

## 2024 PROPOSED RULE CHANGES

*The following proposed rule and bylaw changes will be considered by the membership at each district's annual meeting and will be voted on by the USTA Board of Directors at the 2024 Annual Meeting. Additions are **bold underlined**; deletions are ~~struck out~~.*

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### **1. A proposal to amend existing Rule 4.114 and 13.05 (e) to add verbiage for purse money distribution in no-contest races:**

4.114 No Contest—If the judges are unable to properly judge the running or finish of a race, they may declare the race “no contest.” ~~(When the race is declared no contest, all monies wagered are refunded, and no purse distribution may be made.)~~ **When a race is declared a no contest, all monies wagered are refunded and purse distribution shall be made per Rule 13.05. Purse money distributed as a result of such contest shall be added to the lifetime earnings of each horse but will not affect eligibility.**

13.05 Purse Money Distribution.—Unless otherwise provided in the conditions, all purses shall be distributed on the heat basis with the money awarded according to a horse's position in each separate heat of the race.

*(a) through (d) unchanged*

(e) If there be any premium or premiums for which horses have started but were unable to finish ~~in due~~ to an **no contest** accident all unoffending horses who did not finish will share equally in such premium or premiums;

**1. An equal premium distribution shall be made to all non-offending horses if the judges determine a deliberate or negligent action by a driver, participant, or horse caused the no contest, and no premium distribution shall be made to an offending horse; or,**

**2. An equal premium distribution shall be made to all horses in a race if the judges determine the no contest was the result of unintentional error, omission, or outside force with no fault attributable to any horse, driver, or participant.**

3. ~~b~~**But** where there are fewer unoffending horses failing to finish than there are premiums for which horses have started but have not finished, the number of premiums in excess of the number of unoffending horses not finishing shall go to the winner.

(f) If there be any premium or premiums for which horses have started but were unable to finish and the situation is not covered by the preceding such premium shall be paid to the winner.

Sponsors: Jason Roth, District 1 Director; Renée Mancino, London, OH; TC Lane & Michele Kopiec, USTA Staff

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### **2. A proposal to amend existing Rule 4.34 Corresponding Officer and 8.07 Designation of Corresponding Officer and add new Rule 26.33 Ownership Percentages:**

4.34 Corresponding Officer—The person designated by all members of a stable, farm or corporation **as per Rule 8.07** to sign documents on their behalf relative to the registration and/or transfer of ownership of a horse.

8.07 Designation of Corresponding Officer.—Each member of a registered farm, corporation, stable, or stallion syndicate should sign a document designating the name and address of the corresponding officer thereof. As used in Rule 8, the word “corporate” name shall include the name of a corporation, partnership, limited liability company, trust, and any other recognized legal entity. **The corresponding officer shall be determined by:**

**(a) The individual with the largest share of ownership of the animal after the partnership/stable has been established; or,**

**(b) In the case of equal share ownership or in partnership entities where the corresponding offer has no ownership, the corresponding officer shall be determined upon and agreed to by all participants of the partnership/stable after it has been established.**

26.33 Ownership Percentages.—The percentage of ownership of each ownership entity within a registered farm, corporation, stable, or stallion syndicate shall be recorded upon the initial registration of any horse as well as any

transfer, claim or change to registration that may take place thereafter.

Sponsor: Jon Wiesman, Middle River, MD

[The sponsor states: “Here is the scenario: A trainer buys a horse at a sale and sells off pieces of the horse to make up a stable or partnership. In most of the cases, the trainer retains a very small percentage of the horse. They file the paperwork with the USTA and so they automatically become the said ‘corresponding officer’ and subsequently are listed ‘first’ on the registration papers. In the eyes of the USTA, whoever is listed first automatically becomes the ‘controlling’ officer of the stable or partnership. In most cases, the other owners/partners in the horse have little or no say, so they are basically held hostage until someone either buys them out at a dramatically reduced value, the horse is sold in a public auction, or the situation is handled in court. Honestly, this could be construed as ‘restraint of free trade.’ After experiencing two very bad partnerships, where the owners had no say over the trainer, I feel that the corresponding officer should be based upon ownership percentage and not listed first on the registration certificate. This then protects the members of the partnership/stable from that ‘boxed-in’ feeling that they have no say. This should also eliminate a lot of excess paperwork and phone calls from troubled partners of a partnership/stable calling the USTA with their grievance because the partners now have an out. Having a set of rules/guidelines could very well reduce this situation and maybe keep more people in the sport. Honestly, a new person to the Standardbred industry, especially like a business person, would say, “Once and done, no more,” and then the industry loses as a whole because of one bad situation that could have been avoided. I think this rule change, if approved, will do more to ‘pre-resolve’ disputes, not to mention lessen the interaction of the USTA where owners expect it to resolve their problems.”]

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**3. A proposal to amend existing Rule 5.16 Medical Assistance to delete “other suitable transportation,” define “ambulance” and clarify that no horses should be on the racetrack, or a race be conducted before another ambulance is on site:**

5.16 Medical Assistance.—At all member tracks where harness races are conducted, it shall be the responsibility of the track member to have a licensed paramedic, emergency medical technician, or the equivalent, and an ambulance or other suitable transportation available on the premises with direct proximity, clear visibility and immediate access to the racetrack during the period beginning 30 minutes prior to the post time for the first race on the program, or first qualifying race, through the conclusion of the racing program. For the purposes of this rule, “ambulance” or “other suitable transportation” shall be defined as one capable of transporting injured parties to an appropriate medical facility and staffed with two or more state certified paramedics that are equipped to treat trauma and acute illness. At no time shall the ambulance be left unmanned; at least one licensed paramedic shall remain with the ambulance at all times. Such ambulance shall be properly and fully equipped to include a defibrillator and other such equipment as directed by the respective regulatory authority, licensed to operate on public highways and ready for immediate transportation to a medical facility. In the case of an injury, the medical team on site shall have the discretion to transport immediately and have a backup ambulance called to replace them or call for backup to transport depending on the severity of the injury. The permit holder must not allow any horses on the racetrack and may not conduct a race until another ambulance is on site.

Current rule:

5.16 Medical Assistance.—At all member tracks where harness races are conducted it shall be the responsibility of the track member to have a licensed paramedic, emergency medical technician, or the equivalent and an ambulance or other suitable transportation available on the premises during the period beginning 30 minutes prior to the post time for the first race on the program, or first qualifying race, through the conclusion of the racing program. For the purposes of this rule “ambulance” or “other suitable transportation” shall be defined as one capable of transporting injured parties to an appropriate medical facility. In the case of an injury, the medical team on site shall have the discretion to transport immediately and have a backup ambulance called to replace them or call for backup to transport depending on the severity of the injury.

Sponsor: Dr. Scott Woogen, District 11 Director; Robert McHugh, Harness Horsemen’s Association of New England, President

**4. A proposal to amend existing Rule 5.17 Accident Warning Lights as follows:**

5.17 Accident Warning Lights.—Every extended pari-mutuel track member shall be equipped with a three-light system of green, yellow and red beacon-style warning lights and sirens for use in the event of an accident. Every non-extended pari-mutuel track member shall be equipped at a minimum with a red beacon-style warning light and siren for use in the event of an accident.

Sponsor: Jason Roth, District 1 Director, Renée Mancino, London, OH

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**5. A proposal to amend Rule 5 to add new subsection 5.21 to include a requirement for a chain-link fence in front of the grandstand at county fairs:**

5.21 All member county fair tracks shall have a 10-12 foot chain-link fence from one end to the other in front of the grandstand.

Sponsor: Mary Martin, Honesdale, PA

[The sponsor states: “My family owns several starting gates; we do all the NY and PA fairs. This is a safety issue.”]

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**6. A proposal to amend existing Rule 6.11(g) Duties of the Judges to add the requirement of driving-line buckles to be taped in addition to the current requirement of taping front hobble hangers:**

6.11 (g) Require all buckles on front hobble hangers and driving-line buckles attached to the bit be taped with black tape.

Sponsors: Mark Loewe, USTA Vice Chairperson; Ray Schnittker, District 8 Director

[The sponsors state: “Safety! Pocono Downs has adopted this policy.”]

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**7. A proposal to amend existing Rule 6.11 Duties of the Judges (h) to add new subsection (6) in regard to accident warning lights and siren:**

6.11 Duties of the judges.—

(a) through (g) unchanged

(h) The following shall be considered grounds for the judges to declare a heat or race a “no contest”:

1. In the event an accident occurs on the track during a heat or race and the field must pass the spot of the accident before the finish;
2. If one or more driver or horse is down;
3. If, in the opinion of the judges, the safety of the drivers and horses are in jeopardy due to an incident;
4. If a horse is traveling clockwise;
5. ~~Or, i~~n the event the racetrack is thrown into darkness during the progress of a race by failure of electricity; ~~or,~~
6. The judges activate the red accident warning light and siren.

Sponsor: Jason Roth, District 1 Director; Renée Mancino, London, OH

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**8. A proposal to amend existing Rule 6.11 Duties of the Judges to add new subsection (i) in regard to racing in extreme weather:**

6.11 (i) When a severe weather warning has been issued by the National Weather Service, racing shall be cancelled, delayed or postponed if the heat index, wind chill, lightning, or air quality is dangerous to the health and safety of equine and human participants.

Sponsor: Carroll Hays, Williamsville, IL

[The sponsor states: “I know that at least some tracks have policies that races are canceled if the wind chill reaches -20 degrees, but I can find nothing about any cancellations because of extreme heat. I propose that anytime the National Weather Service posts an extreme heat index, extreme cold, lightning or air quality warning, races shall be postponed until it is once again safe for all participants and spectators, or cancel if conditions will not improve. We cannot have people or horses suffer heat stroke or death!”]

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**9. A proposal to amend existing Rule 6.12 Procedure of the Judges (a) and add new subsection (d) (and re-letter [e] and [f]) as follows:**

6.12 Procedure of the Judges.—It shall be the procedure of the judges to:

(a) Be in the judges’ stand 15 minutes before the first race and remain in the stand at all times when the on-site medical team is on premises, in place, and ready to provide medical assistance consistent with Rule 5.16 the horses are upon the track.

*(b) and (c) unchanged*

(d) Monitor, control and trigger the accident-warning lights. From the time medical assistance is available, the judges will activate the green “all clear” light to signal no known problems on the race-track.

1. If at any point during the card the judges determine there is a condition on the racetrack requiring the drivers to proceed with caution, the judges will activate the yellow “caution” warning light.

2. The judges shall activate the red light and siren to declare a race a “no contest” due to safety issues. Upon the activation of the red light and siren, all drivers in a race will immediately cease racing and follow any instructions of the judges, starter, track announcer, or racing officials to get off the track as quickly and safely as they can. Drivers refusing to stop racing may be subject to a monetary penalty or suspension.

3. When the red “no contest” light is turned off, the judges will activate the green “all clear” light as a signal for warm-ups and live racing to resume.

(e) (d) Post the “objection” sign, or “inquiry” sign, on the odds board in the case of a complaint or possible rule violation, and immediately notify the announcer of the objection or inquiry and the horse or horses involved. As soon as the judges have made a decision, the “objection” sign or “inquiry” sign shall be removed, the correct placing displayed, and the “official” sign flashed. In all instances the judges shall post the order of finish and the “official” sign as soon as they have made their decision. In addition the judges shall cause the “inquiry” sign to be posted whenever there has been an accident during the course of the race.

(f) (e) Display the photo sign if the order of finish among the contending horses is less than a half-length or a contending horse is on a break at the finish.

Sponsor: Jason Roth, District 1 Director; Renée Mancino, London, OH

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**10. A proposal to amend existing Rule 9.02(c) Owner Names on Electronic Eligibility to increase the number of names issued on electronic eligibility from four to an unlimited number (all owners):**

(c) Owner Names on Electronic Eligibility.—The names of all owners including beneficial owners shall be listed on the electronic eligibility. The electronic eligibility shall not be issued in the names of more than four persons. In the event five or more names are reported to the USTA, the electronic eligibility shall be issued only in four or fewer including registered farm, corporate, syndicate, or stable names, which must be registered in accordance with Rule 8.01.

Sponsor: Tim Roach, Columbiaville, MI

[The sponsor states: “I realize there is only room for four on most programs; put ‘et al’ for all owners not listed. We should try to make it easier to be an owner. I know a stable is an option, but it costs more, and some new owners are one and done. Not to mention banking situations. Let’s make it as easy as possible to get small-percentage people involved.”]

**11. A proposal to amend current Rule 9.02(c) Owner Names on Electronic Eligibility to increase the number of names issued on electronic eligibility from four to six:**

(c) **Owner Names on Electronic Eligibility.**—The names of all owners including beneficial owners shall be listed on the electronic eligibility. The electronic eligibility shall not be issued in the names of more than ~~six~~ **four** persons. In the event ~~seven~~ **five** or more names are reported to the USTA, the electronic eligibility shall be issued only in ~~six~~ **four** or fewer including registered farm, corporate, syndicate or stable names, which must be registered in accordance with Rule 8.01.

**Sponsor: Andrew Cohen, Englewood, CO**

[The sponsor states: “Rule 9.02(c) and any other rules that limit ownership to four entities should be amended to a limit of six entities. This will allow owners to save registration fees while still providing transparency of ownership. Programs no longer need addresses of owners. In this age of partnerships, the four-owner rule is outdated. It forces individuals to hide their names behind ‘stable’ names. It also forces USTA members to pay for those stable names. Six-owner rules will reduce costs and provide more transparency in programs.”]

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**12. A proposal to amend existing Rule 9.07 Horses 15 Years of Age or Older to read:**

**9.07 Horses 15 Years of Age or Older.**—No horse that is 15 years of age or older is eligible to perform in any race.

Current Rule:

**9.07 Horses 15 Years of Age or Older.**—No horse that is 15 years of age or older is eligible to perform in any race except matinees, county fair races, and races exclusively for amateur or club drivers as sanctioned by the USTA, or non-betting racing-under-saddle events, and no electronic eligibility shall be issued for such a horse except for a performance in such races.

**Sponsor: Mark Loewe, USTA Vice Chairperson**

[The sponsor states: “As vice chairperson of the USTA, I and the board are always questioned as to why we are not representing most of the membership. This rule change is being proposed for two reasons. In 2022, a rule change proposal was introduced specific to SIX (6) horses in the entire racing population. When we start changing our rule book for less than 1/100<sup>th</sup> of the population, as important as everyone is, we are not serving our membership properly. Secondly, from an optics point of view, with the general opposition to racing and opponents looking for opportunities to criticize our industry, this rule change may prevent a situation ripe for criticism.”]

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**13. A proposal to amend existing Rule 13.04(c) Number of Starters to add language to give the presiding judge authority, prior to the draw, to not allow more than one tier of horses to start at county fair tracks:**

**13.04 Number of Starters—**

(c) In overnight events at extended pari-mutuel meetings and other meetings, not more than eight horses shall be allowed to start on a half-mile racetrack and not more than 10 horses on larger tracks. Trailers are not permitted where the racetrack has room to score all horses abreast allowing eight feet per horse, unless otherwise agreed upon by the track member and representative horsemen’s association. Presiding judges at county fairs, at their discretion, and prior to the draw, shall have the authority to limit the number of starters in a race to a number less than 10 or limit the number of starters to a single tier with no trailers, if in their judgment starting 10 horses or two tiers of horses would be unsafe, taking into account the condition of the racetrack, the width of the racetrack and the class of horses participating.

**Sponsor: Michelle Miller, Milford, NY**

[The sponsor states: “I realize this does not apply to all states that have fair racing, but in New York some of the tracks are not safe to score 6 horses, let alone have two tiers of horses. Judges should have the ability to not allow

trailers if the track isn't wide enough or if the track conditions are poor. Most tracks do not allow P drivers to drive in tiered races because of safety issues, yet at the fairs we stack them up. This makes no sense since fairs are where many drivers get their start. I realize not all fairs are small and as bad as in New York, so I do not want to make something that would negatively affect other states, but at the same time something needs to be done for the safety of horses and drivers. I believe all horses should be able to start at the fairs on the gate because most are all two- and three-years old just learning. I have spoken with many horsemen in New York as well as a county fair judge and they all agree that this is a good idea.”]

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**14. A proposal to amend existing Rule 14.10 Preference Date to add subsection (b) (and renumber current subsections [b] and [c]) regarding the splitting of horses in multiple divisions as follows:**

**14.10 (b) When there is more than one division in any race, horses will be split by owners, then trainers for each division.**

Sponsor: Shane Bacon, Executive Director, Maine State Harness Racing Commission

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**15. A proposal to amend existing Rule 14 Declaration, Drawing of Post Positions, Post Draw to add new subsection 14.19 Public Draw Results (and renumber current Rules 14.19-14.24):**

**14.19 Public Draw Results.—All draw results, including method of drawing, shall be made public at the time of posting on the association website. Information shall include, but not be limited to:**

- (a) Method of drawing;**
- (b) Total number of entries;**
- (c) Number of times the “randomizer” was used for each race;**
- (d) Explanation of why another method to draw was used (if applicable); and**
- (e) Justification of “handicapped” draws (i.e., earnings, class, etc.)**

Sponsor: Rod Allums Jr., Risingsun, OH

[The sponsor states: “There are too many instances of horsemen complaining about the electronic draw system. Since improving the current draw system is taboo, all draw results should be made public. These changes are very easy to implement into posting of entries and take mere seconds to do, if there are no discrepancies. This will take away doubt that a horse was ‘assigned’ or ‘given’ an outside post position in any given draw. TRANSPARENCY IS A MUST!”]

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**16. A proposal to amend existing Rule 14.17 Judges Approval of Drivers to add language to require a driver to drive a horse on which he/she is listed, if not listed on any other:**

**14.17 Judges Approval of Drivers.—No driver may be changed without permission of the judges and for good cause. When an entry starts two or more horses, the judges shall approve or disapprove the second and third drivers. When a driver is listed as the first or only choice on a horse in a race and is not listed as first choice on any other horse in the race, the driver shall not have the option of taking off to drive another horse in the race.**

Sponsor: Mindy Findling Repko, Delray Beach, FL

[The sponsor states: “This is being proposed in the interest of fairness to the owners and trainers.”]

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**17. A proposal to amend existing Rule 16 to add new subsection 16.08 (and renumber current Rules 16.08-16.18) to add verbiage for a recall/restart penalty as follows:**

**16.08 Restart Penalty.—Any horse identified by the starter as responsible for causing a race to be recalled will be penalized and reassigned to the outermost post position for the secondary restart. Should that same entrant be identified as causing a second recall, the horse will be scratched from the race and be required to requalify. Any**

and all causes (equipment failure, interference to other horses, etc.) as specified by Rule 16.07 will trigger this penalty enforcement.

Sponsor: Jack Froschauer, Vandalia, OH

[The sponsor states: “All contestants are required to arrive at least three hours in advance of post time. Trainers and/or grooms should find that to be an abundant amount of time to inspect equipment, secure it as it should be and be certain that their entry is prepared to compete, without exception. Failure to rig a horse satisfactorily violates spirit of fair play and demonstrates lack of understanding of sport protocol and inexcusable, irresponsible behavior. Younger racehorses and especially older racehorses are unfairly and unnecessarily handicapped by horses sent to post parade with gear unprepared and/or untrained to maintain assigned lane behavior. Causing all entrants to approach the gate under full acceleration, only to be called off and expected to begin again in spent condition destroys the integrity of the start and competitive conditions expected by the wagering public. Moreover, failure to adequately inspect equipment puts all drivers at risk of participating with competing horses under unsafe conditions.”]

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**18. A proposal to amend existing Rule 16.09 Violations of the Starting Rule by moving (a) to new subsection 16.10 (and renumbering current rules 16.10-16.18) to add additional language and a penalty for delaying the start:**

16.10 Penalty for Causing Start of Race to be Delayed.—Any horse returning to the paddock after stepping on the track for the post parade, thereby causing a race to be unnecessarily delayed, will be penalized by the starter. Subsequent to returning to the track for the race, the horse in violation will be reassigned to the outermost post position. No excuse nor explanation by involved parties will serve as justification for such disruption.

Sponsor: Jack Froschauer, Vandalia, OH

[The sponsor states: “All contestants are required to arrive well in advance of post time. Trainers and/or grooms are libel to inspect equipment and secure as should and be certain that their entry is prepared to compete as scheduled. Preparatory failing, thereby causing that entrant to require additional correction, is irresponsible. The remaining ready-to-race entries are left to wait and wander the infield, continue scoring and essentially biding time, despite having met their responsibility to race as/when scheduled. The horse that requires additional paddock attention is solely culpable for upsetting the program and competitive conditions expected by other horsemen and the wagering public. Releasing a horse to post parade without inspecting and securing equipment puts all drivers and horses at risk under unsafe conditions during warm-up period and possibly under race conditions.”]

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**19. A proposal to amend existing Rule 18.02 Requirements for Filing An Objection to remove “before dismounting” in the second sentence as follows:**

**18.02 Requirements for Filing an Objection.**—All complaints by drivers of any foul driving or other misconduct during the race must be made at the termination of the race unless the driver is prevented from doing so by an accident or injury. Any driver desiring to enter a claim of foul or other complaint of violation of the rules must ~~before dismounting~~ indicate to the judges a desire to enter such claim or complaint and forthwith upon dismounting shall proceed to the telephone or judges’ stand where and when such claim, objection or complaint shall be immediately entered. The judges shall not cause the “official” sign to be displayed until such claim, objection or complaint shall have been entered and considered.

Sponsor: Shane Bacon, Executive Director, Maine State Harness Racing Commission

[The sponsor states: “We changed the objection rule by the driver to read like this. In my experience drivers have not put an objection in with the starter, but after thinking of it or conferring with the trainer of the horse, they would go to the paddock judge and enter an objection. I think by making it mandatory for a driver to, before dismounting, put the objection in with only the starter is handcuffing the driver if he so chooses to change his mind after going by the starter. And also being on the witness stand and having an attorney ask if the driver dismounted before his objection and if he did the objection by rule was not to be heard. This language eliminates that. It is

*up to the driver to put the objection in before the race is declared official. If he waits, he rolls the dice on the time factor. This is the way our Maine rule reads now.”]*

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**20. A proposal to amend existing *Rule 18 Racing and Racetrack Rules* to add new subsection (18.18) *Time of Actual Post Time* (and re-number current *Rule 18.18 – 18.25*):**

**18.18 Time of Actual Post Time.**—Horses must race within 30 minutes of their assigned Lasix window.

(a) Exceptions to the 30-minute window include:

1. Tote delay
2. Accident on track
3. Power outage
4. Emergency situation(s) in race paddock

(b) In the event of weather delays, any race that is not conducted within the 30-minute window shall be cancelled.

Sponsor: Rod Allums Jr., Risingsun, OH

[The sponsor states: “Horsemen pay for Lasix to prevent their horses from hemorrhaging during a race. Studies have shown the effectiveness of Lasix deteriorates over time (half-life in horses is two to four hours). Studies have also shown that Lasix has NO diuretic effect in racehorses after four hours of intravenous injection. Long delays for a track to make an extra \$100 (based on an additional \$15,000 bet in takeout) via simulcast is absurd. Horsemen pay for the medication to be effective in their horses.”]

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**21. A proposal to amend existing *Rule 18.21(b) Sulky Performance Standards/Approval and General Provisions* to add language to new subsection (4) regarding a warranty for manufacturer defects or sulky recall:**

18.21 (b) General Provisions

4. All newly purchased sulkies will have a five-year warranty provided by the manufacturer and/or the USTA. The warranty will cover manufacturer defects or sulky recall due to failure not discovered during testing.

Sponsor: Casey Leonard, District 5 Director

[The sponsor states: “The 3D model being removed from the approved list shows there is a need to protect our participants, not only physically but financially. What good is the testing if we can’t stand behind the results? Manufacturers should be confident in their product.”]

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**22. A proposal to amend existing *Rule 18.21 (k) Sulky Committee* to move subsection (3) to new section (l) *Other Provisions* and to add additional language as (2) and (3) in regard to the change of ownership of a sulky manufacturer and modification of a previously approved sulky:**

(l) Other Provisions

1. Any change of name to a previously approved sulky must be reported to the USTA within 30 days by submitting a signed affidavit indicating the previous and current name of the sulky model. Failure to submit an affidavit within 30 days shall result in a fine of \$1,000.
2. A change of ownership to a sulky manufacturing company must be reported to the USTA within 30 days of sale by submitting a signed affidavit by the former and new owner. Failure to submit an affidavit within 30 days shall result in a fine of \$1,000 to both parties.
3. In the event a previously approved sulky is modified in any way, including but not limited to change in materials used or any change to style, such modification must be reported to the USTA and the modified version may be required to undergo additional performance testing at the expense of the manufacturer. Failure to submit any modification shall result in a fine of \$5,000.



Current Rule:

(k) Sulky Committee

1. The President shall appoint a sulky committee which shall have the authority to establish guidelines and recommendations for the design, performance and certification of racing sulkies.
2. The sulky committee shall have the authority to authorize variances from these standards and may approve for use any sulky which does not qualify under the above sections if in their opinion the sulky does not pose a safety hazard, does not impair the horse or driver and does not undermine the competitiveness of the horse and/or driver.
3. Any change of name to a previously approved sulky must be reported to the USTA within 30 days by submitting a signed affidavit indicating the previous and current name of the sulky model. Failure to submit an affidavit within 30 days shall result in a fine of \$1,000.

Sponsor: Michele Kopiec, USTA Staff

[The sponsor states: “USTA Rule 4.181 states ‘...Only sulkies that have been approved by the USTA under provisions of Rule 18.21 (Sulky Performance Standards/Approval) shall be used at track member or contract tracks.’ Each sulky on the approved sulky list, once presented to the USTA, is measured to make sure it meets the criteria set forth in 18.21(c) through(j) and is then sent to the University of Dayton to be tested extensively for static and dynamic load. If the sulky passes both, it is placed on the approved list. To ensure the safety of human and equine participants, if any modifications are made to the originally approved sulky, it should again be evaluated, i.e., both measurements and testing should be redone. For record keeping, any change of ownership of a sulky manufacturer should also be reported to the USTA.”]

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**23. Housekeeping item—A proposal to combine current Rules 20.12-20.14 to remove repetitive language regarding the reporting of a Coggins’s test (this change will also renumber Rules 20.12-20.19). (See also proposal #24; if both proposals are approved, the language in both shall be combined and presented to the Rules Committee at the 2024 annual meeting):**

**20.12 Coggins Test.—It shall be the responsibility of the trainer of a horse to furnish to the racing office a negative “Coggins Test Certificate” properly identifying the horse by lip tattoo, freeze brand or microchip number issued by an approved laboratory certifying that within the prior 12 months the horse has been tested negative, before it will be allowed entrance to or remain upon the grounds of a track member conducting any type of meeting. Such report shall be entered on the electronic eligibility of the horse.**

**(a) When it is determined that a horse is infected with and/or is a carrier of equine infectious anemia, such horse shall thereafter be prohibited from racing and/or being stabled at a track member.**

**(b) No owner, trainer, driver, attendant or other person representing a horse which has previously tested positive for equine infectious anemia shall knowingly cause said horse to be declared into any race; and no owner, trainer, driver, attendant or other person shall seek to bring about the transfer of such a horse without first notifying the prospective purchaser or transferee of the fact that the horse had previously tested positive for equine infectious anemia.**

Current Rules:

**20.12 Coggins Test.—**When it is determined that a horse is infected with and/or is a carrier of equine infectious anemia by means of the “Gel Immuno-Diffusion” method developed by Dr. Leroy Coggins hereinafter known as the “Coggins test” and conducted by an approved laboratory such horse shall thereafter be prohibited from racing and/or being stabled at a track member.

A negative “Coggins Test Certificate” properly identifying the horse by lip tattoo, freeze brand or microchip number issued by an approved laboratory certifying that within the prior 12 months the horse has been tested negative shall be presented to a track member for any horse before it will be allowed entrance to or remain upon the grounds of a track member conducting meetings.

**20.13 Equine Infectious Anemia Positive Horse.—**No owner, trainer, driver, attendant or other person representing a horse which has previously tested positive for equine infectious anemia shall knowingly cause said horse to

be declared into any race; and no owner, trainer, driver, attendant or other person shall seek to bring about the transfer of such a horse without first notifying the prospective purchaser or transferee of the fact that the horse had previously tested positive for equine infectious anemia.

**20.14 Furnish Negative Coggins Test Certificate.**—It shall be the responsibility of the trainer of a horse to furnish to the racing office all pertinent information regarding the Coggins test of the horse so that it may be entered on the electronic eligibility of the horse prior to the horse’s first start in the current year

**Sponsor:** Michele Kopiec, USTA Staff

[The sponsor states: “*The three current rules, 20.12-20.14, contain redundant language. This change will streamline the rule.*”]

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**24. A proposal to amend existing Rule 20.14 Furnish Negative Coggins Test Certificate to rename as Furnish Negative Coggins Test Certificate/Vaccine Documentation and add additional verbiage as follows (see also proposal #23; if both proposals are approved, the language in both shall be combined and presented to the Rules Committee at the 2024 annual meeting):**

**20.14 Furnish Negative Coggins Test Certificate/Vaccination Documentation.**—It shall be the responsibility of the trainer of a horse to furnish to the racing office all pertinent information regarding the Coggins test **and all vaccine documentation** of the horse, **and it shall be required to be** so that it may be entered on the electronic eligibility of the horse prior to the horse’s first start in the current year. **Each track shall also be required to hold such documents for the current year.**

**Sponsor:** Neal Ehrhart, Lititz, PA

[The sponsor states: “*Many horses change ownership, move from track to track or change trainers many times during the course of a racing year. Oftentimes the vaccination or Coggins report are not available to the new connections or the next track. As a result, many needless Coggins tests are drawn and, more seriously, horses are over-vaccinated several times in one year, way beyond the recommended dosage. While many racing departments are diligent about recording vaccinations and Coggins through eTrack, many tracks do not follow this saving practice. I am hereby advocating for all tracks and racing departments to uniformly abide by the practice of recording all vaccination types and dates administered, as well as Coggins reports to be recorded in eTrack so that they may be viewed on the Pathway eligibility report as well as retaining paper documentation for the current year. This rule will be a welcome change for all owners and, more importantly, keep our horses healthy.*”]

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**25. A proposal to amend existing Rule 26.07 Names as follows:**

**26.07 Names.—**

**(a) A name may be submitted on the registration application or through online registration. Name selections should be listed in order of preference. Names will be assigned based upon availability and compliance with the naming rules as stated herein. When a foreign language name is submitted, an English translation must be furnished to the USTA. An explanation must accompany “coined” or “made-up” names that have no apparent meaning.**

**(b) Horses may be named by January 1st, subsequent to their foaling without penalty. Foals may be registered unnamed provided an application for a name is submitted prior to January 1st of the 2-year-old year.**

**(c) Names may be reserved for later use for one year from the date of reservation unless renewed (see fee schedule). Reserved names cannot be used until notification requesting the assignment of the name to a specific horse is received by the registry office. If the reserved name is not used or renewed within one year from its reservation, it may become available for any horse.**

**(d) A horse’s name may be changed at any time prior to starting in its first race if the horse has not been used for breeding (mating). After a horse has started in its first race or if the horse has been used for breeding (mating), a name may not be changed.**

- (e) The prescribed fee (see fee schedule) and the registration certificate must accompany any request to the USTA for a change of name.
- (f) Names of horses that were never used for breeding or racing may be available for use one year from the date of their death as reported, or 15 years after their foaling date.
- (g) The following classes of names are not eligible for use:
1. Names consisting of more than 18 letters (spaces count as letters);
  2. Names with punctuation marks;
  3. Names ending in “filly,” “colt,” “stud,” “mare,” “stallion,” or any similar horse-related term;
  4. Names consisting of numbers may be used only if they are spelled out;
  5. Names ending with “JR,” “the Second” or “the Third,” etc.
  6. Names of living persons unless written permission to use their name is on file with the USTA;
  7. Names of persons no longer living unless approval is granted by the USTA based upon a satisfactory written explanation submitted to the registrar;
  8. Names of racetracks or stakes races;
  9. Names that in the judgment and discretion of the registrar:
    - i. Have clear commercial, artistic or creative significance, including any name “trade-marked;”
    - ii. Contain profanity or suggest a vulgar or obscene meaning;
    - iii. Are likely to be offensive or threatening based upon factors including, but not limited to, color, creed, disability, ethnicity, gender, national origin, race, religion, politics, or sexual orientation;
    - iv. Appear to be designed to harass, humiliate, or disparage a specific individual, group, or entity;
    - v. Are inflammatory or are likely to invoke controversy;
    - vi. Are demeaning to the horse or to the Standardbred sport;
  10. Names of a prior registered horse unless 12 years have elapsed since:
    - i. That horse last raced;
    - ii. The progeny of any mare are active either in racing or breeding;
  11. Names of any stallion or mare who sired or foaled a horse with an honored name, as described below. Horses—A horse meeting one or more of the following criteria is deemed to have an honored name which may never be used again:
    - i. Horses in the Harness Racing Hall of Fame;
    - ii. Horses that have won a USHWA Dan Patch or HTA Nova Award;
    - iii. Horses that have won a Joe O’Brien Award (Canadian champions);
    - iv. Horses that have set a world’s record;
    - v. Cumulative career money winners of the following:
      - Foaled prior to 1970—\$150,000
      - Foaled 1971-1980—\$250,000
      - Foaled 1981-1990—\$500,000
      - Foaled 1991-2000—\$1,000,000
      - Foaled 2001 or after \$1,500,000; and
    - vi. Horses who have won the final of the Hambletonian, Kentucky Futurity, Yonkers Trot, Dexter Cup, Little Brown Jug, Meadowlands Pace, North America Cup, Messenger Stake, Cane Pace, Adios Stake, or their companion filly division finals; as well as any finals of all divisions of the Breeders Crown.
  12. Names similar in spelling or pronunciation to active horses or honored names (e.g., Nigh A Tross will be rejected as Niatross is an honored name);
  13. Names of horses appearing within the first five generations of the pedigree of the foal for which the attempt is made;
  14. Names that include the name of a registered farm or stable that has reserved their “brand”—e.g., Hanover, Blue Chip, etc.
  15. Names that include part or all of a prominent stallion line (e.g., Dragon, Bunny, etc.) if the foal is not a descendant of that line, or neither stallion or dam have that name included in their own.
- (h) The Registrar of the United States Trotting Association reserves the right of approval and disapproval

on all name requests. The Registrar further reserves the right to require a name change and/or to immediately revoke an issued name.

Current Rule:

26.07 Names.—

(a) Names for proposed registration shall be limited to four words and a total of 18 spaces.

(b) Horses may not be registered under a name of an animal previously registered and active unless 15 years have elapsed since any such activity except where the applicant is able to establish to the satisfaction of the Registrar that one or the other of the following circumstances has occurred:

1. That the horse has died or had its name changed prior to becoming two years of age.
2. That the horse has died or had its name changed before racing or being used for breeding purposes.

(c) Names of outstanding horses, including the winners of the Hambletonian, the Kentucky Futurity and the Little Brown Jug and their respective filly divisions, may not be used again nor may they be used as a prefix or suffix unless the name is a part of the name of the sire or dam. A prefix or a suffix such as “Junior,” etc., is not acceptable.

(d) Use of a farm name in registration of horses is reserved for the farm that has registered that name.

(e) Names of living persons will not be used unless the written permission to use their name is filed with the application for registration.

(f) No horse shall be registered under names if spelling or pronunciation is similar to names already in use.

(g) Names of famous or notorious persons, trade names or names claimed for advertising purposes, except names, or parts of a name of a registered breeding farm will not be used.

(h) The USTA reserves the right to refuse any name indicating a family or strain which may be misleading, or any name which may be misleading as to the origin or relationship or sex of an animal, or any name which might be considered offensive, vulgar or suggestive.

(i) Horses may be named by January 1st, subsequent to their foaling without penalty.

(j) The foregoing provisions of this section notwithstanding, foals may be registered unnamed provided an application for a name is submitted prior to January 1st of the two-year-old year.

(k) When nominating, advertising, cataloging, selling or otherwise representing an un-registered horse, the use of a name for the horse in identifying said horse is prohibited. Whoever violates this rule may be punished by a fine or suspension or both.

**Sponsor: WJ Donovan, Delray Beach, FL**

[The sponsor states: “*The amount of time expended by both USTA staff and members who seek to name a foal or change the name of a horse is extensive and unnecessary. Too many name choices are rejected because the name is for a horse that had the name and is considered ‘outstanding.’ Over the years, the basis for an ‘outstanding’ horse has changed somewhat, but to primarily base this notation on two prerequisites, lifetime record and lifetime earnings, does not adequately raise the bar. This proposal outlines specific requirements a horse must meet to be deemed an ‘outstanding’ horse with an ‘honored name.’ There are too many horses that truly are not outstanding by today’s standards, yet their names are forever reserved. Let’s consider a few:*”

Name	Foaled	Record	Earnings	Comment
ALAMABA	1977	P,6,1:59.1	\$51,114	133 lifetime starts
ALIBI	1979	p,3,1:57.1	\$66,765	Dam of 13 foals, no \$100K winners. None with records faster than 1:57.
ARTILLERY	1976	p,3,1:57,3	\$34,685	Stood at stud, two foals made more than \$100K. Meadow Connors made \$259,265 in 306 starts and took a p,7,1:57.1f record. Last foal raced in 2000.
CAVALIER	1966	p.8.2:02f	\$130,041	85 lifetime starts

FASCINATION	1983	p,3,T1:59.4	\$3,763	37starts. Dam of four, none took records. Highest money-winning foal made \$200.
MYSTERY MAN	2000	p,1:52,3	\$279,512	146 starts. Last raced in \$13K claimer.
NICODEMUS	1999	p,7,1:53.1f	\$80,372	104 starts
PRIME DIRECTIVE	1993	p,1:53	\$446,658	301 starts. Last raced in \$5K claimer.
RETRIBUTION	1986	p,6,1:53,3f	\$238,104	306 starts. Last raced in \$3K claimer.
VICE ADMIRAL	1986	p,5,1:59.3f	\$32,301	90 starts. Last raced in \$4K claimer.
VICTORY MARCH	1974	8,1:59	\$114,447	164 starts. Had four foals, none took records of 2:00 or made more than \$20K lifetime.
VINDICATOR	1995	4,1:53.3f	\$43,448	75 starts. Took record in \$4,000 race and never again was timed under 1:55.

*There are hundreds and hundreds of other similar ‘outstanding’ horses that simply don’t deserve that honor. These horses were, for sure, special in their day to the owners and horsepeople who cared for them, but does that really qualify them to have their name reserved any more than thousands of other well loved horses?”]*

**26. A proposal to rename Article 10, Section 5 Roll Call Vote of the association bylaws to Rule, Bylaw and Resolution Voting and to amend the call for voting to be handled electronically:**

**10.05 Rule, Bylaw and Resolution Voting.—All votes regarding rules, bylaws and/or resolutions shall be made electronically, with said results made available publicly. USTA will use properly licensed or purchased software to track such voting.**

Current bylaw:

10.05 Roll Call Vote.—At the request of any five members of the board of directors, the vote on any rule, bylaw, or resolution shall be by roll call.

Sponsors: David Siegel, District 3 Director; Jason Settlemoir, District 12 Director

[The sponsors state: “This rule should be a no-brainer. Software to accomplish enforcement is inexpensive, easily attainable, and can be used on smartphones, tablets and PCs. The rule change has several primary motivations:

1. *Speed—This will save time at meetings rather than counting hands on close votes. It also eliminates the need for slow verbal roll call votes when called for.*
2. *Accuracy—Counts cannot be off using such a system and will tie back to numbers of directors present and can therefore include not only yes and no votes, but abstentions and absenteeism.*
3. *Transparency—As elected officials representing more than 15,000 members, members should be able to see how their representatives voted, just like other transparent and democratic organizations—libraries, school boards, Congress, Little League boards, etc. Members expect to know the position of their directors, and this meets that expectation in an easy and affordable manner.*
4. *Historic Reference—In case ever needed, the organization will have accurate counts, director by director, for each item voted upon.*

Cost—There are many software packages available, so prices vary widely but should be in the range of \$55+ per month, and software use would likely be for three months.”

*\*\* Update to 2023 Proposal. This rule change was eventually defeated at the board level. The primary argument against was that some trainers were concerned about blowback if they might vote for a rule that went against the interest of track management. It is our feeling that if this was the case, the director has the option to abstain from*

*the vote or, in the extreme, step off the board if the conflict of interest is so high. Furthermore, it is our belief that the members s/he represents need their director to vote in the membership's interest, not what is in the particular best interest of the individual director.]*

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**27. A proposal to amend Article 11, Section 2 Election of Officers (a) and (b) of the association bylaws to change the term of office of chairperson of the board, vice-chairperson, secretary, and treasurer from one year to two years:**

11.02 Election of Officers.

(a) The board of directors shall elect the following officers to the following terms at its annual meeting:

1. President for a term of four (4) years.
2. Chairperson of the board to a **two (2)** ~~one (1)~~ year term.
3. Vice-Chairperson to a **two (2)** ~~one (1)~~ year term.
4. Secretary to a **two (2)** ~~one (1)~~ year term.
5. Treasurer to a **two (2)** ~~one (1)~~ year term.

Sponsor: Jim Miller, District 5 Director

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**28. A proposal to amend existing Article XII, Section 3 Abuse and Harassment of the association by-laws:**

12.03 Abuse and Harassment.—No director or officer of the association shall abuse or harass any other director or officer, or any agent or employee of the association, with respect to any matter. No director or officer of the association shall abuse or harass any member of the association or any other person who is involved in the Standardbred breeding and racing industry in connection with the adoption, implementation, application, or enforcement of the rules and policies of the association; provided, however, that this rule shall not apply to other disagreements or confrontations between a person who happens to be a director or officer of the association and another person who is a member of the association or is involved in the Standardbred breeding and racing industry, such as a disagreement over conduct on the racetrack between a director who is a driver and another driver.

Abuse or harassment shall be deemed to have occurred if the offending person (i) commits or threatens physical violence on another person; (ii) makes or engages in slurs, epithets, name calling, intimidation, ridicule, mockery, insults or put-downs that a reasonable person would consider to be offensive; (iii) makes physical contact or verbal statements that are sexual or suggestive in nature and are offensive or inappropriate; (iv) commits other acts that a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile or abusive; or (v) commits any act that would be considered to be harassment under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 or the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967. Any offending person shall be subject to disciplinary action by the board or by a committee designated by the board, at their discretion. Such disciplinary action may include, without limitation, the reprimanding or removal from office of the offending person. The disciplinary action shall be subject to appeal to the executive committee in accordance with Article VIII of the bylaws.

Sponsors: Steve McCoy, District 1 Director; David Siegel, District 3 Director

[The sponsors state: “At the 2023 Annual Meeting it was proposed to amend Article 12, Section 12.03 of the USTA Bylaws by simply adding the word “member” to the text, thereby making the bylaw applicable to any confrontation between a director or officer of the association and a person who is a member of the association. The amendment was rejected because of the concern that it might be interpreted to require the board to sanction a director or officer for conduct that had nothing to do with the rules or policies of the association. The proposed bylaw amendment clarifies that Section 12.03 applies only to disagreements or confrontations that relate to the adoption, implementation, application or enforcement of the rules and policies of the association, and does not apply to other matters that are private in nature.”]

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**29. Housekeeping item—A proposal to amend existing *Rule 4.10 Beneficial Owner* to clarify definition to only those who own 5% or more in any ownership make-up as per approved changes to *Rule 8* in 2023:**

~~4.10 Beneficial Owner—The term “beneficial owners” includes: the owner; in the case of multiple ownership, all co-owners; all shareholders owning 5% or more of any class of stock and all officers and directors of any corporation which is a “beneficial owner”; all partners of a general partnership and in the case of a limited partnership; all general partners and those limited partners owning a 5% or more interest in such general or limited partnerships which is a “beneficial owner”; all stallion syndicate shareholders owning 5% or more interest in the stallion syndicate; all lessees; and all corresponding officers.~~

Sponsor: Jessica Schroeder, USTA Staff

[The sponsor states: “*This clarifies contradictory text in reference to whether all partners or only those with 5% ownership should be listed and removes the words being defined as part of the definition.*”]

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**30. Housekeeping item—A proposal to amend the title and first paragraph of existing *Rule 7.06 Tattoo/Freeze Brand/Microchip Requirements* to remove the references to requiring a tattoo and/or freeze brand to race:**

~~7.06 Tattoo/Freeze Brand/Microchip Requirements.—No horse that has not been tattooed or freeze branded or implanted with a microchip as authorized by the USTA will be permitted to start at any an extended pari-mutuel meeting unless the permission of the presiding judge is obtained and arrangements are made to have the horse tattooed or freeze branded or implanted with a microchip. Any person refusing to allow a horse to be tattooed/ freeze branded/microchipped by a USTA representative may be fined, suspended or expelled, or further applications for registrations submitted by such person may be refused.~~

Sponsor: Jessica Schroeder & Michele Kopiec, USTA Staff

[The sponsors state: “*All horses are required to be microchipped to race; the references to tattoo and freeze-brand are no longer needed in this rule.*”]

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**31. Housekeeping item—A proposal to amend the third and fourth paragraphs of existing *Rule 26.06 Breeding Requirements* to remove the dollar amount for a late stallion report and to remove the reference to blood typing:**

~~26.06 Breeding Requirements.—~~

~~All persons standing a stallion at either public or private service shall file with the USTA a list of all mares bred to each stallion together with the dates of service. This list must be filed by September 1st of the year of breeding. Failure to comply with this provision may subject the owner or lessee of the stallion to a fee as prescribed in Rule 27.06 fine of not less than \$10.00. Application for registration may be refused from any person not complying with this rule.~~

~~All brood mares must be blood typed or DNA genotyped at a USTA-approved laboratory.~~

Sponsor: TC Lane & Jessica Schroeder, USTA Staff

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**32. Housekeeping item – A proposal to combine existing *Rules 26.24, 26.25 and 26.27* to remove references to blood typing and repetitive language regarding parentage verification (this change will also renumber *Rules 26.24-26.32*):**

26.24 Horse Identification and Parentage Verification. — The parentage of all foals shall be verified by DNA Genotyping by a USTA-approved laboratory. The permanent identification (freeze brand or microchip) of foals shall be done simultaneously with the collection of hair from the foal for DNA genotyping, both of which shall be accomplished under the supervision of a USTA employee, director or other individual so designated by the President or Executive Vice-President. No ownership transfer of a foal will be recorded by the USTA unless said foal has been permanently identified and its parentage verified. Permanent identification assigned and administered by the USTA or by Standardbred Canada, including lip tattoo, neck freeze brand, microchip, or any future identification method, may not be altered or obliterated.

Current Rules:

**26.24 Parentage Verification.**—The parentage of all foals shall be verified by either a parentage verification blood test or a DNA positive identification conducted by a USTA-approved laboratory after the permanent identification (tattooing, freeze branding or microchip) of the foal and prior to the issuance of an electronic eligibility or the use of the foal for breeding purposes, whichever occurs first.

**26.25 Parentage Verification Prior to Registration.**—No transfer of a registered foal will be recorded by USTA unless the parentage of said foal has been verified by either a parentage verification blood test or a DNA positive identification by a USTA-approved laboratory after a permanent identification of the foal by either tattooing, freeze branding or microchip.

**26.27 Identification at the Time of DNA Genotyping.**—The freeze branding or other identification of foals shall be simultaneous with the drawing of blood from the foal for blood typing or the collection of hair from the foal for DNA genotyping, both of which shall be accomplished under the supervision of a USTA employee, director or other individual so designated by the President or Executive Vice-President. Permanent identification assigned and administered by the USTA or by Standardbred Canada, including lip tattoo, neck freeze brand, microchip or any future identification method may not be altered or obliterated.

**Sponsors:** TC Lane, Aimee Hock, Michele Kopiec, and Jessica Schroeder, USTA Staff

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