

# **EXCERPT FROM THE FINNISH RACING RULES**

## **1**

### **FINNISH TROTTING RACES**

Suomen Hippos ry, hereafter referred to as Suomen Hippos, administers the trotting sport in Finland. It is the national authority, which grants the right to organize races. Only a person authorized by Suomen Hippos is entitled to supervise a racing event.

## **2**

### **OBSERVANCE OF RACING RULES**

The Finnish racing rules and other regulations of Suomen Hippos or its member organisations must be observed by the following persons:

- 1) Horse owner, trainer, training apprentice, driver, groom, and any other person who works or competes on a Finnish racecourse on which racing events supervised by Suomen Hippos are arranged.
- 2) Horse owner, breeder or other person who has registered or has announced his intention to register a horse with Suomen Hippos, or who has otherwise been engaged with Suomen Hippos or its member organisations in registration matters.
- 3) A member of the board, employee or official of Suomen Hippos or its member organisations.
- 4) A person working in horse management or transport.

All persons decreed to observe these racing rules are obligated to be familiar with them and their revisions and updates as prepared by the board of Suomen Hippos.

## **3**

### **ALCOHOL AND DRUGS**

No person may handle a horse under the influence of alcohol during a race meeting. No horse may be handed over to an intoxicated person in the racetrack grounds during a race meeting.

If a driver or a person handling a horse is found under the influence of alcohol in the racetrack grounds during a race meeting, he/she shall be suspended from racing in accordance with the following limits: if the blood alcohol concentration is 0.5-1.0 pro mille,

he/she shall be suspended for three months, and if it exceeds 1.0 pro mille, for six months.

If a driver's blood alcohol concentration is below 0.5 pro mille, the board of judges shall decide whether the driver is eligible to compete on said race day.

If a driver who is taking part in a race is found under the influence of drugs in the racetrack grounds during a race meeting, he/she shall be suspended for a period decided by the board of directors of Suomen Hippos.

If the judges suspect a driver of being under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, they may order him/her to submit to an official examination. Otherwise he/she shall be deemed to have been under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, unless he/she can later establish having submitted to an examination. A person who is intoxicated and creates a disturbance while in the racetrack grounds shall be removed from the area and be prohibited entrance to the racetrack grounds. If such person has a harness racing driver's licence, he/she shall be suspended for a period of at least one month.

The judges may order breath analysis tests to be made on race days.

Breath analysis tests shall always be conducted in all races on which national tote betting is conducted (Totoline, Toto+).

## 4

### **EQUIPMENT AND HARNESSING**

The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act prohibits causing unnecessary pain to animals. The racing equipment and harnessing used must be appropriate. The track veterinarian and organiser of the start shall inspect the equipment and harnessing of each contestant as well as their eligibility to race prior to each start in a place indicated by the organiser.

The wheels of the sulky must be equipped with clear wheel-disks. Modified sulkies and other new types of sulkies may be used provided that they have been approved by Suomen Hippos.

It is the driver's responsibility to see to it that the horse's number is correct and corresponds with that given in the programme leaflet. If two-sided saddle cloths are used, the driver is responsible for turning the saddle cloth when preparing for the parade.

The following equipment is prohibited:

- Curb chain or string
- Curb bit that may cause excessive pain to the horse
- Burrs on the reins or headpole
- Electric stimulator

- Sulky with too large a gap between the wheel and the fork; the maximum height of the gaps is 60 mm and the maximum width 200 mm; maximum width of the whole sulky is 165 cm
- Use of blanket in the start inspection, in the parade and in the race
- Headgear that covers the muzzle
- Hobbles
- Surgical means that extend the nostrils (rings etc.)
- Removing horseshoes after the parade is prohibited
- Any other equipment that may cause pain to the horse

Other points concerning equipment that may be prohibited by the track veterinarian include:

- Too tight overcheck; a sliding overcheck must have the stopper in the right place
- Fixed martingale must be equipped with an elastic ring
- Driving whip: the maximum length of the whip is 125 cm and maximum weight 120 g; the driving whip may not be made of wire
- Tongue strap adjusted too tightly; the horse's tongue may be inspected after the race
- Gag bit
- Bar under the chin
- Headpole on both sides
- Nose tapes
- Tying the tail; a thin leather strap must be used for tying the tail
- Reins must be buckled to a bit ring
- Use of training sulky is allowed in the warm-ups
- Racing without horseshoes
- Any other equipment that the veterinarian may find harmful

## 5

### **MOBILE START**

The starting vehicle waits with the gate wings retracted at a distance of approximately 350 metres before the starting point. When the horses are called for the start, the horses assemble in the mobile start assembling area about 150 metres behind the starting vehicle.

When the command "one minute to start number x" is announced, the horses start to approach the starting vehicle.

30 seconds before the start the command "30 seconds to start number x" is announced. The starting vehicle opens the wings of the starting gate.

With the command "start number x" the starting vehicle starts to move and the horses assemble behind the starting gate. The driver is responsible for the horse starting on the correct lane.

The starting vehicle increases its speed towards the starting line. 100 metres before the starting line all horses have to be in their correct positions. When the vehicle crosses the starting point, it accelerates and pulls off the track as soon as possible.

The start is recalled by order of the starter, the chief starter or the jury, in case of a risk of an accident, or if a horse rushes ahead of the gate, impedes the progress of another horse, gains unfounded advantage or causes interference.

Falling behind in the start causes either a recall or a penalty. The chief starter shall give a clear signal of a recall from the starting vehicle.

In a mobile start the horses are either in one or two rows as instructed by the organiser. In case of scratches, the track positions are filled in a numerical sequence in the same row, but not from the second tier to the front.

When there are eight horses starting from the first row, the horses in the back row may choose their post position between two tracks as follows:

- number 9 selects lane 1 or 2
- number 10 selects lane 3 or 4
- number 11 selects lane 5 or 6
- number 12 selects lane 7 or 8.

If some of the horses in the front row have been scratched, the horses in the second row take their positions, counting from the outside lane inwards as follows:

- if one horse is scratched, number 12 starts from lane 7
- if two horses are scratched, number 11 starts from lane 5 and number 12 from lane 6 etc.

In the case of only three horses in the front row and four in the back, horse number 12 starts from the third row from the rail position.

If a horse proves unruly and difficult to control, the jury may rule it out of the start. The driver himself may also request this.

The start of timing is signalled by the starter at the starting point with a flag. A starting vehicle must be used whenever track conditions permit.

A trial mobile start must be arranged immediately following the parade.

## 6

### **USE OF WHIP, SHOUTING AND ROUGH DRIVING**

The whip is a signalling device. The whip has to be held in the same hand as the reins, inside the sulky, and never used sideways.

The whip may be used only to flick with the wrist without raising the upper arm. The reins must be held with both hands during the race unless there is a risk of danger. It is forbidden to hit the horse, the sulky or the equipment with the whip or to use it so that it interferes with other competitors.

Taking the reins into one hand during the race and hitting with a free hand is punishable by a suspension. The use of the driving whip after the race, after disqualification or after dropping off the race also causes a suspension unless this is done to avoid an accident.

Shouting, yelling and inappropriate using of the whip are forbidden. Excessive use of the whip, even if otherwise according to the rules, harsh pulling of the reins and other kind of rough driving are also forbidden.

## 7

### **DURING THE RACE**

Track-wide lanes must be kept during the race.

It is forbidden:

- To interfere, slow down or impede the progress of other competitors by changing lane positions, pressuring or otherwise
- To submit one's own lane position to improve that of another horse or otherwise give advantage to another competitor
- To change the lane position held at the end of the last turn unless there is another horse in the way to slow down the speed or unless it causes interference with other horses by breaking
- To attempt to make other competitors to move out of one's way by shouting or otherwise
- To intentionally cross the rails
- To cause dangerous situations by slowing down abruptly
- To move to an inner lane position if the horse is tired.

The leading horse must be driven so that the left wheel of the sulky runs at a distance of less than half the width of the sulky from the inside rail. Not using the rail is not punishable unless it causes advantage or disadvantage to the other competitors.

The judges may exceptionally rule that the use of the rail position is forbidden if track conditions or climate so require.

A horse may be passed either from the inside or the outside provided there is sufficient clearance and no interference is caused to the other competitors. Passing from the inside is prohibited unless it is quite clear that there is sufficient room to do so. Giving advantage intentionally to another driver is punishable.

The jury may disqualify a horse if it has decisively affected the results of the race by a gross violation of these rules. Generally the offence occurs during the last 500 metres when a competitor moves from a blocked track position to another lane, thus interfering with one or more competitors and gaining a distinct advantage in finishing. A violation is deemed to have occurred if the placing of the offended competitor is estimated to have worsened considerably as a result of the interference. The offending driver is always suspended from racing.

A horse is also disqualified if the driver leaves the sulky during the race. The horses must not be stopped abruptly but slowed down gradually after the finishing line over a distance of about 100 metres.

At least the winner must immediately come to the winner's presentation.

Drivers must be available to the jury at the racecourse for at least 15 minutes after the finish of the start.

## 8

### **APPROVING OR DISQUALIFYING A HORSE**

The horse must have a proper gait. A horse that breaks into a gallop, paces, or is off-gait must be immediately checked to resume the proper trot. The horse must be controlled so as not to cause any risk of an accident.

A breaking horse shall be taken to the outside of the track as soon as there is sufficient clearance to do so. When unable to do so, the driver should keep his position without slowing down so as not to interfere with the rest of the field. A breaking horse must never be taken to the inside unless to avoid a dangerous situation.

A horse will be disqualified if:

- It is off-gait or pacing for more than 100 metres at a time (total maximum 200 metres). A horse that is off-gait more than two times during the race is disqualified.
- It is off-gait on the home-stretch, which is clearly marked with a sign (red and white pole) in the beginning of the home-stretch, for more than 20 metres.
- It gains an advantage over the field as a result of breaking or pacing. The horse is not deemed to have gained advantage if the gallop is continued in order to give clearance to the other competitors, so that the horse, after resuming its gait, is in distinctly worse position.
- It crosses the rail to pass another competitor or to gain any other advantage.
- It is off-gait at the moment its muzzle crosses the finishing line.
- It halts, moves into a pace, or leaves the track.
- It is guilty of breaking out or a similar kind of very gross offence, gaining advantage over the field or causing interference.
- The driver leaves the sulky or if the monté-driver falls off from saddle during the race.

After hearing of the disqualification, the driver must immediately interrupt the race unless the horse is disqualified on the home-stretch, in which case it must always be driven across the finishing line. A disqualified horse may not leave the track in such a way that it interferes with the rest of the field.

Disqualification and off-gait rulings may not be appealed.