

## NORTHERN REGION

### Minutes

**MONDAY 18<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2019**

#### **Attendees**

Ann Duffield - President, Rupert Arnold- Chief Executive, Ruth Carr – Deputy Chair, Andrea O’Keeffe/ Leanne Kershaw / Tim Hogg (Jedd O’Keeffe), William Easterby (Tim Easterby), Jo Foster, Steve Brown (Julie Ann Camacho), James Bethell, Shaun Harris, Helen Ward, Berni Parr- Ann Duffield P.A/ Minutes

Also welcomed - Mike Waring & Paul Johnson, BHA (items 2 & 3) and Joanne Ellis, NHC (item 5)

#### **Apologies**

Ray Craggs, John Quinn, Michael Herrington, Clive Mulhall, Rebecca Menzies, Nigel Tinkler, Jedd O’Keeffe, Sandy Thomson, Barry Murtagh, Karen McLintock, Tim Reed, Wilf Storey, Richard Whitaker, Ian Jardine, Mark Johnston, Tim Easterby, Alison Hamilton, Gary Sanderson, Martin Todhunter, Jackie Stephen, Linda Perratt, Noel Wilson, Paul Clarkson, Eric Alston, Brian Rothwell, Rose Dobin

#### **1. Approval of the minutes of the meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019 and update**

The minutes from the previous meeting were accepted as true record. Matters arising: -

*Race planning*-BHA collate statistics relating to how many last-minute declarations are received.

*Race fixture reductions*- injuries in summer jumping- There is not a strong correlation in increase in fatalities however there is an increase noted of injuries. RA is to look into reports that Racecourses seem reluctant to euthanise horses at the racecourse.

*Headgear*; - The proposal for horses to go to the start in a hood as long as it is red and trainer responsible for having it removed at the start, has gone to the Rules Committee to be ratified

*Apprenticeships*: BHA are going to provide funding towards employers’ contribution.

Other items are covered on the Agenda for this meeting

## 2. Race planning

Mike Waring & Paul Johnson from BHA attended to update and collect feedback

- Jump classification and Novices Chases

There is a proposal at the Racing Group to trial redistributing races between Classes 4 & 5 to obtain a better balance. All Novice races are to become Class 4 and more graded to 105/115/120 etc. Some will remain in the same prize money band and give better opportunities at the bottom. General feedback from Trainers was positive. Novice chases keeping to Class 4.

- Merger of Flat Median Auction and Auction races

There is a proposal from the Racing Group that from 2021 to combine the 2 types of restricted to create more flexibility. There will be 2 levels of qualifications i.e multiple levels and grades of qualification. The question of 'do home bred horses have an advantage?' was raised at one regional meeting. This is being checked. [Update: statistics showed no advantage for home-breds.]

Trainers raised the issue of restricted races with no weight allowances for cheaper horses.

Discussion followed regarding the Racing Admin Website and why it is not able to identify suitable races like Easy Entry does. The website is still a work in progress and Trainers have requested that they be consulted about future changes and plans. Trainers are encouraged to feedback issues to the Race Planning Team in the first instance at [racingquestions@britishhorseracing.com](mailto:racingquestions@britishhorseracing.com) and the Racing Forum. RA is to include this message on future NTF Newsletters.

AD raised on behalf of Nigel Tinkler that quarter 1 fixtures aren't available soon enough to decide which horses to prepare. BHA are working on this programme but as soon as the programme is finalised, they forward the Index to NTF at the end of October [it is available to members on the NTF website.] BHA will look at bringing this forward in the future to give Trainers 3 months' notice of fixtures.

- Lunchtime racing trial

The Betting Liaison Group are looking at an experiment to hold lunchtime racing and so far, have been greeted with indifferent responses. The general feeling at this meeting was that this does not suit yards and staffing availability

and would put more pressure on Trainers and staff. The best day for RCA would seem to be a Saturday but this is the worst day for yards.

There is also still a concern that 8.30pm races are too late although it seems that the trend for racegoers and betters are for day and evening races. JB raised a concern about the practice of holding up 2 yos at the start to coincide with the TV coverage.

Consensus is that there needs to be a balance between racing revenue with a practical working arrangement with yards to consider staff welfare and retention levels and not to be driven entirely by the betting industry.

### **3. Non-runners**

Discussion has taken place recently about a proposal from BHA for a reduction in the threshold percentages of non-runners as a proportion of declared horses. Currently, if a Trainer is above 50% of the average NRs, they are not allowed to self-certify for 1 year. BHA are looking at lowering this threshold due to the increase of non-runners, however this year has been very volatile due to the weather. The proposal should only affect a small number of Trainers.

The Clerk of the Courses 'going' updates were discussed and that they vary in reliability from course to course. BHA are aware of this fact and are currently looking into this including the updating of the app used by the Clerks.

Paul Johnson is leading the BHA Committee that is meeting next week to discuss concerns raised from all groups. The NTF will be represented.

### **4. Equine Anti-Doping Rules**

BHA is reviewing the anti-doping rules after decisions dating back a number of years on cases that undermined its strict liability rules as it was accepted that they did not use the substances intentionally and had taken reasonable precautions. BHA insist that 'strict liability' must apply and Trainers must prove where substances come from to escape a penalty.

NTF have managed to modify BHA original proposals and these amendments will be looked at by BHA to approve. These include an 'assessment of culpability' which will be assessed as low, medium and high. Penalties will then be imposed accordingly ranging from a caution to high financial penalties and or disqualification up to 3yrs.

The 'assessment of culpability' is considered fairer as it gives scope to identify when an incident was beyond the control of the Trainer.

### **5. National Horseracing College (NHC)**

Joanne Ellis, Operations Director at National Horseracing College gave an update which included the rebranding from Northern Racing College to help attract nationwide candidates and better reflect what they do.

Retention rates are very good with 80% qualification success rate and 95% of students go on to get placed at a yard.

They plan to roll out level 2 of Regional Staff Development Programme (RSDP) in addition to Level 1 already offered and Level 4 Learning Programme is to be launched soon.

Safeguarding- Trainers should have received an e-mail from BHA regarding Safeguarding eLearning. The policy includes a requirement to undertake online training as part of renewing a Trainers licence.

Mental Health Wellbeing- 40% of students require some form of counselling for mental health issues. NHC have a programme for this in conjunction with Racing Welfare and staff at the College have been trained.

6-week placements- NHC are quite happy if Trainers prefer to offer these students a normal contract as experience has shown it gives the student a better mindset as they have to show more commitment.

Licence Apprentice Course- No feedback yet and JE will look into this.

Neck straps- request to reinforce the use of these to students

Bleep Test- These were considered not suitable for racing students although they are a BHA requirement.

Joanne made a request for Trainers to keep sending feedback with any issues and all are welcome to visit the College. [J.Ellis@theNHC.co.uk](mailto:J.Ellis@theNHC.co.uk)

## **6. NTF news platforms**

It was agreed that this publication that is currently sent out every 2 months to Trainers will be sent via e-mail in future. This will save approx. £8,000 per year in printing and postage.

## **7. Any Other Business and Date of Next Meeting**

- The next meeting will be in June 2020.