

THE JOCKEY CLUB
THOROUGHBRED SAFETY COMMITTEE
RECOMMENDATION
August 14, 2016 (*modified 8/11/19*)

Recommendation: Use of the Crop and Penalties for Misuse of the Crop

Use of the riding crop during the race has been the subject of intense debate among racing fans, stakeholders, and regulatory authorities. International racing jurisdictions have amended rules to more strictly regulate the use of the riding crop via alternative regulatory approaches including metering use of the crop over set distances and counting total times the riding crop may be applied during a race.

Survey results from the Racing Officials Accreditation Program (ROAP) concluded a majority of racing stewards indicated use of the riding crop is a significant issue in horse racing today.

Eliminating the use of the riding crop as a means of encouragement has received increased attention among international racing regulatory authorities. To date, however, no major racing jurisdiction has promulgated a rule calling for a strict ban of its use in a race with the exception of Norway, which has prohibited the use of the crop for more than 20 years. Consumer research conducted during early 2019 indicated that making penalties stricter for violations of rules regarding use of the riding crop received the most support among current and potential fans. Limiting the number of times the riding crop can be used during a race was among the top one-third of reforms selected by survey respondents in addition to better padding and more uniformity in rules across racing jurisdictions.

Based upon review of international and domestic rules of racing regulating the use of the riding crop in addition to responses to the ROAP survey and the results of consumer research, The Jockey Club Thoroughbred Safety Committee calls for:

“The Association of Racing Commissioners International (ARCI) Model Rules Committee amends, and all regulatory authorities immediately adopt, ARCI Rule 010-035, Article (E)(7) to eliminate the use of the riding crop for encouragement and include new penalty guidelines for breach of the rule. The riding crop shall be used only to avoid dangerous situations to horse and rider. Progressive penalty guidelines incorporate stewards’ review, fines, and suspensions for repeat offenders. Regulatory authorities should provide suitable time to educate stakeholders.

ARCI-010-035 Running of the Race

E. Post to Finish

(7) Use of Riding Crop while on association grounds

- (a) The riding crop shall not be Used for encouragement and can only be Used to avoid dangerous situations. “Used” is defined as making contact with the horse.
- (b) In all races where a jockey will ride without a riding crop, an announcement of such fact shall be made over the public address system.
- (c) No electrical or mechanical device or other expedient designed to increase or retard the speed of a horse, shall be possessed by anyone, or applied by anyone to the horse at any time on the grounds of the association during the meeting, whether in a race or otherwise.
- (d) Riding crops shall not be Used on two-year-old horses before April 1 of each year.
- (e) Prohibited use of the riding crop in any situation includes but is not limited to striking a horse:
 - (A) on the head, flanks or on any other part of its body other than the shoulders or hind quarters except when necessary to avoid a dangerous situation;
 - (B) during the post parade or after the finish of the race except to avoid a dangerous situation;
 - (C) excessively or brutally causing welts or breaks in the skin;
 - (D) striking another rider or horse.
- (f) After the race, horses will be subject to inspection by a racing or official veterinarian looking for cuts, welts or bruises in the skin. Any adverse findings shall be reported to the stewards.
- (g) The giving of instructions by any licensee that if obeyed would lead to a violation of this rule may result in disciplinary action also being taken against the licensee who gave such instructions.
- (h) Stewards shall hold a hearing into any use of the riding crop to determine if a breach of the rules occurred and apply the following minimum penalty scheme:
 - (A) For races with total purse of \$100,000 or less:
 - (a) First Offense: Minimum 14-day suspension and fine equivalent to 50% of jockey’s earnings for that race;
 - (b) Second Offense: Minimum 21-day suspension and fine equivalent to 100% of jockey’s earning for that race;
 - (c) Third Offense: Referral to commission.
 - (B) For races with total purse over \$100,000:

- (a) First Offense: Minimum 28-day suspension and fine equivalent to 100% of jockey's earnings for that race;
- (b) Second Offense: Minimum 45-day suspension and fine equivalent to 100% of jockey's earnings for that race;
- (c) Third Offense: Referral to the commission.