

ASHA Opposition to Rule Change Petition: Mandatory Rest Period for Quarter Horses, Standardbreds and Thoroughbreds

Thank you for sending this proposed rule for feedback.

Upon review, I think this rule may be more applicable to Thoroughbreds and Quarter Horses, as opposed to Standardbreds.

On the standardbred side of things, although most trainers due tend to average at about 3 starts a month, it's not uncommon to go 4 or 5 weeks in a row, especially for our more veteran horses who can handle and actually seem to thrive once they get on a bit of a roll. In these situations, which again are usually reserved for horses aged 4 and up, the weekly training is scaled down quite a bit, and the horse's weekly race is relative, and in some cases probably easier, when compared to a horse that is training down and having to go heavier trips every week to get into race shape.

Once they are race tight, a light week of exercise and a once a week race for a 4-5 week stretch isn't particularly unusual especially for horses with good conformation that come out of races with ease.

Additionally, on the mandatory 7 days rest, I do feel this could also introduce complexities for us that may not necessarily be needed. A good example is next week, as we have had to move Saturday's card to Thursday. This means that most of the horses racing this Saturday will race back again next Thursday. This doesn't harm the horses since it isn't a common occurrence, but in some cases, like the schedule switch next week, or when transitioning between meets, we do have to race on 5-6 days rest.

Generally speaking, the horses handle this very well and then are balanced out by a 8-9 day rest on the other end of the race when the schedule gets back to normal.

I think that implementing a mandatory 7 day rest for Standardbreds would introduce too many times where we would need to apply for an exemption to the rule, when in reality, it doesn't get abused too much as it is.

For folks who try to race Wednesday back Saturday on a regular basis, I would prefer to have the judges or race secretary intervene, as this would be a lot less complicated and more controlled.

Please let me know if you have any questions or comments about my feedback, would be happy to discuss.

Thank you,

Bret Litke