

Trainer

EUROPEAN EDITION

THE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE FOR THE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE THOROUGHBRED

TEAM TIZZARD

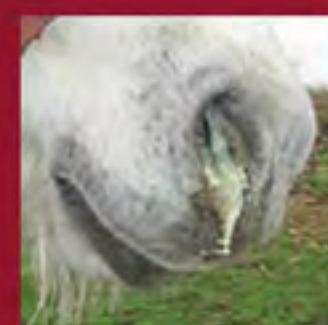
The farming family who have built a leading stable



DRESSAGE
Why it works
for racehorses



WHERE TO START?
Set-up costs across
Europe compared



STRANGLES
How can you
minimise the risk?



LICENSING AND INTEGRITY THE SUBJECT OF LATEST EMHF SEMINAR

NEWS FROM THE EMHF



The word 'integrity' must be one of the most commonly used in the output of Racing Authorities and, in our world, it carries a very particular meaning. Sure, it encompasses the normal definition of 'adherence to moral and ethical principles' but, with us, what we're mostly talking about is the 'straightness' of how our sport is run and of those involved.

The latest in the EMHF's Seminar Programme, hosted and delivered by the British Horseracing Authority and Newbury Racecourse, took integrity as its subject, and majored on the processes and criteria by which trainers, jockeys and others are licensed in Britain, and the structures in place to combat race-fixing and unfair betting practices on horseraces.

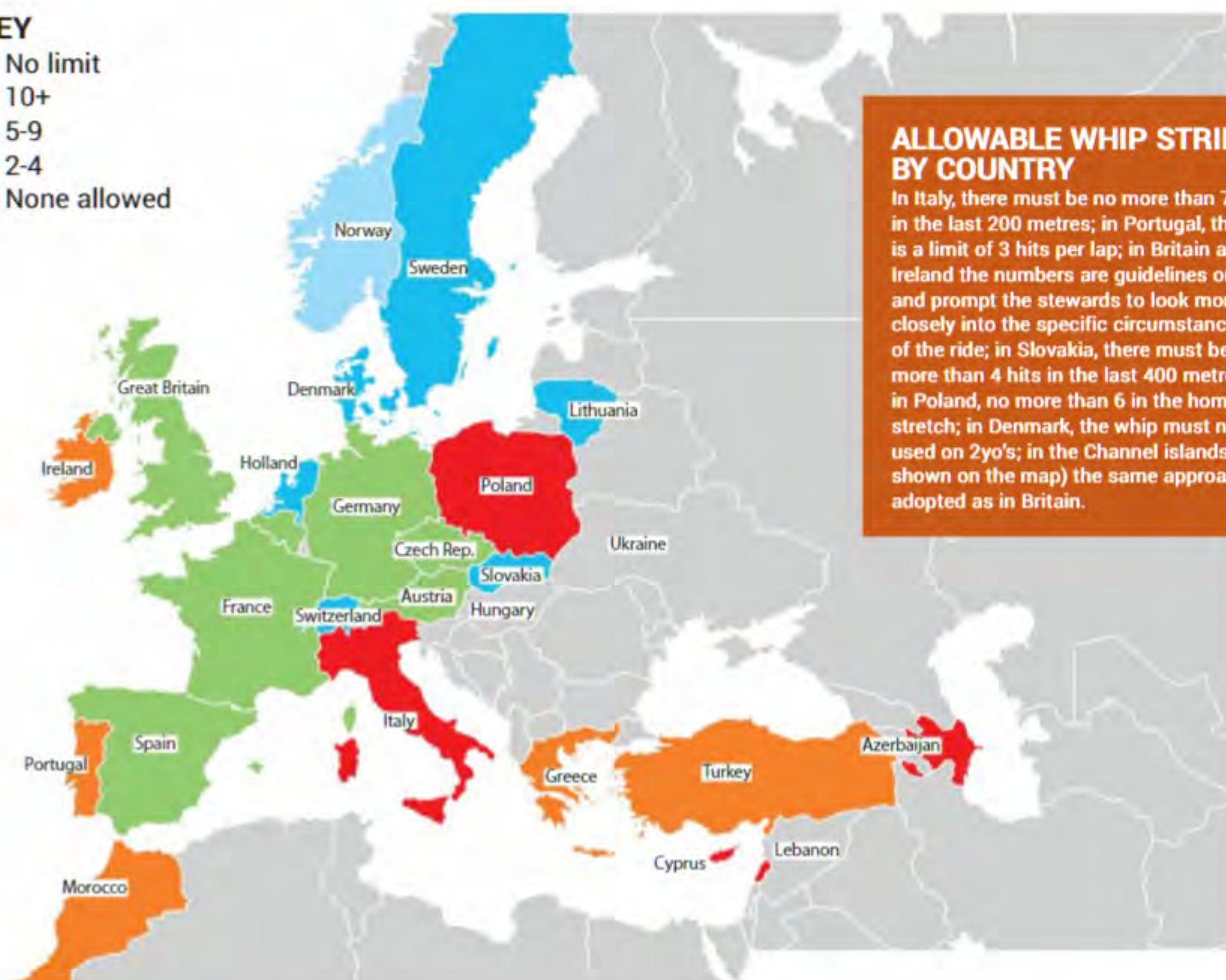
The BHA was an appropriate host, since delegates could benefit from the conclusions reached following a major integrity review that British racing's governing body had undertaken, aimed at improving 'confidence amongst participants and the racing and betting public'. The review confirmed that measures to combat race-fixing and doping remained of paramount importance.

Within the BHA's remit, integrity is certainly given high priority. The very first item under 'Things we do' in its latest annual report reads: 'Keeping racing fair and clean: We aim to maintain the integrity of British racing by supporting participants to comply with the rules and dealing appropriately and effectively with rule breaches'.

The sheer scale and cost of the infrastructure which is committed to this aim, in a major racing nation such as Britain, may surprise readers. The staff complement

KEY

- No limit
- 10+
- 5-9
- 2-4
- None allowed

**ALLOWABLE WHIP STRIKES BY COUNTRY**

In Italy, there must be no more than 7 hits in the last 200 metres; in Portugal, there is a limit of 3 hits per lap; in Britain and Ireland the numbers are guidelines only, and prompt the stewards to look more closely into the specific circumstances of the ride; in Slovakia, there must be no more than 4 hits in the last 400 metres; in Poland, no more than 6 in the home stretch; in Denmark, the whip must not be used on 2yo's; in the Channel islands (not shown on the map) the same approach is adopted as in Britain.

of the BHA's Integrity and Regulatory Departments numbers over 100. Within this total, the 40 or so who make up the field force teams of Clerks of the Scales, Starters, Judges and Inspectors of Courses are outnumbered by those covering areas such as Intelligence (collection, assessment, development), Racing & Betting Analysis, Investigations, Licensing & Registration, Stable Inspections, Anti-Doping and Equine Welfare Integrity.

Sampling and Research alone account for some "3.8M of the BHA's annual €36M budget.

Delegates from Belgium, the Channel Islands, Hungary, Morocco, Slovakia and Turkey attended the two-day course. The first day was spent at the BHA's headquarters on High Holborn, London, for a series of presentations and discussions. The group then travelled down to their hotel base near Newbury, where, following dinner, they were treated to a talk from Tarik Shamel, the Football Association's Head of On-Field Regulation, for some insights into another sport's approach to integrity. The following morning they visited Group-winning trainer Joe Tuite's Felstead Court Stables in Lambourn, before attending the races at Newbury, to witness the pre-race liaison and intelligence-exchange on the forthcoming afternoon's racing. Jonathan Perree, Secretary of the Channel Islands racing authority, felt that "The day out at Newbury, to see the practical application of measures taken, was very insightful."

The seminar in general was well received. "I left with so many ideas to help the company's business", remarked Sara Mansoor, Head of Licensing at SOREC, the Moroccan racing authority. "I attended the seminar because we plan to update our rules, and the matters of licencing and integrity are very important", explained Jan Valtyni, acting Director of the Slovakian authority.

Our thanks, indeed, to the BHA.

HIGH-TECH AND THE WHIP

In the last issue, this column mused on what a map of Europe would look like, if it reflected different countries' limits to the number of times the whip may be used in a race. Well, this is the result. The darkest red represents those countries where there is no such limit; orange is where the number is 10 or more; countries which apply a limit of between five and nine are shown in green; the darker blue is where between one and four strikes are allowed – through to the light blue of Norway, where the whip must not be used. I have interpreted the rules literally and, in the process, no doubt done a disservice to several Racing Authorities, so I have attempted to make up for this by adding foot-notes on some of the nuances of implementation.

You will surely agree, the inverse correlation between latitude and laxity, whilst not perfect, is indeed striking. >

WHIPCHIP ANALYSIS OF THE STRENGTH OF STRIKES ADMINISTERED

01.04.2017 – 16.10.2017 APPLIED ENERGY PER RACE (JOULE)



< There is clearly wide diversity as to the whip usage which is seen to be acceptable. But this is an area of the Rules Book which, more than any other, many countries have seen fit to change – sometimes more than once. And, in every case where the Rule has changed, the number of strikes has been reduced – never increased: the shading on this map would have been far darker a decade ago. So, it would appear that across Europe and the Mediterranean, we are on a journey – and we share the direction of travel.

In setting the Rules surrounding whip use, Racing Authorities are reacting to the very different societal expectations which exist in their respective countries. And, as an option to assist them in this endeavour, a fascinating new tool is now available to them, which has emerged from the world of high technology, bearing the name of WhipChip.

ESIT Electronic Ltd is a Turkish multi-national, more used to utilising sensors to enable the weighing of trucks passing at high-speed. Development of the WhipChip began as a hobby interest of ESIT's President and founder, Ferhat Tigrel. While at the races at Turkey's flagship racecourse, Veliefendi, in 2015, he witnessed a particularly distressing race in which the rider aboard a tired and struggling horse chose to continue to beat it fast and ferociously all the way down the home straight until it collapsed, exhausted, by the winning post.

Tigrel set about designing technology which would enable objective analysis of how a whip is used. This ingenious technology is now a reality – and has been used in all races at Veliefendi this season.

All riders must use purpose-built whips, which look and feel very similar to 'normal' whips. These have, inbuilt into their handles, three electronic movement sensors. One of these sensors measures acceleration;

another, rotational movement; and the third is an 'electronic compass'. Together, they are able to send sufficient information to a microprocessor, also in the whip, for it to distil the data into the number and strength of the hits which the rider has applied.

Whips are available with three different degrees of flexibility, to cater to riders' tastes. It matters not that some riders are using more inflexible crops – whatever their choice, the actual energy transfer at point of contact will be measured by WhipChip.

At Weigh-Out, the rider places his whip – which is linked to him on the Turkish Jockey Club's computer system – into a housing, which confirms that he is declared to ride in the upcoming race. Only at the appointed off-time of the race is the microchip activated. In this way, only hits administered during the race are recorded – should a rider have cause to slap a horse down the neck in order to encourage it to enter the stalls, for example, this will not count against his tally of 10 allowable strikes in the race.

On Weigh-In, data is taken from the whip memory in each rider's whip and transferred to the stewards' computers.

A threshold level has been determined for the acceptable strength of a strike, based on data of actual whip use over a number of races. The Veliefendi stewards can call up on their screens the number of hits administered by each jockey, the strength of those hits and the number, if any, which exceeded that threshold of severity.

This data can be aggregated across time, so that a picture is built up of such things as the overall propensity for specific riders to use their whip and the average force with which they do so.

The result? An overall reduction in whip use. And the stand-out finding? Of all the regular riders in Turkey, one



was clearly the lowest, both in terms of the number of times he hit his mounts on average in a race and of the strength with which he hit them. Did his results suffer as a consequence? On the contrary: the rider was none other than Halis Karatas – Turkey's Champion Jockey.

The Turkish Jockey Club is delighted with the Veliefendi trial, and there are prospects of it being rolled out to all the Turkish racecourses (soon to number ten with the addition of the new track at Antalya). Burak Konuk, Assistant General Manager and closely involved in the initiative, explains:

"We trialled the WhipChip for six months, with success. We didn't have any problems - the jockeys were happy, the officials were happy. For the International Meeting in September it was mandatory, too, but the guest jockeys were also very happy with it. We liked it because it was efficient and friendly to the horse at the same time".

Determining whether a rider has breached the number of hits rule is normally a time-consuming process, involving the scrutiny of the race footage, perhaps from more than one angle, and doing a mental count. In these post-race minutes, time is at a premium, and this technology frees officials up to use their time to better effect. Small wonder, then, that the Veliefendi stewards have embraced WhipChip.

The potential advantages for racing authorities are equally striking. For the first time, critics can be presented with hard, objective data which supports the contention that animal welfare is being protected and that the effect on the horse is being measured and controlled.

It will be fascinating to see whether high-tech whips will soon become as accepted a part of the racing landscape as the photo-finish or electronic scales.

EMHF SETS UP NEW RULES COMMITTEE

The EMHF's new Rules Committee, (this column in the last issue gave background information), duly held its first meeting in Dusseldorf on December 1st. Fortuitous timing, as an important landmark in rules harmonisation had been reached only weeks earlier, on the long-running and vexed question of the different ways in which cases of interference are handled around the world. The International Federation of Horseracing Authorities (IFHA) has announced that its *International Agreement on Breeding, Racing and Wagering* will, for the first time, address this issue, through the introduction of a Model Rule which will set out best practice on the approach raceday Stewards should take when tackling objections on grounds of interference.

The racing world is currently split into two broad camps, and essentially it boils down to how you treat a winner which interfered with another horse whose finishing position was affected, but which would not have beaten the winner but for that interference. If you would let the winner keep the race, you would be in what has become known as Category 1 – a group of countries that includes Britain, Ireland, Asia and Australasia. If, on the other hand, you would demote the winner behind the horse it disadvantaged, you fall into Category 2 – which, hitherto, has included France, Germany and the Americas. The result is that, in different countries, there can be markedly different results following a broadly similar set of circumstances. We can all think of recent examples.

All instances of differences of approach, in whatever aspect of racing administration, are viewed negatively by those who hanker after a universal Rules Book for horseracing, and point, in exasperation, to golf, tennis and other sports as exemplars. (The IFHA

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< has no powers of enforcement, and its International Agreement is but a best-practice document, to which member racing authorities are encouraged to sign up). But this particular example of inconsistency has wider repercussions. Horseracing, as a global endeavour, is not awash with opportunities to boost its future prosperity – and much hope is being placed on accelerated growth in international betting, fostered by simulcasting and the commingling of betting pools. And much is made of punters' reluctance to bet on racing in exotic lands if the way in which the stewards may potentially alter the result is unfamiliar and counter-intuitive to them. Globally consistent interference rules have been seen by some almost as a Holy Grail, and the decision taken in Paris to come down on the side of 'Category 1' was indeed remarkable.

The most recent major racing nation to switch approaches was Japan, and the Japan Racing Association has reported several benefits since joining Category 1. Many countries in our region – including France and Germany – have signalled their intention to move to the Category 1 approach. The education task that should happen in preparation for the change is likely to be widespread, initially involving the stewards themselves, before including trainers, jockeys and other stakeholders as well as the media and wider betting public.

The EMHF has recognised that we have a role in assisting the 'smaller' racing nations in our region who choose to make the leap. The Irish Turf Club has stepped up in a most generous way – by offering two seminars early in the New Year, one in Ireland and one in Scandinavia, to which member countries may send their senior decision-makers in this area.

Beyond this, all Rules Committee representatives agreed to make themselves available for member

countries to submit to them, for comment and guidance, race footage of examples from their own countries where the decision was a close call, particularly where it might have been different if applying the Category 1 philosophy, rather than Category 2. I believe this can do nothing but improve the consistency of decision-making across our region, something that we all - regulators, trainers, owners and public alike – want to see.

The EMHF Rules Committee is made of the following: Rudiger Schmanns, Director of Racing at the Direktorium (Chair), Denis Egan, Chief Executive, Irish Turf Club, Helena Gartner, Chief Administrative Officer at the Swedish Horseracing Authority, Dr. Paull Khan, Secretary-General, EMHF, Dr. Martina Krejci, Secretary-General of the Jockey Club of the Czech Republic, Henri Pouret, Director of Racecourse Regulation at France-Galop and Jamie Stier, Chief Regulatory Officer of the British Horseracing Authority. ■

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