Rule	Tracking	Draft	Proposal Type	Effective Date	Proponent	Status
EQ 104.1	126-24	3	Standard	12/1/2026	National Hunter Committee	Approved (9/21/2026)

Tracking #126-24 Draft #3 Approved

Rule Change Type	Effective Date	Draft Received	Board Action
Standard	12/1/2026	9/14/2026	Approved 9/21/2026

Rule Change Intent

In an effort to align more closely with the edited GR838, the National Hunter Committee recommends updating the equine welfare rules in both the hunter and equitation chapters. These changes include a reference to GR838 for acts that are prohibited. To avoid repetitiveness between the discipline chapters and the GR, there are strikeouts of actions included in GR838. This updated unethical treatment of the horse also includes additional language on how many times a horse may be struck with a whip consecutively.

Proponent Details

National Hunter Committee

Contact Information

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Linked Rules

HU 100 (125-24), HU 100 (022-24), EQ 104 (024-24), JP 102 (171-24)

Comments

Arabian

Draft 1: Recommends Approval 03/31/2025

Council - Member Services

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 05/27/2025

Draft 1: The Council agrees with and supports the intent of this proposal but has concerns specifically around the proposed language in EQ104.1.d regarding use of the whip. The Council has concerns with the use of the word “striking” and how it would be enforced since no definition of strike is provided. Additionally, the Council had concerns about applying a numerical limit to the number of times a whip can be used, rather than addressing the manner in which the whip is used. The Council prefers the wording in the USEF-proposed rule change to GR803 (Tracking #243-24) concerning whip use and would recommend approval of this proposal if a reference to GR803 were provided in EQ104.1.d instead of the currently proposed language.

Council - Natl Breed & Discipline

Draft 1: Recommends Approval 05/20/2025

Human and Equine, Safety & Welfare

Draft 1: Recommends Approval 04/07/2025

Licensed Officials

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 04/14/2025

Draft 1: The LOC agrees with the intent and majority of language within this rule change proposal. The Committee would recommend approval if some of the following considerations were addressed regarding 1.d. There was concern about applying a numerical number to the amount of times a horse could be "struck." There was a preference to providing a description of when using a crop is appropriate rather than the maximum number of times is was permitted as that may encourage negative behavior and increase pressure for a rider to implement harsh discipline. The usage of the term "consecutive" could be considered a gray area and therefore difficult for judges to interpret. In general, there was also concern of using the language "strike" due to its negative connotation and its affects it may have regarding social license to operate.

Morgan

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 03/20/2025

Draft 1: The committee questions point 1(d) about the striking of a horse with a whip more than three consecutive times: who is responsible for counting the number of strikes? How will this be reported and enforced? Who is responsible for bringing the complaint forward? What is the evidence requirement for proving that the horse was stuck more than three consecutive times? The committee also feels that the word “striking” is open to interpretation and requires defining; is striking considered tapping?

National Show Horse

Draft 1: Recommends Approval 03/19/2025

USHJA

Draft 1: Recommends Approval 03/17/2025

HU104 ~~***Horse Welfare***~~ *Unethical Treatment of the Horse (see also GR838)*

~~1.~~ ~~***Any acts included in GR838 are prohibited. In addition, t***~~The following acts are prohibited:

~~a.~~ Riding an exhausted horse.

~~b.~~ Lunging a visibly exhausted horse.

~~c.~~ Excessive pressuring of a tired horse.

~~d.~~ Riding or lunging an obviously lame horse.

~~e.~~ Chasing a horse with a whip or other inappropriate use of the whip.

~~f~~b. Appendages and attachments ~~***to whips***~~ are prohibited, including but not limited to bags and flags.

~~g~~c. Excessive and/or disruptive crackling of the whip.

~~g~~d. ~~***Striking of the horse with the whip more than three consecutive times.***~~

~~h.~~ Excessive use of a whip on any horse in a stall, aisle, schooling area, competition ring or elsewhere on the competition grounds. The use of a whip must be for a good reason, done at the appropriate time, in the proper place and with appropriate restraint. Excessive whipping will not be tolerated.

~~i~~e. Any striking of the horse's head (on the poll or forward of the poll) shall be deemed excessive.

~~j.~~ Repeated jerking on the reins and sawing on the bit unless applied to an unruly horse that is jeopardizing its own safety or the safety of its rider.

~~k.~~ Improper use of the bit resulting in bleeding, broken skin or broken mucous membrane.

~~l.~~ Excessive use of the spurs or spurring resulting in broken and bleeding skin.

~~m.~~ Rapping the legs of a horse with the butt end of a riding crop or other implement.

~~n.~~ Use of any substance to induce temporary heat causing hyper-sensitization.

~~o~~g. ~~***Manual P***~~poling~~***, or the use of offsets (see GR839).***~~

~~p~~h. Use of a wire or chain in conjunction with any schooling jumps.

~~q~~i. Use of electronic shock devices in schooling or showing.

~~r~~j. Use of shackles, hock hobbles and similar devices, with the exception of kicking chains while the horse is in the stall or in transport. This does not prohibit the use of rubber or plastic exercising devices.

~~s.~~ Showing a horse with hypersensitive, raw or bleeding sores around the comets, pasterns, legs or body.

~~t~~k. Use of laser beam devices anywhere on the competition grounds, except in an exhibition or if required in class specifications. (Exception: Lasers used in a therapeutic manner).

~~u~~l. Withholding of feed or water for prolonged periods.

~~v~~m. Letting blood from a horse for other than diagnostic purposes.

~~w~~. Inhumane treatment of a horse in a stall, aisle, schooling area, competition ring or elsewhere on the competition grounds, by any person.

~~x~~n. Use of any device capable of emitting a flame or spark in and around the schooling/warm-up and competition rings during scheduled competition sessions.

~~y~~o. Use of any attention-getting device that emits a spray, mist, or fog while competing in the ring, such as an aerosol can or spray bottle. (see GR839). ~~***Exception: Appropriate attention-getting devices are permissible any time a horse or pony is being judged in-hand.***~~

~~*(re-letter accordingly)*~~

~~2. Regular and local competitions. Competitors found to be in violation of these rules by the Competition Steward or other Federation Official shall be eliminated/disqualified from competing within the upcoming 24-hour period and shall forfeit all entry fees for such competition. In addition, after consultation between Competition Management, the Steward, or~~ © USEF 2026 HU - 5 ~~other official involved, and a Senior Judge in the division, additional penalties including disqualification from the balance of the competition may be imposed. All such violations must be recorded in the Steward's Report and, if cruelty or abusive behavior is evident, it will be reviewed by the Federation for such action as may be deemed appropriate to the particular circumstances.~~

EQ104 Unethical Treatment of the Horse (see GR838)

1. Conduct in the competition ring:

a. Any action against a horse by a competitor in the ring, deemed excessive/improper by the judge, may be penalized by any one or combination of the following: Recorded Warning, Yellow Card, or elimination from the class.

b. Such action(s) could include, but are not limited to, excessive or improper use of the whip, spurs, reins, rider's weight, or rider's hands.

Excessive/Improper use of the whip:

- ***The whip may never be used to vent a rider's anger.***
- ***The use of the whip on a Horse's head is always excessive use.***
- ***Striking a horse more than three times after entering the competition ring ~~during a performance~~.***
- ***The whip may never be used after elimination.***

c. In addition, after consultation with the Competition Manager and a Competition Steward,

additional penalties, including one or more of the following: disqualification from competing within the upcoming 24-hour period, disqualification from the balance of the competition.
d. All such violations must be recorded in the Steward's Report.