

PEOPLE FOR  
THE ETHICAL  
TREATMENT  
OF ANIMALS

August 26, 2025

To: Lisa Lazarus  
Chief Executive Officer, HISA

Re: Egregious whipping violations by jockey Paco Lopez in the Forego Stakes at Saratoga on August 23, 2025

Dear Ms. Lazarus,

Please see the replay footage we have provided, and the accompanying screen shot stills of jockey Paco Lopez's violations of HISA's crops rules in the 12<sup>th</sup> Race at Saratoga – the Grade 1, \$500,000 Forego Stakes - aboard Book'em Danno on August 23. Paco Lopez won this race after viciously striking his mount multiple times by lifting his wrist above his helmet to exert more force. This is a flagrant violation of HISA's whip rules, and Paco Lopez did this **four** times in this race.

[https://jockeyclub.com/pdfs/HISA/HISA\\_Jockey.pdf](https://jockeyclub.com/pdfs/HISA/HISA_Jockey.pdf)

**The crop cannot be used:**

- | If your wrist is raised above your helmet
- | Anywhere except the horse's shoulders or hindquarters
- | In a manner that injures the horse or leaves physical marks
- | Persistently without response from the horse
- | After the horse has attained its maximum placing in the race
- | During the post parade or after the finish of the race unless you are avoiding a dangerous situation
- | On two-year-old horses in races before April 1 each year unless you are avoiding a dangerous situation
- | To strike another person or horse

As you will see in the accompanying visual exhibits, there is indisputable evidence that Lopez violated this rule.

Here's the Dropbox link to the race replay videos and screenshot stills (and screenshots are also attached):

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/3wnahcnp7zy7haii0z2ff/ACAGhpbx4AO234gnfT4-5vQ?rlkey=nhi87jqrnvkeksgb9003mc4u&dl=0>

As you know, Paco Lopez has been suspended by HISA multiple times for repeated whipping violations, including one major incident for striking his horse after a race. And Lopez was suspended earlier this year for violating

**Entities**

- PETA Asia
- PETA India
- PETA France
- PETA Australia
- PETA Germany
- PETA Switzerland
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA Foundation (U.K.)

this same whipping rule – lifting his wrist above his helmet – in [three different races](#).

Below, we also copied images of the first two of the four violations in his race on Saturday's Forego Stakes as examples.

Paco Lopez hit Book'em Danno with such force that PETA received multiple whistleblower calls and emails even from long-time racing fans. These violations by Lopez not only influenced the race and potentially cheated bettors, but he also was rewarded for this behavior with a “Win and You’re In” to the Breeders’ Cup and earned elite purse money from the Forego Stakes win, and thus may have cheated other jockeys and connections. Further, the optics of beating a horse like this, in a high profile race on Saratoga’s Travers day, does even more damage to the racing industry. Most importantly, this inflicted multiple cruel strikes on Book'em Danno.

We urge you to penalize this recidivist to the full extent of HISA’s authority. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Kathy Guillermo  
Senior Vice President

**Below are images of whip strike violations #1 and #2 of four violations. All four violations are in the attached and at the Dropbox link.**

**First violation of four, raising his wrist above his helmet. Paco Lopez is riding the number 4 horse (yellow saddle cloth) and is wearing blue & white silks with a blue helmet.**



2nd violation of four:

