

This text is an extract from paragraphs in the Rules and Regulations for Finnish trotting 2023 and is valid during the current year.

RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR FINNISH TROTTING

Welcome to Finland and Finnish trotting. The trotting sport differs throughout the world and with this summary we like to inform Guest Drivers about the most important rules and regulations for Finnish trotting. All participants are required to acknowledge the rules and regulations in its entirety to take part.

The animal protection is the most important and the Animal Health and Welfare Act is always in focus.

On the day of competition, the Panel of Judges is the highest authority in everything concerning the competitions, with the exception for the Racecourse Veterinary. Finnish Trotting Association is the central trotting organization, responsible for rules and regulations.

PRE-COMPETITION

Alcohol and drugs are forbidden in Finnish trotting tracks. All drivers will be tested before a race; and a retake can occur anytime during the day of competition. A breath test shall be done, by the latest, one hour before the actual start.

Driver

Helmet with fastened chinstrap and a safety vest is mandatory when driving on the racetrack or in the paddock, stable area. White trousers or proper competition attire shall be worn as well as suitable shoes.

The whips can be from 90 to 125 cm long, snapper included.

PRE-RACE

All horses and drivers are assembled before the race in the paddock where the Veterinary and the Equipage Controller check horses, drivers and their equipment before driving to the track. **Equipages are then paraded in number order in front of the audience,** following commands given by the Equipage Controller.

After the parade, all equipages complete a trial start in front of the audience. Adjustments to the equipment are allowed after the parade under indulgence of the Racecourse Officials.

Immediately after the parade the Speaker announces that the start will commence in five (5) minutes. The following time references are always used by the Speaker:

Lähtöön aikaa viisi minuuttia – Start in five (5) minutes,

Lähtöön aikaa kolme minuuttia – Start in three (3) minutes,

Lähtöön aikaa yksi minuutti – Start in one (1) minute, all equipages drive the shortest way to the assembly point for the auto start.

45 sekuntia – 45 seconds,

30 sekuntia – 30 seconds,

15 sekuntia – 15 seconds,

Lähtöauto liikkeellä – Ready for start, all equipages are at their starting positions.

STARTING PROCEDURES

The race is started with an auto start. If the same equipage cause for a recall or interrupt the start more than once, the equipage will be excluded from the race.

Auto start

The maximum number of equipages in an auto start is limited to 15, but in most cases the number is a maximum of 12. When there are 12 equipages, the race is started in two rows behind the gate. Equipages with event number 1-8 starts in the first row, directly behind the starting gate. Equipages with event number 9-12 starts in the second row and are free to choose between two tracks as follows:

- Equipage no. 9, behind no. 1 or 2
- Equipage no. 10, behind no. 3 or 4
- Equipage no. 11, behind no. 5 or 6
- Equipage no. 12, behind no. 7 or 8.
- **Equipage no. 13, third row behind no. 9**

In the event of a withdrawal/cancellation from the competition, equipages can be moved to the next available inside lane. However, equipages can never be moved from the back row to the front row.

Equipage 1-8 shall be placed about 100 meters behind the starting line, well connected to the gate, and in the correct lane. Equipage 9-12 shall be positioned behind and in the correct lane. If this is not observed a recall can be ordered and sanctions imposed.

AUTO START (1640 m)

GATE SPEED

The gate shall increase speed gradually. The final increase of speed from 38 km/h to 52 km/h takes place when the car reaches the stretch.

REASONS FOR A RE-START

The basic principle is that the chief starter judges the situation from case to case, referring to the following reasons for a re-start:

- disturbing the other competitors
- equipment failure
- gaining advantage in an unlawful manner

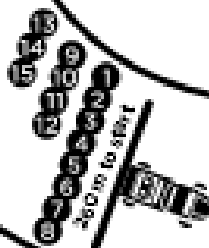
There is no reason for a re-start if a horse gallops or is disruptive after the gate has been set in motion unless the horse disturbs or hinders the other competitors.

The finishing line
.....

The assembly
area approx.
150 m

start 1640 m
.....

100 m to the start
The horses are
now assembled



THE RACE

Horses shall be competitively driven to achieve the best possible position, without putting the horse under abnormal stress. **Leading equipage shall take the inner lane.** Driving between or outside the lanes are not allowed and can lead to disqualification if the equipage gains advantage by doing so. **On the finishing stretch, a trotting horse can't change lane if there is no horse in front on the same lane.** Narrow driving, jostling or excessive/reckless use of the whip is examples of violations which can result in sanctions.

Goadings

The whip and reins can only be used for correction or light prompting. Whip/reins can be used a couple of separate times for gentle goading. Administering several blows in quick succession is forbidden. The whip/reins can't be used again before the horse has had a chance to respond to prior goading or on a horse whose position obviously can't be improved.

When driving, all goading or corrections must be affected with the whip pointed forward, and with one rein in each hand. Goading with the whip pointed backwards, kicking, boxing, excessive goading and tearing with the reins or administering blows to the sulky and equipment is not allowed. The Driver must have both feet in the stirrups of the sulky unless side shafts are used.

When mounted, all goading or corrections must be affected with one rein in each hand. **Raising the arm holding the whip above shoulder height or administering blows to the horse's head, groin or belly is not allowed.**

Prohibited gaits

Prohibited gaits are gallop and amble.

An equipage will be disqualified if it:

- gallops more than twice
- gallops more than 150 meters during the first 250 meters
- gallops more than 100 meters during the remaining part of the race
- gallops during the last 100 meters' stretch, or gallops when it is passing the finish line
- gains advantage by galloping

When galloping or ambling amongst the other horses the driver must: Be alert - take to the outside – and pull back to the correct gait. It is not allowed to steer inwards or backwards if interference can occur.

Sanctions

Sanctions can occur if rules and regulations are broken. Sanctions can be warnings, fines, driving bans (suspensions). The sanctions are imposed by the Panel of Judges.

All fines depend on the sum of the first prize in the actual race, the higher the amount, the higher the fine. Suspension from racing in Finland will also lead to suspension in other UET countries.