

Rule Notification FY2526-9 Consequences of red card and issues with cross listed dogs

At its meeting on 4 May 2026 the AFA committee resolved to change the penalty for a dog being given a red card from being excluded from the team's next three heats to being excluded from all remaining heats in the current race and all heats in the next race of any team in which the dog is included. The rule changes will be effective from 1 July 2026 and will be included in the next published version of the rules.

The committee also agreed to arrange for reports to be produced to ensure that:

- all teams have at least three dogs which are not cross listed, and
- all cross listed dogs are identified so that officials can enforce the relevant exclusion of dogs that are issued with a red or black card.

The Judges Manual and the Timekeepers Manual will also be updated to reflect the changes.

Background

The rules subcommittee had been asked to consider how to ensure that exclusion of dogs for red or black card offences is enforced, particularly in the context of cross listed dogs.

As part of its deliberations the subcommittee discussed the purpose of excluding a dog for a red card offence and whether the current consequences for a red card were appropriate.

The subcommittee noted that the primary purpose of a red card is to remove the offending dog from a potentially escalating situation and provide for a cooling off period. The subcommittee noted that the current exclusion for three heats meant that the dog could be brought in for the second or subsequent heat of a later race without having warmed up which would not be desirable.

The subcommittee agreed to recommend to the AFA committee that the exclusion should be for the remaining heats in the current race and all heats in the dog's next race.

As to cross listed dogs, the subcommittee noted that in relation to red cards the current reference to "the team's next three heats" does not address cross listed dogs so that a cross listed dog could race in its other team without having served its exclusion or any cooling off. The subcommittee agreed that the exclusion should apply to the next race for any team in which the dog is listed.

The subcommittee also noted that there is currently no system for ensuring that cards issued to cross listed dogs are monitored and appropriately noted on respective timesheets. The subcommittee recommended to the AFA committee that reports should be generated to identify cross listed dogs in order to assist timekeepers and judges in recording the issue of cards and enforcing consequences.

The AFA committee accepted the subcommittees recommendations.

The consequences for a red card in Table 6.1 of the rules will be amended to read:

Offender:

- is excluded from the remainder of the **heats** in the current **race** and, if a dog, is excluded from participating in the next **race** for any **team** for which the dog is listed on the **official timesheet**,
- must immediately leave the **ring** and remain outside the **ring** for the remainder of the **heats** in the current **race** and, if a dog, must not enter the **ring** in the next **race** for any **team** for which the dog is listed on the **official timesheet**,
- may be subject to disciplinary action.