



PJA Proposed Changes to the Whip Rules

The PJA feels that, in view of the widespread media interest in the new whip rules over the last week or so, it would be helpful to set out in brief the proposals it put to the BHA on Monday.

The PJA believes that its proposals are a responsible response to concerns expressed about use of the whip. They largely follow the BHA position on the actual restrictions for use of the whip, but amend the related penalty structure. The PJA proposals represent a material increase in the penalties imposed before the latest changes, and are a significant deterrent.

The proposals are confined to penalties for excessive frequency as the penalties for frequency are the issue that must most urgently be addressed.

Flat

Total hits permitted in a flat race 7. Allowed at any time in the race and remove the restriction of 5 hits in the last furlong.

Excessive Frequency

- 7 - hits in total allowed at any time in the race
- 8 - 1 hit over, 2 days suspension*
- 9 - 2 hits over, 4 days suspension*
- 10 - 3 hits over, 10 days suspension*

Thereafter the level of penalty to be increased by 2 days for each additional hit.

*In determining the number of hits the Stewards must disregard any hits down the shoulder with the whip hand still on the reins, and any hit that might be used for correction or safety.

Illustrations of safety and correction: If a horse swerves when leaving the stalls or continues to veer of a straight line. If a horse is hanging of a straight line potentially causing interference to any other runner in other race. If a horse ducks or shy's through any unforeseen circumstances. This list is not exhaustive.

Jumps

Total hits permitted in a Jump race 8. Allowed at any time in the race and remove the restriction of 5 hits from the last obstacle or the last set of wings in bumper races.

Excessive Frequency

As per the Flat, with the starting point being that 8 hits are allowed

Financial penalties

The penalties should be confined to riding suspensions only, as has historically been the case. There should be no provision for forfeiture of the riding fee and the jockey's percentage of prize money. The penalties proposed are already incredibly severe, and additional financial penalties are unnecessary and disproportionate. They also have a number of unintended consequences on others, including valets, jockeys agents, the PJA, and a number of important group insurance schemes.

Repeat offences within a 12 month period

Penalties for repeat offences should be increased for offences where the penalty for a first offence would be 5 days or more, as follows.

Second whip offence within previous 12 months – having decided the level of penalty for the offence, it should be doubled if it is a second offence

Third whip offence within previous 12 months – having decided the level of penalty for the offence, it should be trebled if it is a third offence. If this would result in a suspension or more than 42 days, the rider must be referred

The proposals also included details on the proposed powers of the Disciplinary panel in cases that are referred

General

Group 1 and Grade 1 exemptions for races in this country and abroad should continue to apply for minor whip offences with penalties of 4 days or less.