have turned in poor performances on the track, largely because their racing muzzle did not permit proper breathing during the running of a race.

Much study has been made over the years, both between English and American groups, on the most comfortable muzzle to use on racing Whippets and Greyhounds. The English use very light threads of wire welded to a form that allows the Greyhound to open his mouth either when panting or during the running of a race. The Americans use a plastic or leather muzzle, which offers similar freedom in opening the mouth during the running of a race. There are numerous openings in the wire, leather and plastic muzzles to allow intake of air and exhale of hot air.

Individual Whippets vary greatly in length of jaw, as well as the size of head. The racing muzzles should fit closely around the dog's cheeks and should be held in a firm position by the strap that goes around the back of the ears. The muzzle should not be allowed to flop over the eyes of the racer during the running of a race. A racing muzzle should have ample room for the whippet to open his mouth at all times. Do not have a muzzle down so very tight that the end of the muzzle is pushed against the Whippet's nose. Allow approximately one finger spread of room between the Whippets nose and the end of the muzzle.

All Whippets should be thoroughly muzzle broken before they are allowed to school or race. When possible, start muzzle training young pups at about six months. Fix muzzle firmly on the trainee. Walk on a leash each day for about ten minutes at a time with the muzzle fastened on firmly. Allow the trainee pup to fight at the muzzle, but **DO NOT LET THE WHIPPET GET THE MUZZLE OFF DURING THIS TRAINING PERIOD!** Older dogs are often determined but use the same program. Often dogs, who have been improperly trained to the muzzle, will fight it their entire racing life. Such Whippets often fail to show their best form because of wasted effort in fighting the muzzle going down to the starting box and after they are placed in the starting box.

It must be remembered that the difference between defeat and victory can be a racing muzzle that does not give the racing Whippet complete freedom in breathing and unrestricted vision during the actual running of the race.