

Statements FOR and AGAINST Proposed Rule Changes

(See Proposed Rule Changes in this issue for wording of the proposals)

Please consider these proposals and make your feelings and opinions known to your national directors prior to the November 11th meeting.

ICE BOOTS

The proposal would allow the use of ice boots and other means of applying ice/ice water/cooling packs topically by various attachment methods.

FOR Statement

From the Veterinary Drug Committee: Mike Peralez, DVM; Greg Fellers, DVM; Stephanie Ostrowski, DVM

ALL exercise, whether a horse is fit or not, causes some degree of micro trauma and inflammation. Not all inflammation is bad; it's part of what stimulates the process of remodeling and strengthening of tissues. Too much inflammation, on the other hand, can be deleterious to the body. Simple wear and tear is one of the small things that can add up to a big thing. Minimizing the short term and long term effects of inflammation can not only improve the horse's short term comfort but its long term performance.

Cold water hosing or standing in buckets of cold water or in a cold stream have long been recognized as simple and effective methods of post-exercise cold therapy in horses. These methods are not often available or practical at a competition.

Ice therapy is another means to help minimize the repetitive and accumulative damage that is incurred in this sport – from fit Open Division horses on a properly paced trail to marginally conditioned Novice Division horses. The use of ice has been legal in our competitions for years. It seems that the disagreement is the manner in which ice/cold therapy is applied. Do we make competitors squat next to their horse and hold the ice or allow them to attach ice boots/wraps onto a leg or other body area (such as the girth area)? The best option for cold or ice therapy is one that is reasonable to use.

There is also a philosophical disagreement about what it means “*To demonstrate the best methods of caring for equines during and after long rides without the use of artificial methods or stimulants.*” (NATRC philosophy #5)

Is the minimalist (doing little or nothing) approach the best? *Riders have many more choices of things to use to care for their horses than they did 50 years ago.* Cold water therapy/ice is a simple strategy to help reduce the wear and tear that we cause our horses. *Good horsemanship involves making good choices for the horse.*

AGAINST Statements

Mike Bridges, DVM, and Donna Johnson, DVM representing the dissenting views on the Judges Committee

I've been around long enough to see Shirley Sobol's Saddlebred, Wing Tempo, a trotting horse, win the President's Cup (and National Sweepstakes Championship) seven times, and Lisa Brooks' Missouri Fox Trotter, Chargers Rampage, win three times with no ice boots or even ice -- just good cool water -- and almost never have a heat, fill or soreness problem. I have judged them many times. They were both excellent riders and horse ladies on excellent horses.

Through the years it seems that the trend in NATRC has been to add more and more artificial protection for the horse. The use of good shoeing (not covering the sole or frog) escalated to boots, then boots with

straps around the pasterns, then from cool or cold water to ice, and now potentially ice wraps. To me the emphasis seems to be what can be added to aid the horse, and not what the good horseman can do to prevent the need for all this, or how to select a horse that needs none of it. Granted, these aids can be very beneficial if one over-rides his horse or experiences the unfortunate circumstance of an injury, but one should not depend on them to have a sound horse at the end of a ride.

Some practices extant in AERC need not be borrowed for NATRC. We are a different sport with different goals and philosophies.

All this escalation of aids worries me. This seems to me to strain all five points in the philosophy of NATRC, and seems to be getting away from selecting and riding a good natural horse with good natural ability.

Ice wraps are artificial. We have already stretched this with hoof boots. If we change this rule we need to delete this philosophy first. A well-conditioned horse should be able to go 1 day without the use of ice. That's all we ask, 1 day- Saturday. If a rider wants to ice after hauling in on Friday and before check in, great. Then ice after check out on Sunday, fine. But why do we need to keep changing rules that go against our philosophies?

DIVIDING CP INTO ADULT AND JUNIOR CLASSES

FOR Statement Angie Meroshnekoff

We are fortunate to have a large number of junior riders in some regions. R5 and R1 have Novice Juniors who will probably "novice out" according to current rules in 2017. Dividing the CP Division into adult and junior classes could provide a place for experienced Novice Juniors to advance to without having to compete against adults.

AGAINST Statement Kay Gunckle, DVM

This change could interfere with future division of this class to match the other divisions (novice and open) into the heavyweight, lightweight, and junior classes. There are many competitors that would like to see this change next year and are frustrated that the current proposal would only divide the division into adult and junior classes. Hopefully the proposal will be a stepping stone to divide the CP class into heavyweight, lightweight and junior classes in the future.

JUNIOR COMPETITOR PROPOSALS 1 OF 2 – WOULD INCREASE THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF POINTS FOR NOVICE JUNIOR COMPETITORS

FOR Statement Kim Cowart

The scenario exists, although infrequent, where a very young Novice Junior can reach the current maximum allowed points quickly and at too young of an age to just be forced out of Novice and competing with their peers. Raising the point maximum to 225 and the age to 14 simultaneously would greatly decrease that possibility while also preventing a "career Novice Junior" from competing in that

class. Any novice junior having reached 225 points and age 14 would likely have attained the maturity level and skills necessary to be competing against older and/or more seasoned competitors. It seems reasonable these point/age combinations extend to the junior horse/rider combination as well since it is likely most novice juniors are riding the same horse most/all of the time.

JUNIOR COMPETITOR PROPOSALS 2 OF 2 – WOULD ALLOW NOVICE JUNIORS TO COMPETE IN THE NOVICE HEAVYWEIGHT OR NOVICE LIGHTWEIGHT CLASSES

FOR Statement Angie Merosnekoff

Juniors can compete in the Open Heavyweight or Open Lightweight Classes if the weight limits are met. The reason to NOT allow them to compete in the Novice Heavyweight or Novice Lightweight Classes has been to keep the number of starters and the number of points in the Junior Class. Allowing juniors to compete in the weight classes in the Novice Division would give them another option for competition.

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP CRITERIA WOULD CHANGE PLACING VALUE FOR B AND AA RIDES

FOR Statement Shari Parys

The Open and CP National Champion awards have guidelines that were originally meant to make them an elite award that is earned. With the large increase in B rides offered across the nation, the placings portion of these awards has lost meaning. Currently a rider may enter two B rides on a weekend instead of one A ride and many times be guaranteed first or second placings due to the low number of entries. It used to be that the placings were often harder to earn than the points, but these are now too easily received by opting for a B ride for the sole purpose of fulfilling this requirement. There are some that already have the necessary points but are lacking the placing portion of the award, so sacrificing more points is not an issue if they can be given the top placing that has eluded them in larger classes. This thought is becoming more openly talked about and accepted as a way to qualify for the award and now is the time to close the loophole and maintain the value of a National Championship.

In keeping in line with how rides are counted, a B ride counts as ½ ride, for ½ mileage, for ½ points, it follows that it should be for ½ placing. Similarly, an AA ride counts as 1 ½ ride, for 1 ½ mileage, for 1 ½ points, so 1 ½ placings is consistent with the weight given in other aspects.

AGAINST Statement Jamie Dieterich

Several years ago, we encouraged ride chairs to have flexible thinking and offer more options. Two “B” rides in one weekend is an example of more options. National Championships require points and certain placings. If few competitors in a class, placings are easier to achieve; if many competitors, points are easier to achieve. Several riders have used the opportunity of two “B” rides in one weekend to try for two high placings. Few have actually achieved that goal.

The requirements for a National Championship have been in place since the very early days of NATRC. In 2010, Lory Walls and I examined/researched every use of the word “ride” in the Rule Book as to whether it meant “a ride is a ride” (any ride type) or a “ride according to type”; i.e. “A” = 1, etc. We were able to determine the meaning in every case and specified that meaning in the Rule Book. None changed

from what they had historically been. Placings required for National Championships have always been in any ride type.

Additionally, if the proposed rule change to divide CP into adult and junior classes passes, the juniors would be required to have 75 points for a national championship in CP but only 60 points for a national championship in the Open Division – thus, a discrepancy.