



National
Trainers
Federation

South West Region

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT TAUNTON RACECOURSE ON WEDNESDAY 6TH NOVEMBER 2019

PRESENT: S Mullins (Chairman)
J Barber
S Earle
J Frost
H Fry
P Hobbs
R Millman
J Scott

IN ATTENDANCE: R Arnold (Chief Executive)
G Noad (Racing Executive)
N Mitchell (Observer)
S Middleton (BHA Race Planning)
N Dartnall (BHA Race Planning)

APOLOGIES WERE RECEIVED FROM: R Buckler, V Dartnall, M Gillard, N Hawke, A Honeyball, A Jones, S Kittow, E Lavelle, N Mulholland, P Nicholls, D Pipe, F Shaw and P Walker

ITEM 1 – RACE PLANNING

Jump Race Classification

S Middleton presented a proposal whereby all 0-105 races would be reclassified as Class 5. This is to promote flexibility and variety at the lower end of the programme. To offset the reclassification of 0-105 all WFA novice, juvenile and maiden hurdle races would be classified as Class 4. The proposal would work with racecourse finances, to create more opportunities as the horse rated 95 has far more opportunities compared to one rated 103.

N Mitchell highlighted that a number of trainers have expressed concerns due to the lower prizemoney by shifting such a large proportion of races down a class. Furthermore as the majority of horses in training fall into this category this would have an impact on a trainer's business. S Middleton suggested that despite a lowering of class, the prizemoney levels should not drop too low due racecourses competing for runners. N Dartnall said that some of the 0-105 races could be converted into 0-110 and remain at Cl4. However there is a perception that it will benefit trainers who have novices as they are getting promoted to Cl4 but those who have handicappers are getting downgraded.

The Region concluded that the concept had merit but due to the number of races involved in the reclassification, the BHA Race planning team should draw up a rough guide as to the number of races being downgraded to Cl5 and being converted to 0-110.

Novice Chases

Following various reviews, the novice change programme has been maintained for the 2019/20 season. This was despite pressure following the changes in 2018/19 where there were poor field sizes (but this can be attributed to ground conditions.) The Region suggested there could be a few more Novice Handicap Chases. However the Race Planning Team said that once field sizes start to increase, more can be programmed. N Dartnall highlighted that once field sizes improve, the pinch point restrictions of 6.5 races per card can be removed. R Arnold suggested it was right to maintain the policy for another season because changes to the race programme need time to bed in.

Lunchtime Racing

The trial of lunchtime racing has been taking place with 8 fixtures starting at midday in October. However 7 of these fixtures were jump. R Millman felt that it would be difficult for flat trainers to get the work done at the yard in the morning before getting to the racecourse for a lunchtime start. R Arnold highlighted that at the Lambourn meeting trainers suggested it would cost an additional £20/30 per hour to facilitate the fixture. S Mullins asked what the financial benefit of lunchtime racing will be - ACTION. The Region concluded that despite National Hunt Fixtures during the winter start at 12:00 the volume of racing is not the same as the summer and there is no evening racing.

Transparent Entries and Declarations

R Arnold highlighted one concern on the flat when a trainer has the option to declare in more than one race when the race may divide. There was one suggested where trainers could declare in two races with a preference. S Middleton felt this would have a detrimental effect on the principle of open declarations. S Middleton asked if the 9:30 deadline was helpful. P Hobbs and H Fry felt the deadline should stay.

Any Other Race Planning Items

- P Hobbs suggested the Novice Handicap Chase could be diversified so there are more rating bands.
- Balloting – The Region felt there should be a policy similar to Maiden Hurdles for balloting in other races.
- Race Forum - S Middleton asked the Region to use the forum for race requests and race planning issues
- Cheltenham Festival 2021 - S Middleton informed the Region of the creation of a 2 ½ mile Mares Chase at the Cheltenham Festival for 2021. However this would have to come at the expense of another race. P Hobbs felt the Fred Winter should be kept as this has made the Triumph Hurdle more competitive. H Fry suggested that as the Mares Chase will be at 2 1/2 mile then another 2 ½ mile should be lost.
- Newcomers Bumpers - S Mullins asked the Region if there was demand for more Newcomers Bumpers, following a request from a few trainers. H Fry suggested that during October, November and December there was a demand.
- H Fry asked if there should be more confined hurdles. P Hobbs felt they should be removed from the programme.
- Merging Median & Median Auctions. ACTION BHA Race Planning to discuss the proposal with R Millman

ITEM 2 - Horse Welfare

R Arnold informed the region that Victor Dartnall has previously outlined some examples where the industry says the horse comes first but this is not always the case. For example failure to modify and improve racecourses particularly the paddock at Chepstow where a horse can strike the rail in the middle of the parade ring. G Noad informed the Region that following a meeting with Chepstow and Course Inspectorate, improvements will be made to the parade ring. However there needs to be a balance between equine safety and the safety of the people in the paddock as Chepstow is very narrow. R Arnold highlighted concerns by trainers about the priority racecourses put on equine welfare.

R Arnold asked the Region to complete the welfare survey as this will be part of the overall strategy for equine welfare. P Hobbs felt the survey was too long and did not ask the relevant questions. V Dartnall asked for the

Region to discuss trainers recording injuries once the horse has come back from the racecourse. This would create a better picture of welfare standards. The Region felt trainers would not use it and it would be hard to make it mandatory. However the racecourse vets have got better at reporting injuries and questioning trainers on a horses return.

ITEM 3 - Non Runners

RA informed the Region of the latest non runner stats:

Non-Runners as a Percentage of Declarations			
	2018	2019	18/19 +/-
Flat AWT	6.05%	6.21%	0.16%
Flat Turf	8.03%	9.08%	1.05%
Jump	6.07%	6.26%	0.19%
TOTAL	6.97%	7.60%	0.63%

Due to the increase in non runner rates in 2019 the BHA is proposing to revisit the thresholds at which trainers lose their right to self-certify for twelve months (currently 14% Flat, 12% Jumping) rather than potentially going through another wider review. The Region felt the onus was coming back onto trainers and asked what was being done about Racecourses and going descriptions. R Arnold highlighted that a new Going Group has been set up to look at all these issues and the NTF would like some trainers on the group. J Scott felt racecourses and jockeys need to understand that trainers are in the business of running horses and declaring shows an intent to run.

ITEM 4 – Non Racing Agreement

To improve traceability for racehorses after their racing career some changes to the Non Racing Agreement (NRA) have been developed. The NRA will be completed through the admin system by the trainer rather than the owner. Once the NRA is lodged the horse will have a digital NRA placed on it and the owner (from its racing career) will have two weeks to object. Following this the passport will be stamped with the official NRA. The region highlighted that the trainer tends to complete the NRA under the current rules anyway. P Hobbs asked what the reinstatement process was for point to pointers to go hunter chasing again.

UPDATE. When completing the NRA trainers can select point to point or point to point with hunter chase eligibility. If a trainer selects point to point and the new keeper want to go hunter chasing, then the normal reinstatement process applies.

ITEM 5 – Equine Anti Doping Rules

RA outlined the new proposals for equine anti doping following consultation between the BHA and the NTF. Prohibited At All Times

Level of Culpability	Assessment of Culpability	Sanctions	
		Entry Point	Range
Low	No knowledge of administration and reasonable precautions taken. Satisfactory attendance at BHA/NTF seminars is a required precaution	2 years disqualification suspended for 24 months	Additional Financial Penalty (£750 - £10k)
Medium	No knowledge of administration but significant failings at the yard or Panel is satisfied of an acceptable explanation for an administration error	2 years disqualification (disqualification can be suspended for 24 months)	1 – 10 years disqualification (£1k - £10k)
High	Deliberate administration or serious failings in the administration of the yard bordering upon negligence	2 years disqualification	2 – 10 years disqualification

Prohibited on Raceday

Level of Culpability	Assessment of Culpability	Sanctions	
		Entry Point	Range
Low	No knowledge of administration and reasonable precautions taken or therapeutic dose administered close to withdrawal period. Satisfactory attendance at BHA/NTF seminars is a required precaution	Financial Penalty of £1k	Financial Penalty (Caution - £5k)
Medium	No knowledge of administration but significant failings at the yard or Panel is satisfied of an acceptable explanation for an administration error	3 months disqualification Or Financial Penalty of £2k	1 month - 3 years disqualification Or (£1k - £10k)
High	Deliberate administration for performance enhancing purposes or serious failings in the administration of the yard bordering upon negligence	2 years disqualification	1 – 10 years disqualification

The Region felt it could accept the proposal depending on the penalties. The Region also asked for some examples of cases and how they would have fitted into this new model and asked for a set of guidelines on best practice.

J Scott suggested that there is always a penalty even if the penalty is a caution because the horse will lose the race. The Region expressed some concern over the penalties when there is malicious intent. R Arnold highlighted that the panel would maintain discretion and this was why trainers need to show best practice. S Mullins agreed and suggested the independence of the panel must be maintained.

ITEM 6 NTF News Platform

R Arnold asked the Region if the members would still like the NTF to continue producing the printed newsletter. The region was fairly split but some thought the saving of production costs and the benefits of a PDF newsletter emailed to members would be beneficial.

ITEM 7 – Any Other Business and Date of Next Meeting

J Scott raised some concerns surrounding the level of insurance required for the business. P Hobbs highlighted that the owner needs to have adequate insurance for their individual horses but there is a lack of awareness. The Region concluded this should be included in the next updates to the training agreement.

UPDATE. It is already included in the training agreement. **21.** It is the responsibility of the Owner to arrange insurance cover on his horse or horses direct with an insurance intermediary authorised by the Financial Services Authority. The Trainer does not accept any responsibility for affecting this on behalf of the Owner.

The next meeting will be in July 2020