

### **Whip Review Committee Decisions 2026:**

On Tuesday 14 April 2026 the Whip Review Committee convened to consider potential breaches of Rule (F)45 following referrals from the racecourse Stewards and their own independent review of races run from 09 April 2026 – 12 April 2026, inclusive. A summary of their findings is outlined below.

#### **Aintree 09 April 2026:**

##### **Race 2 - The William Hill Manifesto Novices' Chase (Grade 1) (GBB Race) (Class 1)**

Darragh O'Keeffe, the rider of the winner, KOKTAIL DIVIN (FR), was found to have used his whip in the incorrect place on the run to the line. Allowing for the fact that O'Keeffe has had over 75 rides in Great Britain since his previous whip breach, mitigation on penalty was applied. He will be suspended for 3 days as follows; Saturday 02, Monday 04 and Tuesday 05 May 2026.

#### **Aintree 10 April 2026:**

##### **Race 1 - The William Hill Handicap Hurdle (Premier Handicap) (GBB Race) (Class 1)**

Jonjo O'Neill Jr, the rider of the winner, WELLINGTON ARCH, was found to have used his whip once above the permitted level of seven from jumping the second last hurdle. Allowing for the fact that O'Neill has had more than 75 rides in Great Britain since his previous whip breach, mitigation on penalty was applied, but taking into account that this was a Class 1 race, the penalty in respect of being above permitted level was doubled. He will be suspended for 6 days as follows Saturday 02 and Monday 04 to Friday 08 May 2026, inclusive.

##### **Race 7 - The Debenhams Handicap Hurdle (Conditional Jockeys' And Amateur Riders' Race) (GBB Race) (Class 2)**

Patrick O'Brien, the rider of the winner, LAAFI (FR), was found to have used his whip four times above the permitted level of seven from jumping the second last hurdle. Taking into account that none of the uses were clearly and unequivocally for safety purposes, LAAFI (FR) was disqualified under Rule (L)47.11. As this was a Class 2 race restricted to conditional and amateur riders only, the penalty in respect of being above permitted level was doubled. O'Brien will be suspended for 28 days as follows: Saturday 02, Monday 04 to Sunday 17, Tuesday 19 to Monday 25, Wednesday 27, Thursday 28, and Saturday 30 to Thursday 04 June 2026.

Toby McCain-Mitchell, the rider of MELON (GER), which finished second and was subsequently placed first, was found to have used his whip twice above the permitted level of seven from jumping the second last hurdle. Taking into account that this was to be McCain-Mitchell's fourth suspension within the previous 6 months for using his whip above the permitted level, McCain-Mitchell was referred to the Judicial Panel.

**Aintree 11 April 2026:**

**Race 4 - The William Hill Handicap Chase (Registered As The Freebooter Handicap Chase) (Premier Handicap) (GBB) (Class 1)**

Harry Skelton, the rider of the winner, MR HOPE STREET (IRE), was found to have used his whip down the shoulder in the forehand position with his hand off the reins on the run to the line. Allowing for the fact that Skelton has had over 75 rides in Great Britain since his previous whip breach, mitigation on penalty was applied. He will be suspended for 3 days as follows; Saturday 02, Monday 04 and Tuesday 05 May 2026.

**Race 5 - The Jet2 Liverpool Hurdle (Grade 1) (GBB Race) (Class 1)**

Darragh O’Keeffe, the rider of HIDDENVALLEY LAKE (IRE), placed fifth, was found to have used his whip in the incorrect place from jumping the second last hurdle. He will be suspended for 4 days from Wednesday 06 to Saturday 09 May 2026, inclusive.

**Race 6 - The Randox Grand National Handicap Chase (Premier Handicap) (GBB Race) (Class 1)**

Jonjo O’Neill Jr, the rider of IROKO (FR), placed second, was found to have used his whip once above the permitted level of seven from turning into the home straight. Taking into account that this was a Class 1 race, the penalty in respect of being above permitted level was doubled. He will be suspended for 8 days from Saturday 09 to Saturday 16 May, inclusive.

**Ffos Las 12 April 2026:**

**Race 7 - The Barry Murphy Racing Syndicate Handicap Hurdle (Class 5)**

Dylan O’Connor, the rider of I AM SPIDER MAN (IRE), unplaced, was found to have used his whip above shoulder height at the end of the back straight on the first circuit. He will be suspended for 4 days as follows, Saturday 02 and Monday 04 to Wednesday 06 May 2026, inclusive.

**Panel:**

Sam Angell (Chair)

Steve Drowne

Philip Spottiswood