
Media Release



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Changes to whip rules

Racing Australia will amend the rules governing the use of the whip as from 1 December, 2015.

The Board, composed of Chairs of Australia's Principal Racing Authorities, has considered the issues for a lengthy period. It has consulted with various stakeholders including the Australian Jockeys Association which made written and verbal submissions to the Board.

In respect of Australian Rule of Racing AR.137A, the Board has decided:

1. To remove the distinction between forehand and backhand whip strikes so that there is a limit of five forehand or backhand whip strikes prior to the 100 metres.
2. To introduce stronger penalties for whip offences including greater emphasis on suspensions for serious breaches and for breaches in Group and Listed races.
3. The Chairmen of Stewards Committee to develop a uniform Penalty Template in the form of the current Careless Riding Penalty Template which ensures consistency across jurisdictions
4. Amendments to AR.137A to come into force on 1 December, 2015 to enable an education initiative to be undertaken to advise jockeys of their strict liability under the new whip rule with training programs for apprentices to be a focus.

Racing Australia Chairman John Messara AM described the rule changes *"as an extension of the reforms of 2009"*.

"The changes to the whip rules in 2009 introduced limits on the number and manner of whip strikes which in conjunction with a padded whip has ensured the welfare of the horse. However, too great a reliance on the backhand application of the whip has developed in response to the limits imposed on the forehand application."

"After careful consideration, we have decided that backhand strikes should be treated in the same way as forehand strikes so as to leave no room for misinterpretation of the rules against excessive use."

"Importantly, harsher penalties for breaches of the rule will be imposed in a consistent and uniform manner across Australia" Mr Messara said.

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