

OWNERSHIP DOs AND DON'Ts

3. Ownership Control

- a. Owning a racehorse in the Hong Kong SAR is a privilege as there are many more aspiring owners than there are horses available. It is incumbent upon all owners to understand and abide by the Club's Rules regarding ownership, and to exercise proper control over their own horses.
- b. When a Member submits an application to import a horse or a griffin he undertakes to be responsible for the management of that horse during its racing life. The owner is required to delegate certain responsibilities to his Trainer as the "Authorised Agent" under the "Authority-to-Act Rule" (Rule 163 and Rule Definitions) so that the trainer can enter the horse for races and engage a jockey. The owner may not wish to be consulted in these processes, but he would be breaking the Rules if he allowed any person other than the trainer to make or control entries or engage a jockey unless he has received approval for the appointment of that person as his "Authorised Representative" under Rule 44. It is the owner's responsibility, under the Rules of Racing, to ensure that his trainer instructs the jockey to ride the horse in such a manner as to obtain the best possible placing. This is done by means of a written instruction to the trainer in the Authority-to-Act form which every owner must sign.
- c. Owners are responsible for meeting all livery and training charges themselves; to permit another individual to pay these charges would indicate that control had been passed to that party.



d. It is perfectly permissible for an owner to seek the advice and assistance of his trainer, his jockey or his friends in the purchase and import of his horse. Thereafter, the responsibility for the horse's general control and management rests squarely with the individual owner himself. Partners are regarded as though they were sole owners; they share equal responsibility. In the case of a syndicate, every individual syndicate manager is held to be responsible.

4. Race Tips

a. By a trainer

(i) The Rules do not prohibit an owner from seeking tips from his own or, indeed, from any trainer in respect of any runners in any race. However, an owner has no entitlement to privileged information about any horse, except his own, and it is entirely up to the trainer whether or not he provides information about other horses. A trainer has a right, and a duty, to maintain confidentiality regarding the performance of other owners' horses in his stable.

(ii) The Rules prohibit an owner from offering any reward, including an interest in a bet, to induce a trainer to give him tips concerning horses other than his own.

(iii) The Stewards of the Jockey Club consider it improper for an owner to try to obtain information by means of any threat, such as the removal of a horse from the stable.

b. By a jockey

(i) The giving of tips by jockeys is a very different matter.

(ii) Naturally, each owner will be interested in the state of fitness of his own horse as well as its chances in any race in which it is to run. The owner of a horse is fully entitled to ask the jockey who has been riding the horse in work about its state of fitness and about its race chances; if a different jockey is to ride the horse in the race the owner is of course also entitled to ask the race jockey.

(iii) It is equally permissible for a jockey, like any other individual, to express his general views and opinions on the chances of any horse in any race. However, that is very different from passing information privately to an individual, and this is not permitted. It must be appreciated that a jockey will frequently be in possession of privileged information about horses, and he is explicitly forbidden by the Rules of Racing to pass on any such information to anybody except the owners and trainers of those horses. This means that no person, owner or otherwise, should try to persuade or even ask a jockey to give tips. If a jockey does so then he is liable to disciplinary action; so too would be the person who persuaded the jockey to divulge such information, whether for reward or not. All jockeys have been warned about this and have been told that they should refer any such requests to the trainer.



5. Betting

a. By a trainer

A trainer is allowed to bet and to have an interest in a bet, provided that such interest is not by way of inducement.

b. By a jockey

(i) Jockeys are not allowed to bet nor are they allowed to have any interest in a bet under any circumstances. All jockeys are aware of this and know that they face disciplinary action, and possibly disqualification, if they break this Rule. Any person who places a bet on behalf of a jockey also breaks the Rules.

(ii) The reason why jockeys are more tightly controlled than trainers is very simple. A weak or unscrupulous jockey could be tempted or pressurised into riding according to his bets or tips rather than on the merits of his horse. For a jockey to bet, or to pass information, can therefore be a first step towards race fixing and corruption.