

2023 Rule Advisory

Drivers

USTA Rule 18.08

(b) Prohibitions on Urging. No person shall possess or use any goading devices or mechanical or electric devices or appliances. While on the racetrack at any time, the whip shall not be used on a horse in an excessive, indiscriminate, injurious, abusive, or unnecessary manner, as determined in the discretion of the judges, including, without limitation, the driver shall not:

1. Cause an injury to the horse with the whip.
2. Use the whip more than three times in succession without giving the horse time to respond to the urging.
3. Use the whip on a horse that is not visibly responding.
4. Use the whip on a tired horse or continue to use the whip when a horse is not reasonably advancing or maintaining its position in the race.
5. Use the whip after the finish line, except for emergency situations.
6. Use the handle of the whip on a horse in any manner.
7. Strike another horse or driver with the whip or use the whip in a manner that interferes with another horse or driver.
8. Move their body or arms in an exaggerated manner.
9. Use the whip below the level of the arch.
10. Place the whip between a horse's legs.
11. Contact the horse with the whip on the horse's hocks or below.

Notwithstanding the prohibitions described in this section, a driver may use the whip in any reasonable manner to ensure the safety of the horses and drivers in the race.

(c) Allowable Urging during a Race. A driver may use the whip or the lines only in a conventional manner, in accordance with the following:

1. The driver must keep a line in each hand, except as may be necessary to adjust equipment (that is, pulling plugs, dropping blinkers, etc.) beginning when the horse is behind the starting gate and continuing through the finish of the race.
2. Lines shall remain reasonably taut during the race.
3. Use of the whip shall be restricted to forearm and wrist action only such that the driver's elbows must remain reasonably tucked and not raised above the driver's shoulder.
4. For the avoidance of doubt, raising the lines and using the whip with wrist-action only is permissible.
5. Drivers are permitted to use the whip to hit the wheel disc or shaft so long as it does not interfere with another horse or driver.
6. Drivers are permitted to use their hand or the whip in a sliding, gliding or tapping manner above the level of the arch.

(d) Supervision.

1. All tracks conducting an extended pari-mutuel meeting shall publish the rules pertaining to urging in each day's official racing program.
2. Under the supervision of the judges, there may be a visual inspection of any horse following a race for evidence of excessive or injurious urging.

Whipping will only be considered as "wrist and elbow" movement. ANY exaggerated arm movements will be considered a violation. All other USTA rules as to whipping will be enforced.

1st offense will be \$250.00 fine and 1 day suspension (Plainridge day)

2nd offense. Will be \$500 fine and 5 days (Plainridge days)

3rd offense. To be determined for each individual infraction

\$250 fine for "one handing" enhanced for more than one offense

\$300 fine for welts 1st offense

Welts 2nd offense 600 and 1 Plainridge day suspension

Penalties may be increased for any race of \$50,000 or more regardless of the number of offenses.

No contest

Under USTA rule 6.11 in calling a no contest.

1. In the event an accident occurs on the track during a heat or race and the field must pass the spot of the accident before the finish
2. If one or more driver or horse is down
3. If in the opinion of the judges, the safety of the drivers and horses are in jeopardy due to an incident
4. If a horse is traveling clockwise
5. Or, in the event the racetrack is thrown into darkness during the progress of a race by failure of electricity.

If in the case of a "no contest" call by the board of judges the safety lights and sirens will be activated and also the starter will safely get in front of the field and use the PA system to notify the drivers. The drivers will be tasked pulling horses up with safely returning the horses to the paddock.

Handholds

Drivers are responsible to have their handholds in a useable safe position and keep their hands in them at all times. Having them so far back and or grabbing the buckles or above will be considered a violation. You must have control over your horse at all times.

Fines will be set at

1st offense \$200.00

2nd offense \$300.00 and 1 day suspension

3rd offense will be determined

Lying back in the sulky will not be tolerated. It will be considered a violation.

Foot out of Stirrup with contact with horse in anyway will be considered a separate violation.

Slow Second Quarter

USTA rule 18:01 G states "Slow down in front of a horse or take up abruptly in front of other horses so as to cause confusion or interference among trailing horses." To further add to this rule drivers will be responsible to maintain at least a 30 second quarter. A second quarter 30 seconds or slower will be immediate cause for review and may be deemed a violation taking into consideration class of race and mitigating circumstances.