

7884.0260 DRIVING RULES.

Subpart 1. **Conduct before word "go" is given.** Before the word "go" is given, no driver shall:

- A. delay a start;
- B. pass the inside or the outside wing of the gate;
- C. come to the starting gate in the wrong position;
- D. cross over before reaching the starting point;
- E. interfere with another horse or driver during the start; or
- F. fail to come up into position and on the gate.

Subp. 2. **Conduct after word "go" is given.** After the word "go" is given, no driver shall:

A. change course or position, swerve in or out, or bear in or out, during any part of the race in a manner that will compel another horse to shorten its stride or cause another driver to change course;

- B. take his or her horse back or pull his or her horse out of its stride;
- C. impede the progress of another horse or cause it to break from its gait;
- D. cross over too sharply in front of another horse;
- E. crowd another horse by "putting a wheel under it";
- F. carry another horse out;
- G. strike or hook wheels with another sulky;
- H. allow another horse to pass needlessly on the inside, or commit any other act that helps another horse to improve its position;
- I. take up or slow abruptly in front of other horses as to cause confusion or interference among the trailing horses;
- J. lay off a normal pace and leave a hole when it is well within his or her horse's capacity to keep the hole closed;
- K. drive in a careless, reckless, or unsatisfactory manner or fail to maintain complete control of the horse at all times;
- L. fail to set or maintain a pace comparable to the class in which he or she is racing, considering track conditions, weather, and circumstances of the race;
- M. fail to properly contest an excessively slow pace;
- N. back off from any position and subsequently come on when challenged;

O. fail to report any interference or any other infraction that occurred during a race and was observed by him or her;

P. lodge a claim of foul, violation of the rules, objection, or complaint which the stewards consider frivolous;

Q. drive a horse in a manner that prevents it from winning a race;

R. drive a horse to perpetrate or aid in a fraud or corrupt practice;

S. drive a horse in an inconsistent manner;

T. use a whip exceeding 36 inches in length, including a built-in popper no longer than three inches in length, or use unreasonable or unnecessary force in the whipping of a horse, nor whip any horse causing visible injury, nor whip any horse about the head including but not limited to trailing horses, nor whip any horse after the finish line has been crossed except when it has been deemed by the board of stewards necessary to control the horse. The board of stewards must notify a commission veterinarian to conduct any postrace examination on any horse deemed to have been subject to unreasonable or unnecessary force. The following actions shall be considered indiscriminate, unreasonable, or unnecessary uses of the whip:

(1) any one-handed whipping;

(2) the use of the whip other than the area inside and above the level of the shafts of the sulky and between the sulky shafts;

(3) whipping under the arch or shafts of the sulky, use of the whip as a goading or poking device, or placing the whip between the legs of the horse;

(4) using the whip when it does not appear that the horse is advancing its position in the race and appears exhausted or not in contention; or

(5) any whipping other than by wrist action only or where the whipping arm is raised above the driver's shoulder height;

U. punch, jab, or kick a horse;

V. allow his or her horse to break from its gait for the purpose of losing a race;

W. fail to keep a line in each hand, with both hands in front of the driver, until the finish of the race; and

X. lay back at an angle greater than 45 degrees.

Subp. 3. **Breaks.** When a horse breaks from its gait the driver shall:

A. take the horse to the outside of other horses or where clearance exists;

B. properly attempt to pull the horse to its gait; and

C. drop back from the field while on the break.

Subp. 4. **Lapped on break.** If there has been no violation of subpart 3, the stewards shall not place the horse unless a competing horse on its gait is lapped on the hind quarter of the breaking horse at the finish. Placing a horse is at the discretion of the stewards and not necessarily required, even when there is an extended break.

Subp. 5. **Breaks to be reported.** Stewards shall record each break in the official race reports.

Subp. 6. **Drivers must remain mounted.** A driver must be mounted in his or her sulky from the start to the finish of the race or the horse he or she is driving shall be disqualified.

Subp. 7. **Use of stirrups.** After the word "go" is given, barring mishap, both of the driver's feet must be kept in or in contact with the stirrups, posts, or pegs until the race has been completed. At no time during the race should the driver's foot or feet contact any part of the horse's body. Notwithstanding this provision, a driver may use his or her feet as necessary to remove a horse's earplugs.

Subp. 8. **Claim of foul.** A driver who desires to enter a claim of foul, violation of the rules, or other complaint shall notify the nearest patrol judge and shall proceed forthwith to the paddock telephone to communicate immediately with the stewards, unless the driver is prevented from doing so by an accident or injury or other reasonable excuse.

Subp. 9. **Stewards shall view complaint.** The stewards shall not cause the "Official" sign to be posted until the circumstances surrounding a claim of foul, violation of the rules, or other complaint has been viewed and decided.

Subp. 10. **Stewards to determine extent of violation.** The stewards shall determine the extent of the alleged violation and may place the offending horse either behind the horses that in their judgment were interfered with, or last in the field. The stewards' discretion applies to all placings and their determination is final.

Subp. 11. **Pylon violations.**

A. A horse while on stride, or part of the horse's sulky, that leaves the race course by going inside the pylons which constitutes the inside limits of the course, when not forced to do so as a result of the actions of another driver or horse, shall be in violation of this subpart. In addition, when an act of interference causes a horse, or part of the horse's sulky, to cross inside the pylons and the horse is placed by the judges, the offending horse shall be placed behind the horse with which it interfered.

B. For purposes of placing, the following apply:

(1) if a horse while on stride, or part of the horse's sulky, goes inside two consecutive pylons, the offending horse shall be placed behind all horses that are lapped on to the offending horse at the wire;

(2) if a horse while on stride, or any part of the horse's sulky, goes inside three or more consecutive pylons, the offending horse shall be placed last; or

(3) if in the opinion of the judges a horse while on stride, or part of the horse's sulky, goes inside a pylon or pylons and that action gave the horse an unfair advantage over other horses in the race or the action helped improve its position in the race, the horse may be placed at the discretion of the judges.

Subp. 12. **Double riders on sulky.** At no time may there be more than one individual on a single-seat sulky.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 240.03; 240.13; 240.23; 240.24; 240.29*

History: *9 SR 2527; 33 SR 8; 40 SR 29; 41 SR 1322; 42 SR 1258; 46 SR 6; 46 SR 1210; 47 SR 990; 49 SR 497; 49 SR 1123*

Published Electronically: *April 16, 2025*