



May 17, 2022

Lindsay Schanzer
Senior Producer, NBC Sports

Via e-mail

Dear Ms. Schanzer:

I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals U.S.—PETA entities have more than 9 million members and supporters globally—to request that NBC Sports update its procedures to allow the winning horse a *minimum* of two minutes after a race before the outrider approaches and takes control of the horse to facilitate interviews with the winning jockey. This change could prevent a repeat of the incident that unfolded after the 2022 Kentucky Derby in which Thoroughbred Rich Strike, still keyed up from the race, became agitated and was struck in the face by the outrider.

As you know, immediately after this year's Kentucky Derby, outrider Greg Blasi rapidly approached Rich Strike to guide him and his jockey, Sonny Leon, to the winner's circle. Reportedly and understandably, there is pressure for the outrider to deliver the jockey quickly for the initial interview. But horses don't work to media timetables. Rich Strike was clearly still agitated from the race and possibly reacting to the noise of the crowd when a strange person on an unknown horse approached and tried to take control. Rich Strike then bit the outrider and his horse. The outrider responded by hitting Rich Strike in the face and pulling harshly on the reins several times. Horses' mouths are extremely sensitive, and yanking on the reins in this manner causes them pain. Nor was it effective. The outrider's horse, also became distressed and reared up in what appeared to be an attempt to escape.

The shocking scene could have been avoided had Rich Strike been given a few moments to calm down after the race.

Expecting an immediate post-race interview puts unnecessary stress on the winning horse and puts jockeys, outriders, and others in danger. Also, the outrider should have been wearing chaps, which would have protected his leg, and put a protective shield on his horse, as other outriders do. We have asked the stewards to require this, and it would be helpful if NBC Sports would support our request.

As the first woman to produce the Kentucky Derby telecast, you've already made history—and now you have the opportunity to make the sport safer for horses and jockeys by requiring that horses have at least two minutes post-race before an interview.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Kathy Guillermo
Senior Vice President
Equine Matters Department

cc: Pete Bevacqua, Chair, NBC Sports Group

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