

STEWARD DUTIES

RECOGNIZED BY IRHA/NRHA IN ITALY

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1. INTRODUCTION

FISE requires that anyone involved in equestrian sports activities adhere to this code of conduct and recognize and accept as a fundamental principle that the welfare of the horse athlete must always be prioritized and never subordinated to competitive or commercial needs.

Horses must always be well-trained and healthy to participate in sporting events, as competitions should not be detrimental to the welfare of the horse athlete.

In any type of event, competitors and owners (or those responsible) of horses who behave improperly towards judges, stewards, show management, or who do not comply with the directives issued by the organizing committee, who commit unsportsmanlike conduct or other misconduct that could disrupt or prejudice the smooth running of the event, are subject to the disciplinary sanctions provided by this regulation and the federal statute.

It is impossible to know all the rules by heart, so it is essential to be familiar with the FISE/IRHA/NRHA regulations, the procedures relevant to stewarding, and all its updates.

2. THE STEWARD AND HIS DUTIES

The steward is an official figure trained and tasked with supervising, controlling, and ensuring that all safety and welfare measures for horses are implemented during a sporting event; helping athletes comply with the rules is one of the steward's main duties.

The steward's duty is to oversee Reining events to ensure they run correctly. This includes protecting the interests of participants, officials, and show management, as well as the welfare of the horses, ensuring fair conditions for all participating athletes.

The steward must adapt to the show, taking into account the logistical characteristics and infrastructures of the event in question, ensuring the horses' welfare and compliance with the competition conditions.

The steward must be familiar with accepted training practices and take necessary measures if he witnesses or is informed of misconduct or abuse during the event.

It is his duty to report any form of mistreatment of horses or behaviors by participants that could damage the image of FISE/IRHA/NRHA. This also includes the use of loud vulgar language, drunkenness or being under the influence of illegal substances, unsportsmanlike

conduct towards all officials, other participants (organizers, public, etc.), as well as any violation of FISE/IRHA/NRHA rules.

Furthermore, it is the steward's duty to report to the Show Management (Organizing Committee) and the President of the Jury any rule infractions or violations.

Every athlete has their method of preparing the horse athlete; therefore, stewards refrain from evaluating styles, techniques, and effectiveness, and do not interrupt or interfere with the preparation session unless necessary for obvious reasons of safety, fitness, and welfare of the horse athlete.

Stewards supervise the conduct of work sessions in the warm up areas. Any action that, according to the steward, causes psycho-physical harm to the horse athlete or endangers third parties and/or significantly increases the acceptable risk level of the athlete or the horse athlete is undoubtedly defined as aggressive or dangerous riding and will be immediately stopped.

Stewards must consider the following aspects and have the following duties:

- a) Protect the integrity and welfare of horses throughout the event. It is therefore the steward's responsibility to intervene in any circumstance where the behavior of riders, instructors, trainers, companions may compromise the health and/or welfare of the horse athlete. They must exclude any form of horse mistreatment, ensuring their psycho-physical well-being.
- b) Ensure adequate accommodations and working conditions, as well as proper stable management.
- c) Ensure fair treatment and conditions for all athletes, promoting fair play;
- d) Enforce all FISE/IRHA/NRHA rules and regulations.
- e) Be available to competitors to handle specific requests such as review procedures, Draw shifts (NRHA policy 22-06-17), coordinate entries in the arena, organize daily programs, etc.
- f) Control the presence of reference instructors in the warm up arenas for under 18 riders and beginner riders with 'pat. A ludica', the show office must provide the steward with the list of participants and the relevant technician declared at the time of registration; the steward has the authority to exclude from the competition and warm up arenas all competitors not in compliance with the declared technician at the time of registration;
- g) Control the behavior of riders in warm up arenas, both during competitions and training sessions; ensure that practices contrary to horse welfare are not exercised;
- h) Check the equipment as specified in this regulation in chapter 7 Equipment and, if necessary, consult as provided by the General FISE Regulations – Book IX;
- i) Verify the physical integrity of the horse athlete possibly also availing of the opinion of the Service Veterinarian.

Monitoring, supervising, and stopping any irregular behavior, in addition to those already specified in the FISE Veterinary Regulations (pages 53 and following), such as:

- Excessively, aggressively, and continuously whipping or beating a horse athlete;
- Subjecting a horse athlete to any type of equipment that produces electric shocks and/or coercive equipment that may result in abusive action;
- Using spurs excessively or persistently;
- Violently pulling the horse athlete's mouth with a bit or snaffle bit or other equipment;
- Conducting work sessions and/or competing with an exhausted, lame, or injured horse athlete;
- Abusing a horse athlete;
- Abnormally sensitizing or desensitizing any part of a horse athlete;
- Using illegal tools, equipment, or procedures that can cause excessive pain to the horse athlete;
- Leaving a horse athlete without food, water, or adequate exercise; immobilizing or isolating a horse athlete for long periods, preventing them from making basic movements. It is permitted to tie the horse athlete with a halter and lead rope ONLY during the drying period after post-training showering, during grooming, and always with easy access to water and food;
- The cleaning of stalls and common areas, corridors, and other is mandatory for the common good of horses, riders, and the decency of an event.
- Minors and beginners (pat. A) must be accompanied by reference instructors. They are not allowed to ride autonomously without the instructor's presence in the warm up or competition areas as provided by the Regulations.

l) In situations where the athlete's stress could cause undesirable handling and/or mistreatment of the horse athlete and/or as specified in this regulation, the steward may also ask the athlete to stop their work session, dismount from the horse athlete, and walk for a certain period with the horse athlete in hand.

m) It is the stewards' duty to control access to the test fields based on the daily timetable planned by the Show Manager, tracking the horses' actual working times via back numbers.

3. COORDINATION OF THE WORK TEAM

Show management, along with the Chief Steward, are responsible for selecting a team of stewards capable of providing adequate stewarding services throughout the event.

These individuals must be properly instructed about their duties and relevant rules by the Chief Steward.

Before the event begins, the Chief Steward must hold a briefing with the stewards.

A short handover briefing should be held among stewards every day during shift changes.

The Organizing Committee/Show Management is highly advised to organize a Riders Meeting before the start of the event, led by the Chief Steward. This meeting should be based on stewarding guidelines and highlight any additional specifics about the show conditions.

The following topics should be addressed:

- a) Organization of work shifts.
- b) Conduct of the competition.
- c) Proper behavior towards riders/trainers/stewards.
- d) Timely intervention in case of abuses.
- e) Procedure for reporting incidents.
- f) Control of warm-up areas.
- g) Equipment checks.
- h) Supervision and safety of stables.
- i) Handling incidents in the stables.
- j) Veterinary assistance and doping tests (FISE Veterinary Regulations follow).
- k) Award ceremonies.

4. STABLES AND COMMON AREAS

There must be constant vigilance in the stable areas by the stewards. Any infractions witnessed by participants must be reported immediately to the steward.

The steward's job is to protect the welfare of the horses and prevent any prohibited practices.

The stables must:

- a) Provide signs with emergency contact phone numbers.
- b) Be kept clean.
- c) Always be accessible for inspection by the appointed stewards.

It is forbidden to:

- a) Leave a horse athlete without food, water, or adequate exercise.
- b) Immobilize or isolate a horse athlete for long periods preventing it from performing even the most basic movements.

It is permitted to:

- a) Tie a horse athlete with a halter and lead rope ONLY during the drying period after post-training showers (for a maximum period of 2 hours).

b) In case of necessity, such as accidents, to ensure the well-being of the horse athlete, it is allowed to keep a horse athlete tied with access to water and hay, provided valid veterinary certifications are presented. These documents must be submitted to the show office, following the specifications of the FISE Veterinary Regulations, and the show office will inform the steward.

5. STEWARDING/TRAINING AREAS

Horses cannot be ridden for excessive periods (an acceptable work session is a maximum of 2 hours).

Between work sessions, the horse athlete must rest for an indicative period of 8 hours.

However, any decision is always at the discretion and responsibility of the steward.

At the end of the session, the horse athlete must be guaranteed an adequate rest period, as well as access to water and food.

If abuse is detected, the athlete will be stopped, and the most appropriate decision will be made respecting the horse athlete based on the findings.

As a principle for stewards and riders, "out of breath" horses will be immediately stopped, rested, and allowed to recover. The recovery time is different for each horse athlete/situation and remains at the steward's discretion.

If the work session is deemed inadequate, the steward has the authority to immediately stop the training and request that the horse athlete be returned to the stables.

FISE-IRHA-NRHA require that horses not be ridden when not in condition (e.g., excessively tired, showing obvious lameness, etc.). Horses in such conditions will be prevented from being ridden, and responsible individuals must seek veterinary assistance if necessary. Only upon presentation of a fitness certificate from the service veterinarian to the Jury President and Show Manager can the horse be reintegrated into the competition.

Any exceptions to this FISE Regulation can only be accepted in a more restrictive form, and Organizing Committees must request any integration of the "Show Conditions" to FISE, IRHA, and NRHA.

Dogs are NOT allowed in the arenas and are only permitted on a leash in areas designated by Show Management.

It is mandatory to respect the red/green light timings until the end.

Only the steward, based on the needs of the moment, is authorized to modify the session's length or grant different use of the lights.

During ground maintenance, all horses must stop and move to the side of the arena opposite the tractor's passage. All riders must follow and obey the tractor operator's instructions. Work can only resume after the tractor exits.

Exceptions can be made only in the warm-up arena under the steward's instructions.

Any participant or spectator witnessing mistreatment or abuse must report it immediately to all relevant figures (Show Manager, Steward). Direct intervention with the competitors is NOT allowed.

If abuse is witnessed during any event or directly connected to it, it must be reported exclusively to an official (Steward, Show Management, etc.). Behavior and actions harmful to the image of FISE-IRHA-NRHA will not be tolerated and are strictly prohibited.

Entering the arenas without authorization is strictly prohibited. In the pre-check and warm-up areas, the horse athlete can be accompanied by a maximum of two assistants.

In the warm-up arena before the competition, a maximum of 20 horses is allowed. Horses that have completed their run can, if necessary and at the steward's discretion, continue training only in other arenas.

Refer also to the NRHA Warm-Up Arena Policy 12-08-28 and NRHA Monitoring Policy 14-02-38.

5. TRAINING/WARM UP AREAS

The training or exercise area consists of all clearly defined spaces provided for the training and exercising of horses participating in the event.

These areas include not only the areas for mounted work but also areas for lunging.

These areas must always be supervised during use and require priority control by the stewards.

Access to training areas is mandatory with the back number assigned by the show office. Failure to comply with this rule results in a verbal warning, which can escalate to a warning card in case of repeated infractions by the rider during the Show.

The assigned back number is exclusive to each horse; failure to comply with this rule will result in the issuance of a warning card.

All athletes must adhere to work schedules and sessions (traffic light system); the steward has the authority to authorize any changes if necessary.

For each training area available to riders, the presence of at least one steward is mandatory; otherwise, the use of the training areas must be prohibited.

6. VERBAL WARNINGS AND WARNING CARDS

Actions and behaviors harmful to the image of FISE-IRHA-NRHA will not be tolerated and are strictly prohibited.

VERBAL WARNINGS

A verbal warning is issued by stewards in cases of minor violations committed accidentally and without significant consequences.

WARNING CARD

A warning card is an official notice of violation of FISE/IRHA regulations. If a steward decides to issue a warning card, it is advisable to evaluate the decision by discussing it with the Chief Steward, the Jury President, the Show Representative, and the Show Management.

The first warning card results in a report to the Organizing Committee and the Federation.

The second warning card received in the competitive year will result in a direct report to the Federal Prosecutor.

The Show Manager, in agreement with the Organizing Committee and upon the steward's recommendation, has the authority to exclude the athlete from the Show without the possibility of reimbursement of entry fees/stabling costs at any time.

In cases of violations mentioned under 'Mistreatment of Horses' and 'Improper Conduct towards Event Officials or any other parties involved in the event' that are more or less serious, and in cases specified in the Sports Rules, the steward **MUST** issue a warning card to the person deemed responsible for the violation.

In both cases, the competitor may be subject to the jurisdiction of the federal tribunal.

It is understood that in any situation of unsportsmanlike conduct or abuse, reported by the stewards, even in the absence of the Jury President, the Show Manager or Organizing Committee has the authority to remove an athlete or any person involved in the event from the show grounds.

7. EQUIPMENT AND BITS

Only permitted equipment must be used, but it should be noted that any element considered inappropriate or abusive to the eye must be removed and replaced at the steward's request.

The following are not allowed:

- a) Nosebands made from unsuitable materials, such as wire, or with a thickness less than 1 cm. Flat leather nosebands are recommended.
- b) Nosebands positioned in front of the bit.
- c) Draw reins.
- d) German martingales, tie-downs, gag-bits.
- e) All bits considered abusive.

The steward has the discretion to request the removal of the bit at any time during training sessions to check its suitability and, if necessary, request its replacement.

The following are allowed:

- a) Belly bands or any other material that wraps around the horse athlete's flanks can be used only during training or warm-up before the competition but are not allowed in the pre-check area. It is essential to keep in mind that the steward has the right to request their removal at any time to inspect the horse athlete's flanks.
 - b) The use of ear bonnets or fly masks is permitted exclusively in the warm-up area.
 - c) The use of ear plugs.
- The use of a whip is permitted only to assist the horse athlete in moving forward. Any other use is not allowed.



Cavesson Noseband



How to adjust it:

A properly adjusted noseband should be positioned about two finger-widths below the cheekbone. It should be snug but not so tight as to cause discomfort. The noseband should sit high on the nasal bone that runs down the center of the horse's face. It should be adjusted so that there is space for a minimum diameter of 1.5 cm between the horse's nasal plate (bony surface) and the noseband.

Cavesson nosebands must never interfere with the horse's breathing.

The steward can check the noseband at any time they believe it appears too tight. If the steward finds the noseband too tight, they can ask the rider to loosen or remove and replace it, ensuring the 1.5 cm space can be verified between the noseband and the horse's nasal plate. If the issue recurs, the rider will receive a yellow card for not following the steward's instructions.

Drop nosebands are not allowed.

8. MISTREATMENT AND FITNESS OF HORSE

No person may mistreat a horse athlete during an event or at any other time. This regulation follows the Veterinary Regulation, specifically point 8, Equine Welfare, on page 53.

Mistreatment is defined as behavior that may cause pain or discomfort to a horse athlete. It includes actions or omissions that cause or are likely to cause pain or discomfort to a horse athlete. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Excessive or inappropriate use of hands/legs and/or whip.
- Excessive or stubborn use of spurs.
- Subjecting a horse athlete to any type of electric shock device or coercive equipment that may result in abusive action, such as illegal equipment, including that specified in other regulations (see NRHA rule book pages 140, 141, 142, 163, 164).
- Forcing or exercising an exhausted, lame, or injured horse athlete.
- Excessive or prolonged use of any training method or movement.
- Sensitizing or desensitizing any part of a horse athlete.
- Beating a horse athlete.
- Violently and repeatedly jerking the horse athlete's mouth using the bit, bridle, or any other equipment.
- Using illegal or unauthorized equipment during training sessions or in procedures that may cause excessive pain to the horse athlete.
- Any behavior or training method that could be considered mistreatment of the horse athlete.
- Individuals responsible for horses who cause dangerous situations due to lack of consideration for others.

FITNESS of the horse athlete represents the appropriate physical and mental condition, characterized by the absence of current illnesses and good overall health. Furthermore, the horse athlete should not exhibit behaviors such as extreme fatigue or significant rebellion towards the athlete, evidenced by prolonged refusals or attempts to evade the requested activity. For example, horses showing bleeding, obvious signs of distress or pain, and injuries threatening their dignity may be considered unfit. Specific checks are provided to ensure these criteria are met, performed directly by the stewards. Additionally, the on-duty veterinarian can intervene upon the stewards' request for further checks if necessary.

9. PRE- AND POST-COMPETITION TRAINING TECHNIQUES

Head Position of the Horse Athlete - Stretching

Recognizing that each athlete has their own method of preparing the horse athlete, stewards refrain from evaluating styles, techniques, and effectiveness and do not interrupt or interfere with the preparation session unless necessary for safety, fitness, and the horse athlete's welfare.

Context

The correct use of stretching techniques, both before and after training and competition, is recognized as an important and established practice in almost all physical sports. In equestrian sports, it is used to maintain the flexibility and continued health of equine athletes.

Allowed Stretching

Stretching primarily involves elongating the ligaments and muscles (soft tissue) of the horse athlete and can be done both statically (at a halt) and dynamically (in motion). Athletes should aim to stretch all relevant muscle groups of the horse athlete's body, particularly the muscles involved in the locomotion of the hind limbs. However, the most visible part to stewards and the public will likely be the horse athlete's neck.

Neck stretches can take various forms, including:

- "Long, deep, and round" (see diagram I)
- "Low, deep, and round" (see diagram II)
- "Long and low" (see diagram III)

These are just three common examples, but there are other variations involving both longitudinal and lateral flexion, leading to different neck positions.

(Add diagrams)

Extreme Flexion

When evaluating the horse athlete's head position, the steward will consider the natural conformation of each horse athlete, especially concerning native breeds or ponies, and use discretion in determining it.

Deliberate extreme flexions of the neck, involving high, low, or lateral head positions, should be performed only for short periods. If executed for longer periods, the steward will intervene.

Movements involving a sustained or fixed position of the horse athlete's head and neck should be performed only for maximum periods of 5 minutes. Variation can involve a period of relaxation and elongation or a movement involving stretching the horse athlete's head and neck.

It is the steward's responsibility to ensure riders follow the above procedure and intervene if necessary.

Variation of Neck Positions and Stretches

Neck stretches of the horse athlete may be specific and appropriate for each horse athlete and equestrian discipline, but a single neck position should not be maintained, leading to fatigue or stress.

Method for Obtaining Stretches

It is crucial that stretches are performed in a non-forced and non-aggressive manner. "Non-forced" means that the athlete is not allowed to use abrupt commands or constant pressure on the horse athlete's mouth through a fixed arm and hand position. It is the steward's responsibility to intervene if these requirements are not met.

The steward will intervene if they observe:

- Neck stretches obtained through forced or aggressive riding.
- The use of extreme flexions not in line with the above.
- The athlete deliberately maintaining a fixed and sustained head and neck position for more than 5 minutes.
- Cases where the horse athlete is in a state of stress and/or general fatigue.

It is reiterated that in situations where the athlete's stress could cause undesirable riding, the steward may also ask the athlete to stop their work session, dismount the horse athlete, and walk for a certain period with the horse athlete in hand.

The training session must include various periods of relaxation.

Specifications on Rollkur

The hyperflexion of the neck, known as rollkur or overflexion, involves the horse assuming a posture where the forehead line is retracted behind the vertical line projected to the ground. As this is not a natural posture for the horse and is highly harmful, it is considered abuse when demanded by the rider for a prolonged period, especially if achieved using force.

The use of this posture is acceptable only for a period not exceeding half a circle at the canter or trot, or not exceeding half the length of the arena.

This posture should NOT be repeatedly used continuously during the horse's training session, whether mounted during the phases described above or during the spin work at the walk, and obviously, also during groundwork.

It is at the discretion of the steward to establish the limit not to be exceeded in this action, remembering that the correct profile in equestrian disciplines is with the craniofacial area corresponding to or in front of the vertical and NEVER hyperflexed.

The steward must intervene in cases of incorrect rider behavior concerning the flexion of the horse's head and neck. The intervention should ensure that the rider respects the established limits and maintains a position of the horse's head and neck that does not cause stress or harm to the animal.

10. USE OF STEWARDS

Based on the size and type of the event, a sufficient number of stewards must be called by the Show Management or Organizing Committee as specified in this Regulation.

- The work shift of a steward is considered acceptable up to a maximum of 12 hours, with a recommended maximum of 8 hours.
- Every work area, including arenas, box areas, longeing areas, and all zones where there is contact with horses available to competitors, must be overseen by a steward or judge. The presence can be temporary (box areas) or permanent (arenas).
- If the Organizing Committee cannot guarantee the presence of a steward or a judge, the arena cannot be made accessible.

11. ANTI-DOPING CONTROL

Anti-doping control is provided for at every event, and horses can be tested at any time during the event.

These controls follow the FISE Veterinary Regulations, page 44, points 4 and 5.

Riders, assistants, and/or owners are required to follow the instructions of the steward and the veterinarian.