

Notice to Thoroughbred trainers - Intra-articular injections stand-down period

Trainers and Veterinarians attention is drawn to the revised Rule of Racing, AR.87, which relates to intra-articular treatments in Thoroughbred racehorses. The revised rule is effective from 1st January 2020.

The revised AR.87 now prohibits the intra-articular administration (“joint injection”) of **any substance** to a Thoroughbred racehorse within 8 clear days prior to a race, official trial or jump-out.

AR.87 now reads as follows:

- (1) If a horse has been subjected to an intra-articular injection:
 - (a) the horse is ineligible for; and
 - (b) a trainer must not enter or start the horse in, any race, official trial, or jump-out for 8 clear days following midnight on the day of the administration.
- (2) If a horse has been subjected to, or the Stewards reasonably suspect a horse has been subjected to, an intra-articular injection at any time during the 8 clear days prior to the day of a race, official trial, or jump-out, the Stewards may order the scratching of the horse from the relevant event.
- (3) If a horse has been nominated and/or entered for a race, official trial, or jump-out, a person must not:
 - (a) administer;
 - (b) cause to be administered;
 - (c) attempt to administer; or
 - (d) be party to the administration of, an intra-articular injection to the horse at any time within 8 clear days of the race, official trial, or jump-out.

A **Clear Day** is defined within the Rules to mean a twenty-four hour period from 12:01 a.m. to 12 midnight. For practical purposes, a clear day restriction means that the calculation of the number of days for which the procedure/treatment is banned does not take into account the day of treatment nor the day of competition. As such a stand down time of 8 clear days equates to 10 regular days when including the day of administration and the day of competition.

For the purpose of AR.87 and by way of example, if a horse was subjected to an intra-articular administration of a substance at any time on a Monday (1st day of the month), that horse would be ineligible to race, trial or jump-out, until the Wednesday of the following week (10th day of the month).

Trainers are referred to the RWAA Thoroughbred Clear Day Rule chart available under veterinary notices on the RWAA website to further assist with the application of clear day principles.

This prescribed stand-down time is intended as a minimum period before competition within which any substance must not be administered intra-articularly, including any shorter-acting medications. This stand down period must not be confused with the recommended “withdrawal” time of the particular medication used. The “withdrawal” period for a prohibited substance is calculated to ensure a horse is presented clear of the prohibited substance when competing. In certain situations, specifically for longer acting corticosteroid preparations such as methylprednisolone, and for injections into low volume joints such as the lower hock joints, the recommended “withdrawal” period may be much longer than the minimum stand down time prescribed by AR.87, and as such must continue to be observed.

Note: The administration of intra-articular substances is a “treatment” according to AR.104 and therefore must be recorded by a trainer and/or their veterinarian as required by this Rule.