



The PJA welcomes revisions to whip rules and penalties

Following the announcement of changes to the Rules of Racing relating to the use of the whip by the British Horseracing Authority, Paul Struthers, Chief Executive of the Professional Jockeys Association, said:

“The PJA is pleased by today’s decision by the British Horseracing Authority to make important amendments to both the Rules and the penalties relating to the use of the whip within racing.

“The adjustment to the penalty regime is welcome, as the previous penalty structure was not appropriate. However, of greater importance is the general change of approach to how the Rules are fundamentally framed and applied, which was the overriding issue, not just for jockeys but for racing generally.

“This change recognises that a ‘grey’ issue cannot be proportionately and fairly regulated by a ‘black and white’ Rule, and that Jockeys are skilled horsemen who care passionately about horses and are being denied the ability to use their full skill and judgement throughout the course of the race.

“If this is implemented as the PJA believes is the intention, Jockeys will no longer be punished for genuine, wholly unintended mistakes nor for otherwise perfectly acceptable rides. I will continue the dialogue with the BHA as they finalise the guidelines for how this approach will be implemented.

“Around 90% of the offences under the Rules that came into force in October 2011 would not have come close to constituting an offence under the old Rules. Jockeys have collectively made Herculean efforts to change their riding styles overnight and deserve enormous credit not just for that but for their patience whilst discussions to find a sensible solution to the major issues were taking place.

“There might still need to be further minor adjustments and the PJA will continue to work closely with the BHA as part of the on-going monitoring. However, everyone hopes that once the revised interpretation of the Rules comes into force, racing can return to talking about the positives, rather than focusing on and reinforcing an inaccurate and unwarranted impression of both the sport and its Jockeys.

“This has been an on-going process over the last two months and I would therefore like to extend credit to my predecessor Kevin Darley for his efforts. Just because the PJA did not publicly and explicitly speak about certain concerns does not mean that they were not raised as fundamental issues for its members.”

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Notes for Editors:

BHA press release: <https://www.britishhorseracing.presscentre.com/Press-Releases/British-Horseracing-Authority-announce-forthcoming-amendments-to-Whip-Rules-27b.aspx>