



# Racing Commissioners International

## Memorandum:

TO: MODEL RULES Committee Members

FROM: Ed Martin, RCI President

DATE: October 20, 2020

RE: Riding Crop Proposal

Modifications to the riding crop rule in flat racing have been under discussion for quite some time and culminated with an online debate of various options earlier this year. Following that debate, the regulatory members met informally to discuss and give direction to staff as to which proposal to bring forward to the Model Rules Committee for consideration.

The sentiment on that call can be summarized as follows:

- The prevailing view was not in favor of adopting a “use count” policy, believing that such limits are arbitrary and this matter is better left to the judgement of the Stewards;
- There was support for limiting consecutive strikes and then requiring the horse have an opportunity to respond;
- There was a clear desire to define “chance to respond”.

Attached to this memo is the proposed modification consistent with the direction given on that call.

There are no penalty recommendations at this time and it is anticipated that the Rider Driver Safety Committee will come forward with a proposal to be considered at the December meeting.

I would like to personally recommend to the committee that the association provide some degree of guidance to the Stewards as to what might constitute a potential misuse or overuse of the crop. To that end, I propose that the following guidelines based on the work of the Mid-Atlantic Group be recommended to the Stewards to assist them in

determining when crop use starts to cross the line of what is considered “minimal urging” as noted in the rule.

**Proposed Guideline for Stewards:**

In addition to the rule restricting crop use to two consecutive instances before giving a horse the opportunity to respond as defined as three full strides:

- A jockey may use a riding crop in an underhand position on the hind quarters or shoulder without the wrist rising above the shoulder during a race prior to the final 1/4 mile of the race; or with both hands on the reins to tap the horse on the shoulder.
- A jockey may use the crop as necessary to control the horse for the safety of the horse and rider.
- A jockey who elects to use a riding crop for limited urging, except as permitted above, should not use the crop more than six times during the race.