

# THOROUGHBRED SAFETY COALITION

July 1, 2020

Ed Martin  
President  
Association of Racing Commissioners International  
2365 Harrodsburg  
Suite B-450  
Lexington, Kentucky 40504

Dear Ed,

In order to continue to make our sport safer for its human and equine athletes, and to protect the integrity and longevity of Thoroughbred horse racing, we must continue to create, modify and implement rules and regulations industry wide.

Since its formation in 2019, the Thoroughbred Safety Coalition (TSC) has devoted itself to reviewing safety rules from around the world to form the basis for much needed uniform safety and welfare reforms for the United States. These reforms include medical, operational, and organizational protocols which are being instituted at Coalition tracks for the safety, welfare and integrity of Thoroughbred racing. Part of the original TSC mandate was a pledge to advocate for the adoption of a uniform riding-crop rule to limit crop use, set penalties for crop misuse and define crop specifications.

In developing a modern crop rule, the TSC focused on the following principals:

1. Ensure the welfare and safety of the horse and jockey. The welfare and safety of the horse and jockey is paramount and guides all decision making.
2. Create simple, clear, and consistent rules that address safety and welfare and have uniform application across the United States.
3. Address customer/public perception and education regarding horse racing and safety. Shifting public sensitivity on the use of the riding crop in horse racing must be recognized by all industry participants, who must also do their part in educating new fans about the sport and our efforts to make it safer.
4. Support growth of the customer base based on offering a safer sport. Our industry has identified excessive use of the riding crop as a barrier to increased customer growth.

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Racing constituents have voiced concerns about the high visibility and negative perception regarding the use of the “whip” on Thoroughbreds. The public has linked striking horses with breakdowns and there exists a perception that a horse is whipped until it pushes past its own inherent limitations. Criticism of the crop is also, of course, part of the objection of groups that oppose horse racing altogether. Racing jurisdictions must move forward with substantial and essential measures to demonstrate that Thoroughbred racing can continue with safety for horses and riders as its primary concern.

As with most racing regulations in the United States, riding crop rules are not consistent throughout the country. Most international racing jurisdictions have, within the past year, revised their rules and regulations regarding the riding crop and penalties associated with its use. To continue as a global leader of Thoroughbred racing, we must also adopt and implement uniform, strict, and enforceable, regulations for the use of the riding crop and be willing to impose significant, consistently applied, penalties for non-compliance.

Attached as Exhibit “A” is the riding crop rule approved by the TSC which includes integration of the International Federation of Horseracing Authorities standards.

The TSC members recognize the need to control and encourage a mount and have worked together to present recommendations on the usage and type of crop used to avoid an outright ban on crops.

The TSC Members agree that uniformity is critical so that jockeys can follow consistent standards throughout the United States. The TSC members are united in their desire to move forward with real, substantive change and to support each other in the advocacy and adoption of these safety reforms so that Thoroughbred racing may continue to be a competitive, fair, and safe sport for our horses and the people who love them.

Thank you,



Drew Fleming  
Breeder's Cup Limited



Mike Ziegler  
Churchill Downs, Inc.



Josh Rubinstein  
Del Mar Thoroughbred  
Club

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Bill Thomason  
Keeneland Association



David O'Rourke  
New York Racing Association



Craig Fravel  
The Stronach Group

(1) Although the use of a riding crop is not required, a jockey who uses a riding crop during a race shall do so only in a manner consistent with exerting his or her best efforts to maximize placing.

(2) In any race in which a jockey will ride without a riding crop, an announcement of that fact shall be made over the public address system.

(3) An electrical or mechanical device or other expedient designed to increase or retard the speed of a horse, other than a riding crop approved by the stewards shall not be possessed by anyone, or applied by anyone to a horse at any time at a location under the jurisdiction of the racing commission.

(4) A riding crop shall not be used on a two (2) year-old horse in races before April 1 of each year.

(5) Allowable uses of a riding crop include the following:

(a) The riding crop may be used at any time, without penalty, by a rider to avoid a dangerous situation or for the safety of other riders or horses in a race as long as the rider no longer perseveres and pulls up out of the race;

(b) If needed during the first eighth of a mile, a riding crop may be used in a backhanded or underhanded fashion;

(c) Tapping the horse on the shoulder with the crop in the down position while both hands are holding onto the reins and both hands are touching the neck of the horse;

(d) Showing or waving the riding crop without contact with the horse and giving the horse time to respond before striking the horse;

(6) Use of the riding crop to make contact with a horse to maintain focus and concentration, to control the horse for safety of the horse and rider, or to encourage a horse is allowed, with the following exceptions:

(a) Use of the crop in any manner beginning with any upward or forward motion of the hand, otherwise described as cocking the arm or wrist, resulting in more than six (6) strikes to the horse;

(b) Use of the crop and making contact with the horse more than two (2) successive strikes without allowing the horse a chance to respond, meaning;

(i) Pausing use of the riding crop between strikes; or,

(ii) Pushing on the horse with a rein in each hand and keeping the riding crop in a consistent up or down position;

(iii) Showing the horse the riding crop without making contact; or

(iv) Switching the riding crop from one hand to the other.

(c) Use of the crop with the rider's wrist above helmet height;

(d) Use of the crop on the head, flanks, or on any other part of its body other than the shoulders or hind quarters;

(e) Use of the crop during the post parade or after the finish of the race except if necessary to control the horse;

(f) Excessive or brutal use of the crop causing injury to the horse;

(g) Use of the crop causing welts or breaks in the skin;

(h) Use of the crop if the horse is clearly out of the race or has obtained its maximum placing; and

(i) Use of the crop even though the horse is showing no response.

(7) A riding crop shall not be used to strike another person.

(8) After the race, a horse will be subject to inspection by a racing official or official veterinarian looking for cuts, welts, or bruises in the skin. Any adverse findings shall be reported to the stewards.

(9) Use of the crop during workouts shall be permitted so long as such use does not violate sections 6(c) through (i).

(10) The giving of instructions by any licensee that, if obeyed, would lead to a violation of this section may result in disciplinary action also being taken against the licensee who gave the instructions.

(11) Only padded/shock absorbing riding crops which have not been modified in any way may be carried in a race.

(12) Riders using a riding crop in a manner contrary to this rule will be subject to disciplinary action according to the appropriate penalty schedules below:

(a) The seventh (7th) strike of a horse by a riding crop in a race shall result in a warning or fine.

(b) The eighth (8th) strike of a horse by riding crop in a race shall result in a warning or an increased fine.

(c) Striking a horse between nine (9) and twelve (12) times in a race shall result in either a suspension or a fine or both a suspension and a fine.

(d) Thirteen (13) or more strikes of a horse by a riding crop in a race shall result in progressive discipline up to revocation of license.

A rider cannot receive multiple disciplinary actions on the same race card without verbal confirmation of any prior rule violations by the stewards. Failure of prior notice will result in a single violation recorded for the race card.

**Overnight Races and Non-Graded Stakes Races**

	First Violation			Second Violation		
Penalty	7th Strike Verbal Warning	8th Strike Verbal Warning	9th Strike or more 50% of earnings	7th Strike 30% of earnings	8th Strike 60% of earnings (minimum \$400)	9th Strike or more 100% of earnings and one day suspension

	Third Violation			Fourth Violation		
Penalty	7th Strike 40% of earnings (minimum \$300)	8th Strike 70% of earnings (minimum \$500)	9th Strike or more 100% of earnings and three day suspension	7th Strike 50% of earnings (minimum \$500)	8th Strike 80% of earnings (minimum \$750)	9th Strike or more 100% of earnings and five day suspension

	Fifth Violation		
Penalty	7th Strike 60% of earnings (minimum \$1,000)	8th Strike 100% of earnings (minimum \$1,500)	9th Strike or more 100% of earnings and 10 day suspension

Six or more violations will result in a forty-five (45) day suspension for each infraction in addition to the penalties set forth above.

**Graded Stakes Races**

	First Violation			Second Violation		
Penalty	7th Strike 30% of earnings	8th Strike 60% of earnings (minimum \$400)	9th Strike or more 100% of earnings and one day suspension	7th Strike 40% of earnings (minimum \$300)	8th Strike 70% of earnings (minimum \$500)	9th Strike or more 100% of earnings and three day suspension

	Third Violation			Fourth Violation		
Penalty	7th Strike 50% of earnings (minimum \$500)	8th Strike 80% of earnings (minimum \$750)	9th Strike or more 100% of earnings and five day suspension	7th Strike 60% of earnings (minimum \$1,000)	8th Strike 100% of earnings (minimum \$1,500)	9th Strike or more 100% of earnings and 10 day suspension

Five or more violations will result in a forty-five (45) day suspension for each infraction in addition to the penalties set forth above.

For all races, whether overnight, non-graded stakes, or graded-stakes, in addition to the penalties set forth above,

1. Any rider striking a horse more than twelve (12) times in a race while continuing to persevere (non-safety situation) for a better placement will receive an automatic forty-five (45) calendar day suspension;
2. A second occurrence of more than twelve (12) strikes in a race while continuing to persevere (non-safety situation) for a better placement will receive an automatic sixty (60) calendar day suspension;
3. A third occurrence of more than twelve (12) strikes in a race while continuing to persevere (non-safety situation) for a better placement will receive an automatic one hundred and twenty (120) calendar day suspension; and
4. A fourth occurrence of more than eleven (11) strikes in a race while continuing to persevere (non-safety situation) for a better placement will receive an automatic one (1) year suspension.

Riders who incur a penalty infraction may reset the penalty schedule back to zero with six (6) consecutive months of infraction-free riding in \_\_\_\_\_ (jurisdiction).

Notwithstanding any other provision to the contrary, it shall be a violation of this section if the stewards determine that a particular use of the riding crop is unreasonable or unnecessary. For any violation of this section, and in addition to those penalties permitted under this section, the stewards may impose a fine or, for repeated offenses under this section, revoke or suspend the offending licensee's license.