



PRESS RELEASE

Wednesday, 8 February 2023

Reduction in number of times a whip can be used in horse races, starting from 1 May 2023

The way a whip is used in racing is constantly evolving. The number of times a whip may be used in any race (flat or jump), will be reduced from 5 to 4 times from 1 May 2023 onwards.

Between now and the date of the implementation of the new rule, there will be an educational and transitional period from 1 March to 30 April 2023. Jockeys will be systematically made aware of the new rule when they use the whip 5 times and more.

Sanctions currently in place will be applied until 30 April 2023.

This development is part of the aim to gradually reduce the use of the whip. A review of this system will be carried out at the end of the year.

▪ **Below specifications apply to the manner and the number of times a whip is used:**

- Using the whip on the shoulder or neck of the horse when the jockey does not have both hands on the reins counts towards the permitted number of strikes.
- It is at the discretion of the Stewards to decide if a jockey has used his/her whip clearly and unequivocally for safety reasons (correcting the horse's trajectory) rather than misused it.
- The stewards will consider it a misuse offence (according to article 171 of the Racing Code) when a jockey uses his/her whip one or more times even though his/her mount was no longer able to improve or was out of contention (it is a misuse even if the jockey has used his/her whip below the authorised number).
- Using the whip above shoulder height is considered a misuse offence.

▪ **Increase of penalties for misuse offences:**

In conjunction with the latest whip rules, increased penalties will come into effect on 1 May 2023. Specific penalties will apply to Group races (Group 1, 2 and 3).

To make everyone aware of the best possible usage of the whip in view of the horse's welfare, a prevention orientated programme focusing on education and teaching will be set up in the various racing schools. Also, whip rules might be pointed out by the Stewards at the beginning of the race day.

Any misuse offence, such as using the whip above shoulder height or when a jockey continues to use his/her whip even though his/her mount is visibly not able to improve or out of contention, even when it is within the authorised number of times the whip may be used, will be penalised from the first offence onwards.

Repeat offences will apply to all misuse offences committed in races over the last two months.

▪ **New recommendations for penalties applicable in case of a whip misuse offence**

- ✓ From 5 to 6 strikes (In all races except Group races)

Recommended penalties for 5 to 6 strikes (except Group races, from 1 May 2023)			
Offence	Jockeys	Apprentices and young jockeys	Amateur riders
1st offence	150 €	2 days	4 days
2nd offence	1 day	4 days	8 days
3rd offence	2 days	6 days	12 days
4th offence	4 days	8 days	16 days
Following offences	etc	etc	etc

- ✓ From 7 to 9 strikes (In all races except Group races)

Recommended penalties for 7 to 9 strikes (except Group races, from 1 May 2023)			
Offence	Jockeys	Apprentices and young jockeys	Amateur riders
1st offence	6 days	8 days	12 days
2nd offence	8 days	12 days	16 days
3rd offence	10 days	16 days	20 days
4th offence	12 days	20 days	24 days
Following offences	etc	etc	etc

- ✓ Specific penalties for Group 1, 2 and 3 races:

5 to 6 strikes in a Group race, the penalty will be a 5-day suspension

7 to 9 strikes, the penalty will be a 10-day suspension.

Yet, the notion of repeat offences (for offences committed in the last two months) will not be applied in Group races. In fact, it would not allow for equal treatment of jockeys based in France and jockeys who only come to France on specific race days to ride in Group races.

Also, suspensions will be doubled for apprentices and young jockeys, as well as amateur riders (men and women).

- ✓ From 10 strikes onwards in all races, including Group races:

Suspension will be equal to the number of strikes. For example, 10 strikes will result in a minimum 10-day ban that includes all races.

Suspensions will double for apprentices, young jockeys and amateur riders (men and women), including Group races.

- **History of authorised usage of the whip in horse racing**

March 2017: reduction from 8 to 6 strikes

March 2019: reduction from 6 to 5 strikes

May 2023: reduction from 5 to 4 strikes

As a reminder: the approved whip for horse racing measures 68 cm and ends in a foam rectangle intended to produce stimulation with noise.

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