

VIRGINIA RACING COMMISSION

CHAPTER 150.
HARNES RACING.

11 VAC 10-150-10. Definitions.

The following words and terms when used in this chapter, shall have the following meaning, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

"Harness racing" means races whereby registered Standardbred horses compete in harness and hitched to sulkies or under saddle.

"Hopples" means equipment including straps with loops at each end, each loop encircling a leg on a horse's body which tend to steady the horse and help it maintain its gait.

"Starter" means a horse that obtains a fair start when the starter dispatches the horses.

"Starting point" means a point, no less than 200 feet from the first turn, where the starter gives the word, "Go."

"Sulky" means a United States Trotting Association-approved dual-shaft, dual-wheel racing vehicle on which the driver is seated.

"Warmup trip" means a horse being exercised prior to racing.

CONDUCT OF RACING.

11 VAC 10-150-20. Paddock procedures.

The trainer shall be responsible for the arrival in the paddock at the time prescribed by the stewards for each horse entered by the trainer. The following provisions shall apply to the procedures to be followed in the paddock:

1. The paddock time shall not be less than one hour prior to post time;

2. Except for warmup trip, no horse shall leave the paddock until the post parade;

3. No driver, trainer or groom, once admitted to the paddock, shall leave the paddock unless to attend a horse during a warmup trip;

4. Once leaving the paddock, no person except an owner who has another horse entered in a later race shall be permitted to return;

5. Any horse that falls to the racing surface during a warmup trip shall be automatically excused by the stewards;

6. The licensee shall provide the services of a farrier during hours when horses are racing or taking warmup trips; and

7. The licensee shall provide equipment so that racing will not be unnecessarily delayed due to broken equipment.

8. A trainer may exercise his option not to take warmup trips with his horse prior to racing; however, such horse shall be satisfactorily paraded before the commission veterinarian or his assistant prior to starting in a race to determine the horse's fitness for racing.

11 VAC 10-150-30. Sulky.

Harness racing shall be conducted with each horse hitched to a United States Trotting Association-approved sulky. Each sulky shall have dual shafts and shall be equipped with wheel discs on the inside and outside of each wheel. During inclement weather, the wheels may be covered with mud guards. With the permission of the stewards, harness racing may be conducted under saddle.

11 VAC 10-150-40. Identifying equipment.

The licensee shall supply to each horse entered a numbered saddle pad which corresponds to the number of the horse as listed in the daily racing program. The horse shall wear the designated saddle pad during all warmup trips.

11 VAC 10-150-50. Racing colors.

Drivers must wear distinguishing colors, clean white pants and a safety helmet, with the chin strap in place, during all warmup trips and races.

11 VAC 10-150-60. Substitute driver.

No driver shall, without good and sufficient reason, refuse to drive a horse when ordered by the stewards to substitute for another driver. When a driver is programmed to drive a horse and removed at his request, he shall not be permitted to drive another horse in the same race.

11 VAC 10-150-70. Late driver change.

No driver may be changed without the permission of the stewards and for good cause. A person who causes a driver change after the daily racing program has been printed shall be subject to disciplinary action.

11 VAC 10-150-80. Hopples.

A horse habitually wearing hobbles shall not be permitted to start in a race without them unless permission is granted by the stewards. A free-legged pacer shall not be permitted to race with hobbles unless permission is granted by the stewards. Any person altering a horse's hobbles for a fraudulent purpose shall be subject to disciplinary action.

11 VAC 10-150-90. Excessive use of the whip.

Drivers will be allowed whips not exceed 3 feet, 9 inches, plus a snapper not longer than 6 inches. Provided further that the following actions shall be considered as excessive use of the whip:

1. Causing visible injury;
 2. Whipping a horse after a race; and
 3. Whipping under the arch or shafts of the sulky.
- The use of the whip shall be confined to an area above and

between the sulky shafts, to include the sulky shafts and the outside wheel dics. Drivers shall keep a line in each hand from the start of the race until the head of the stretch finishing the race.

The commission veterinarian or his designee shall make a mandatory visual inspection of each horse following each race for evidence of excessive use of the whip.

11 VAC 10-150-100. Post parade.

No horse may be excused from the post parade without the permission of the stewards. The horses comprising a race shall be formed in a post parade and on the track no less than 12 minutes prior to post time, unless due to inclement weather, the stewards decrease the length of time. The starter shall inform the drivers of the number and length of warmup scores to be taken prior to going to the starting gate.

11 VAC 10-150-110. Timing procedure.

The time shall be taken from the first horse leaving the point which the distance of the race is measured until the winner reaches the wire. The leading horse shall be timed and his time only shall be announced. In the case of a dead heat for win, the time shall be accorded to the horses involved in the dead heat.

DRIVING RULES.

11 VAC 10-150-120. Start.

A driver shall obey the starter's instructions. The starter may make recommendations to the stewards that disciplinary action be taken against a driver for:

1. Delaying the start;
2. Failing to obey the starter's instructions;
3. Rushing ahead of the inside or outside wing of the starting gate;

4. Coming to the starting gate out of position;
5. Crossing over before reaching the starting post;
6. Interfering with another driver or horse during the start;
7. Failing to come up into the correct post position; and
8. When a horse comes to the starting gate out of its assigned post position and gains an unfair advantage by moving either to the left or right of its assigned post position before the starter gives the word "go", the horse may be disqualified and placed by the stewards.

11 VAC 10-150-130. Racing.

Although a leading horse is entitled to any part of the racing surface, except after selecting his position in the home stretch, the driver of the leading horse and any other driver committing any of the following acts shall be subject to disciplinary action:

1. Changing either to the right or left during any part of the race when another horse is so near him that it causes the other horse to shorten its stride or make a break;
2. Jostling, striking, hooking wheels or interfering with another horse or driver;
3. Crossing sharply in front of a horse or crossing over in front of a field of horses in a reckless manner, endangering other drivers;
4. Swerving in and out or pulling up quickly;
5. Crowding a horse or driver;
6. Carrying a horse out;
7. Causing confusion or interference among trailing horses;

8. Letting a horse pass inside needlessly or otherwise helping another horse to improve his position in the race;

9. Committing any act which shall impede the progress of another horse or causing him to break;

10. Changing course after selecting a position in the home stretch;

11. Swerving in and out, or bear in and out, in a manner so as to interfere with another horse, cause another driver to change course or take back;

12. Driving in a careless or reckless manner;

13. Loud shouting or other improper conduct; ~~and~~

14. Kicking a horse which shall be defined as a blow or thrust with the foot against any part of the horse's body or to impel by striking with the foot. Removal of a foot from the stirrups in and of itself shall not constitute the offense of kicking. ~~The disciplinary action for kicking a horse shall not be less than a nine-day suspension. ; and~~

15. If at a racetrack that does not have a continuous solid inside hub rail, a horse or part of the horse's sulky leaves the course by going inside the hub rail or other demarcation which constitutes the inside limits of the course, the offending horse shall be placed one or more positions where, in the opinion of the stewards, the action gave the horse an unfair advantage over other horses in the race, or the action helped the horse improve its position in the race. In addition, when an act of interference causes a horse or part of the horse's sulky to cross the inside limits of the course, and the horse is placed by the judges, the offending horse shall be placed behind the horse with which it interfered.

11 VAC 10-150-140. Objections.

A driver ~~may~~ shall lodge an objection by promptly informing the patrol judge ~~of his intention to lodge an objection upon~~ prior to pulling up his horse after the race and dismounting.

~~Once the driver has dismounted,~~ He shall proceed immediately to the designated telephone in the paddock to ~~enter~~ explain his objection.

11 VAC 10-150-150. Driven to the finish.

A driver shall drive his horse so as to win or finish as near as possible to the first-place horse and demonstrate the best and fastest performance of which it is capable during the race.

11 VAC 10-150-160. Inconsistent driving.

When a horse is driven or has been driven in the past with a design to prevent its winning a race, which it was evidently capable of winning, or driven in an inconsistent manner, or driven in a manner to perpetrate a fraud, the driver and anyone conspiring with him shall be subject to disciplinary action.

11 VAC 10-150-170. Breaking.

A. Driver's responsibility. When a horse breaks from its gait, the driver shall at once, where clearance exists, take the horse to the outside and pull it to its gait. The stewards may set any horse back one or more places if a driver of a breaking horse does not:

1. Properly attempt to pull the horse to its gait;
2. Take the horse to the outside where clearance exists; or
3. Lose ground by the break.

B. Lapped-on break. The stewards shall set back a breaking horse when the nose of a contending horse, which is on gait, is at least even with the hind quarter of the breaking horse at the finish.

C. Fraudulent intent. A driver allowing his horse to break, or causing his horse to make a break, for a fraudulent purpose shall be subject to disciplinary action.

D. Notation. One of the stewards shall call out a break made

during the course of a race so that the clerk of the course may make a notation on the horse's eligibility certificate.

E. Any horse making a break ~~which~~ that causes interference to other contending horses may be placed behind all offended horses; if there has been no failure on the part of the driver of the breaking horse in complying with this section, the driver may not be subject to disciplinary action by the stewards.

11 VAC 10-150-180. Excessive conversation.

A driver engaging in excessive or unnecessary conversation between or among other drivers while on the racing surface, either during warmup trips, post parade or races shall be subject to disciplinary action.

11 VAC 10-150-190. Qualifying races.

No Standardbred may be raced unless it has a race at the chosen gait, with a charted line in qualifying time, within 30 days of its last race. If a Standardbred does not have a charted line within 30 days of its race, then the horse must race in a qualifying race under the supervision of the stewards to determine its fitness for racing. The following provisions shall apply to qualifying races:

1. The licensee shall provide appropriate personnel for qualifying races to keep a charted line for each Standardbred in each qualifying race, an electronic timing device shall be in operation, and a photo-finish camera shall be in operation;

2. The licensee shall schedule as many qualifying races on as many days as is deemed appropriate for the horse supply, and the licensee shall maintain the racing surface in condition so that all Standardbreds have a reasonable opportunity to meet the qualifying time;

3. A Standardbred must race in a qualifying race if it has one race over a fast track that is not in the qualifying time as agreed upon by the licensee and the representative of the horsemen or on gait;

4. A Standardbred coming off the Veterinarian's List must race in a qualifying race, and the stewards, in their discretion, may require the horse to race in one or more qualifying races to establish its fitness for racing; and

5. The stewards, in their discretion, may authorize the collection of blood, urine or other samples of body substances from Standardbreds after competing in qualifying races.

11 VAC 10-150-200. Time trials.

For Standardbreds, time trials are permitted with the permission of the licensee and the commission providing (i) the horse is subject to post-race testing, (ii) an electronic timing device is utilized, (iii) if the horse is accompanied by prompters, the prompters shall not precede the horse, and (iv) the stewards are present.

I certify that this regulation is full, true, and correctly dated.

William H. Anderson
Director of Policy and Planning
Virginia Racing Commission
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