

STAFF ANALYSIS

DISCUSSION AND ACTION BY THE BOARD REGARDING THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO CHRB RULE 1699, RIDING RULES

Board Meeting

August 21, 2025

ISSUE:

Rule 1699 addresses interference and riding carelessly during the running of the race. Currently, Rule 1699 requires a steward to issue a minimum penalty; however, there is confusion regarding the subsequent penalties. In addition, interference does not cover all situations, such as a leading horse trying to pass in a clear opening. California Horse Racing Board (Board) seeks to amend Rule 1699, Riding Rules to allow stewards discretion when issuing a penalty for violating the rule and to address a leading horse to not shorten the stride of a passing horse.

BACKGROUND:

In November 2016, the Board filed an amendment to simplify the language and better define “interference” and require stewards to issue enhanced penalties against jockeys who commit multiple infractions within a 90-day period or who jeopardize the safety of another horse or jockey.

In March 2018, the Board filed an amendment to enable a steward to discipline a jockey who rides in a manner contrary to the regulation in a careless or willful manner, or who strikes at another horse or jockey by establishing a minimum penalty of two riding days, and shall issue a suspension greater than the minimum for more than one infraction of this rule by the jockey within a 60 day calendar period or any infraction which in the opinion of the stewards jeopardizes the safety of another horse or jockey.

The stakeholders and the Board have determined that these amendments do not function the way they anticipated and would prefer discretion when issuing a penalty. The regulation is vague regarding subsequent penalties and leads to the question if stewards are required to increase the penalty from the last ruling or if they are only obligated to increase the penalty above the minimum as described in the rule. The stakeholders feel that discretion is better on subsequent penalties rather than having to follow the rule because a garden variety violation followed by a minor infraction may lead to too severe of a penalty for the second violation. The stakeholders and the Board also determined that interference did not cover all situations as anticipated.

CONTROLLING LAW:

Business & Professions Code (BPC) § 19440 (in part):

(a) The board shall have all powers necessary and proper to enable it to carry out fully and effectually the purposes of this chapter. Responsibilities of the board shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following:

(1) Adopting rules and regulations that protect and advance the health, safety, welfare, and aftercare of racehorses.

(2) Adopting rules and regulations for the protection of the public and the control of horse racing and parimutuel wagering.

(3) Administration and enforcement of all laws, rules, and regulations affecting horse racing and parimutuel wagering.

(4) Adjudication of controversies arising from the enforcement of those laws and regulations dealing with horse racing and parimutuel wagering.

(5) Licensing of each racing association and all persons, other than the public at large, who participate in a horse racing meeting with parimutuel wagering.

(6) Allocation of racing dates to qualified associations in accordance with law.

BPC § 19461

Every license granted under this chapter is subject to suspension or revocation by the board in any case where the board has reason to believe that any condition regarding it has not been complied with, or that any law, including the Labor Code and the regulations adopted thereunder, or any rule or regulation of the board affecting it has been broken or violated. All proceedings to revoke a license shall be conducted in accordance with Chapter 5 of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code.

BPC §19562

The board may prescribe rules, regulations, and conditions, consistent with the provisions of this chapter, under which all horse races with wagering on their results shall be conducted in this State.

ANALYSIS:

Rule 1699 currently provides that a jockey who rides contrary to the rule will face a minimum suspension of two riding days and shall issue a suspension greater than the minimum for more than one infraction of this rule within a contiguous 60-day calendar period or any infraction which the steward determines jeopardized the safety of another horse or jockey. However, the rule has been deemed impractical by stakeholders and CHRB due to the lack of clarity. In addition, Rule 1699 does not address a leading horse not crossing over to compel a passing horse to shorten its stride.

CHRB finds it necessary to amend Rule 1699, which allows the steward discretion in penalties for a jockey riding in a manner contrary to this rule. Therefore, CHRB staff recommends that regulations be amended to eliminate the minimum penalty for suspension and allow the stewards to either disqualify, suspend, or otherwise discipline a jockey who rides in a manner contrary to this rule and allowing the stewards to use their discretion. CHRB staff also recommends that regulations be amended to address a leading horse not crossing over to impel the passing horse to shorten its stride.

RECOMMENDATION:

The item is presented to the Board for action and discussion. Staff recommend that the Board approve the proposed amendments as presented.

CALIFORNIA HORSE RACING BOARD
TITLE 4. CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS
ARTICLE 8. RUNNING THE RACE
PROPOSED AMENDMENT OF
RULE 1699. RIDING RULES.

During the running of the race:

(a) A leading horse is entitled to any part of the course but when another horse is attempting to pass in a clear opening, the leading horse shall not cross over so as to compel the passing horse to shorten its stride.

~~(a)~~ (b) A horse shall not interfere with any other horse. Interference is defined as bumping, impeding, forcing or ~~floating in or out~~ or otherwise causing any other horse to lose stride, ground, momentum or position.

~~(b)~~ (c) A horse which interferes with another as defined in subsections (a) or (b) may be disqualified and placed behind the horse so interfered with or last if, in the opinion of the Stewards, the horse interfered with was not at fault and the interference occurs in a part of the race where the horse interfered with loses the opportunity to place where it might be reasonably expected to finish ~~due to the interference lost the opportunity for a better placing.~~

~~(c)~~ (d) Jockeys shall not ride carelessly, or willfully, so as to permit their mount to interfere with any other horse.

~~(d)~~ (e) Jockeys shall not strike or strike at another horse or jockey so as to impede, interfere with, intimidate, or injure.

~~(e)~~ (f) If a jockey rides in a manner contrary to this rule, the mount may be disqualified and the jockey may be suspended or otherwise disciplined by the Stewards.

~~(f) When suspending a jockey for riding contrary to this rule, the Stewards shall issue a minimum suspension of two riding days, and shall issue a suspension greater than the minimum for (1) more than one infraction of this rule by the jockey within any contiguous 60 day calendar period or (2) any infraction which, in the opinion of the stewards, jeopardized the safety of another horse or jockey.~~

NOTE:

Authority cited: Section 19562, Business and Professions Code.

Reference: Sections 19461 and 19562, Business and Professions Code.