
Media Release



Australian Racing Board Limited
ACN: 104 986 334

Level 7, 51 Druitt Street,
Sydney, NSW 2000
AUSTRALIA

Email:
arb@australianracingboard.com.au

19th March 2009

**Australian Racing
Board**

Tel: 61 2 9551 7700
Fax: 61 2 9551 7708

SWEEPING CHANGES TO WHIP RULES

The Australian Racing Board has today announced sweeping changes to the rules governing use of the whip. The effect of these changes will be to change forever the role of the whip in Australian racing. This follows lengthy consultation both within the industry and with the public. These changes fall into 6 categories:

- (i) The type of whip used in Australia.

From the 1st August 2009 only padded whips are to be used in races and official trials.
- (ii) New regulations that tightly limit the circumstances in which a whip may be used.
- (iii) New regulations that tightly limit the way in which a whip may be used.
- (iv) A comprehensive campaign to educate riders on compliance with the new rules.
- (v) A national code of penalties for breaches of the whip rules
- (vi) The use of stockwhips on thoroughbreds, while currently banned in a number of jurisdictions, will now have the force of a national ban under the Australian Rules of Racing.

The ARB Chairman, Mr Bob Bentley, announced these changes.

“These changes send a clear message that Australian Racing is fully attuned to contemporary community expectations. The need for change is clear and there was no point fiddling around at the edges. There is no point procrastinating where there is industry and public expectations that practices of the past are no longer condoned. Once we opened up the subject we were determined to do it properly.” - RG Bentley, Chairman, Australian Racing Board

Mr Bentley responded to criticisms that changes to the existing whip rules were pandering to welfare groups.

“Some people are uncomfortable with change but racing needs to change and be proactive. There are a lot of things that society condoned fifty years ago but which are now seen as unacceptable, and this is one of them. When something remains stuck in the same position for 50 years you start to worry whether it still has a heartbeat – well that’s not going to happen to Australian Racing. It is our job to make sure that racing remains fresh and relevant so that millions of Australians go on enjoying it into the future.”

RG Bentley

Mr Bentley commented on each of the areas of proposed change:

1. Mandatory use of padded whips

“We have considered all the arguments for and against padded whips. The best scientific advice available to us says that padded whips do not inflict pain or injury, and that is the outcome we want. A number of other countries are watching very closely what we do here and I think will follow our lead in the near future.”

2. New regulations that tightly limit the circumstances in which a whip may be used

“Using an action that raises the arm above shoulder height will now be prohibited as will the use of the whip where there are no prospects of improving the horse’s placing.”

3. New regulations that tightly limit the way in which a whip may be used

“What happens from the turn into the straight is where major problems have existed, and the new rules will focus on this. The whip is not to be used more than 5 times before the 200 metre mark, and after that point not in consecutive strides.”

4. Education campaign

“While for many jockeys their riding styles don’t greatly rely on the whip, for some there will be real adjustment required. We are determined to provide meaningful help to them in making this adjustment. One of the practical measures agreed on is the development of a DVD that will demonstrate what is and what is not permissible.”

5. National code of penalties

“Education is the first priority: we want to do everything possible to ensure that no rider is penalised for not understanding the new requirements. Nevertheless, once a proper period of education has been completed, compliance with the new requirements must be supported by a suitable set of deterrents. In this respect the April 2009 meeting of the National Chairman of Stewards has been instructed to examine:

- *The development of a national template of penalties for breaches of controls on use of the whip.*
- *The development of a policy of forfeiture of prizemoney percentages in the case of egregious breaches of the new controls, in addition to other penalties.”*

6. National ban on use of stockwhips.

“The use of stockwhips is currently banned by the racing industry in a number of States and Territories. It has been decided to give this the force of a national ban under the Australian Rules of Racing.”

End Media Release.

For further inquires:

Mr Andrew Harding

Chief Executive

Office: 02 9551 7700

Mobile: 0417 043 233

Notes to Editors:

1. The National Chairman of Stewards Advisory Group (NCOSAG) is an advisory group established by the Australian Racing Board. A meeting of the NCOSAG held in Darwin in September 2008 commenced the current review of Australian Racing’s controls on whip use.
2. On 12th December, 2008 the Australian Racing Board initiated a process of industry and public consultation.
3. Submissions to the Australian Racing Board were received from: the RSPCA, Animals Australia, Animal Liberation, Equine Veterinarians Australia, the Australian Jockeys Association, the Australian Trainers Association, the Australian Racehorse Owners Council and members of the public.
4. 1st August 2009 has been set as the implementation date for the new rules. It was identified that the period from 19th March – 31st July was necessary for: approval of specifications, supply and acquisition for the new padded whips, preparation of educational materials, and implementation of a campaign to educate jockeys, other industry participants and fans. The national ban on stockwhips will come into effect from 1st May, 2009 so as to allow sufficient time for the change to notified within the industry.
5. The amended Rule of Racing concerning whip use will be as follows:

AR137A.

- (1) (a) Only padded whips of a design and specifications approved by a panel appointed by the Australian Racing Board may be carried in races or official trials.
 - (b) Every such whip must be in a satisfactory condition and must not be modified in any way.
-

- (c) The Stewards may confiscate any whip which in their opinion is not in a satisfactory condition or has been modified.
 - (d) Any rider who has been found guilty of a breach of this subrule may be penalised. Provided that the master and/or other person who is in charge of an apprentice jockey at the relevant time may also be penalised unless he satisfies the Stewards that he took all proper care to ensure the apprentice complied with the rule.
- (2) Only whips of a design and specifications approved by a panel appointed by the Australian Racing Board may be carried in trackwork.
 - (3) The Stewards may penalise any rider who in a race, trial or trackwork, or elsewhere uses his whip in an excessive, unnecessary or improper manner.
 - (4) Without affecting the generality of subrule (3) of this rule, the Stewards may penalise any rider who in a race or trial uses his whip -
 - (a) forward of his horse's shoulder or in the vicinity of its head; or
 - (b) using an action that raises his arm above shoulder height; or
 - (c) when his horse is out of contention; or
 - (d) when his horse is showing no response; or
 - (e) after passing the winning post; or
 - (f) causing injury to his horse; or
 - (g) when his horse is clearly winning ; or
 - (h) has no reasonable prospect of improving or losing its position, or
 - (i) in such manner that the seam of the flap is the point of contact with the horse, unless the rider satisfies the Stewards that this was neither deliberate nor reckless.
 - (5) In a race or trial a rider using the whip must give his horse time to respond and, other than on one occasion in the last 200 metres when the whip may be used in three consecutive strides, the whip shall not to be used in consecutive strides, other than in a slapping motion down the shoulder, with the whip hand remaining on the reins, or alternatively in a backhand manner.
 - (6) A rider shall not use the whip more than 5 times prior to the 200 metres other than with a slapping motion down the shoulder, with the whip hand remaining on the reins, or alternatively in a backhand manner
 - (7)
 - (a) Any trainer, owner or authorised agent must not give instructions to a rider regarding the use of the whip which, if carried out, might result in a breach of this rule.
 - (b) No person may offer inducements to a rider, to use the whip in such a way that, if carried out, might result in a breach of this rule.
 - (8) Any person who fails to comply with any provisions of this rule is guilty of an offence.
-

End.
