

IFHA Principles of Good Practice for the use of the Whip in Horseracing

Preamble

1. Used appropriately, the jockey's whip is considered an acceptable aid to horsemanship and therefore plays a role in ensuring horse and rider safety as a communication, corrective and encouragement aid.
2. To ensure that the use of the whip does not compromise horse welfare and remains in alignment with general public opinion, Racing Authorities must define standards for the design and manufacture of the whip, as well as regulate the use of the whip to only that required to achieve appropriate communication with, control and encouragement of the horse.

Whip Design Specifications

3. All whips used in racing and training must be of a design which meets the requirements of the Racing Authority. It is a requirement that all whips approved for use by the Racing Authority are fitted with energy/shock absorbing padding.
4. Design features such as the length and diameter of the whip, the length of the frame and of the flap and the use of energy/shock absorbing padding must be specified by the Racing Authority with the objective of limiting the force of impact of the whip to prevent the delivery of a stimulus (cue) which is beyond that required to achieve communication with, or correction or encouragement of the horse, and to prevent potential damage to the skin of the horse.
5. A system of inspecting the whips used by riders in races must be applied and the detection of the use of whips of an unapproved design, or any modifications of the whip to increase the impact force of a strike and potentially cause damage to the skin of a horse must be penalized.

Prohibited Use of the Whip

6. The following actions are prohibited under the provisions of Article 11 B of the International Agreement on Breeding, Racing and Wagering and the enforcement of these prohibited actions should be regarded as the minimum acceptable standard of regulation.
 - Using the whip to the extent of causing injury;
 - Using the whip with the arm above shoulder height;
 - Using the whip with excessive force;
 - Using the whip on a horse which is showing no response;
 - The continued use of the whip on a horse after its chance of winning or being placed is clearly gone;
 - The unnecessary use of the whip on a horse that has clearly won its race or has obtained its maximum placing;
 - Using the whip on a horse which is past the winning post;
 - Using the whip on the flank of the horse;
 - Using the whip with excessive frequency;
 - Using the whip on any part of the horse's head or in the vicinity of the head;
 - The use of the whip in front of the saddle while the whip is held in the forehand position, unless exceptional circumstances prevail.

Frequency of use of the whip during a race

7. Racing Authorities may impose restrictions on the number of uses of the whip which may be applied to a horse during a race.

Penalties for Improper use of the Whip

8. Penalties applied to improper use of the whip and/or the use of an unapproved or modified whip during racing must reflect the seriousness with which the Racing Authority views any misuse of the whip and the impact this might have on the welfare of the horse.
9. Therefore the penalties should be substantial and significantly progressive for subsequent offences to provide a strong deterrent to misuse.