

# New Entry Rule at Aqueduct Causes Multiple Scratches

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The stewards were forced to scratch eight horses from Sunday's card at Aqueduct after the racing office erroneously allowed them to be entered in violation of a rule the New York Racing Association put in place just nine days ago.

The scratches resulted into NYRA having to offer two fields of three horses and one of four.

On Jan. 16, in a press release announcing steps it was undertaking to address the spate of equine fatalities at the Aqueduct winter meet, NYRA announced "entries will no longer be accepted at Aqueduct on any horse that has participated in a recognized race within 14 days of that start. Horses will be permitted to start on the 15th day following said race."

On Sunday's card - entries for which were taken on Thursday - eight horses were entered who had made their previous start exactly 14 days ago.

"There was a misinterpretation in the office, we dealt with it, we apologized to owners that had horses in that we had to scratch and we move forward," said Martin Panza, NYRA's senior vice president of racing operations.

A similar issue is likely to occur on Thursday as 11 of the 63 horses entered would be running back on the 14th day after a race, and therefore will have to be scratched. That includes six of the eight entrants in the fourth race, which means it will be a match race between Painted Pony and Epiphany.

"If we have to scratch 11 horses we have to scratch them," Panza said. "We can't renege on the rule."

There are no horses entered on Wednesday's card that would be running back in less than 15 days. Coincidentally, there's a blizzard forecast for Tuesday that is likely to force NYRA to cancel Wednesday's card.