



NTF WEEKLY – 29 MAY 2018

BHA update on the novice programme for 3year olds and older horses

From Richard Wayman, BHA Chief Operating Officer – 23rd May 2018

We are aware that a number of trainers have expressed concerns about the change made at the beginning of the year to convert the vast majority of maiden races for three-year-olds and older horses into novice races. This followed on from the same change having been successfully introduced to the two-year-old programme over the previous couple of years. This new approach was based on feedback from connections saying that winning a race too soon in a horse's career could be limiting to its prospects and the main aim of the change is to provide an improved programme of races for horses that win on one of their early visits to the racecourse.

Previously three-year-olds and older horses that won on their debut or their second start had few options other than stepping straight into handicap company or, alternatively, aiming for a Listed or Pattern race. The latter often over-faced a young, inexperienced horse. As for the handicap option, the handicapper would have very limited information on which to allot a handicap rating. This could, of course, work both ways in that the horse's rating could underestimate its ability and the horse then make a mockery of whatever handicap it turned up in; on the other hand, if the handicapper overestimated its ability, this could damage the horse's development by over-facing them against more seasoned campaigners at a formative time in their career.

A few months into this new system, we would like to reassure trainers that we are closely monitoring these races and, working with the NTF, we'll review the results from the first half of the year once we get to the end of June. In the meantime and for your information, the headline numbers since the beginning of the year to 14 May include:

- The programme has included 228 novice races and 59 maiden races giving a total of 287 races. This compares with 291 maiden races during the same period in 2017.
- The average field size in the 287 races in 2018 has been 8.36, which compares with 8.09 in the 291 races in 2017. The average starting price of the favourite is 2.27/1 this year, compared with 2.34/1 last year.

- There have been 306 horses carrying a penalty in a novice race so far this year, of which 87 (28%) won. 38% of the novice races have been won by penalty carriers with 62% won by maidens.
- There have been 259 individual winners of the novice and maiden races staged this year. Last year, there were 291 individual winners of the maiden races.

When we consider this, as well as looking at the data, we'll focus on a number of specific areas:

- Eligibility – Since the beginning of April, previous winners with more than six runs have been excluded from novice races on the basis that they are intended as developmental races for lightly raced horses rather than more experienced types that have only won once or twice. Is six runs the appropriate cut-off point for previous winners?
- Balance of novice and maiden races – The race programme currently comprises 80% novices, 20% maidens. Is this balance right? Some trainers have said that the pace of novice races makes them a tougher place to start for inexperienced horses than maiden races. On the other hand, if there are more maiden races, this runs the risk of maidens avoiding novice races and therefore increasing the likelihood of small fields.
- Penalty structure – Are penalties at the right level?

It is still early days and the new approach remains work-in-progress but please be assured we are listening to feedback from trainers. At the heart of the changes we have made is our desire to provide a programme that encourages horses to win early in their careers and supports their future development. However, if changes are required to make the system work better, they will be made, and we will be working closely with the NTF to ensure that any lessons are learnt from the first half of this year.

Emergency assistance to be available for Weatherbys Racing Admin

Since the BHA informed trainers about the closure of the Weatherbys Call Centre from Monday 2nd July, the NTF has been passing on feedback to them from trainers. Much of this has been about intermittent internet access and how individual trainers and their office staff would cope in emergencies.

As you know, to ensure you are supported with the changes to the Call Centre, a dedicated Help Desk, open seven days a week and contactable via 01933 440011, has been established to answer questions about using the Racing Admin system and to guide you through the processes.

In addition, based on feedback the BHA has received in May, in the case of an absolute emergency trainers should call the new Help Desk which, at the discretion of the manager, will be able to take an entry/declaration over the phone. This emergency facility will be monitored for the first six months and, if it is being misused, its availability could be put at risk.

Tongue ties no longer permitted in German races

The International Racing Bureau has informed us that from 1st June 2018 horses will be banned from wearing a tongue tie in all races in Germany. This notice has appeared in the latest edition of the German Racing Calendar.

Metal badge forgeries

At its May meeting, York Racecourse identified some forged NTF metal badges. They will be sent to the RCA, which will raise the matter with the BHA Integrity Department.

Racecourses will be alerted about the potential use of forged badges and this is likely to result in additional monitoring. Please ensure all badges are used in conjunction with your PASS Cards to ensure the most expedient access to the racecourse.

Additional course for potential Conditional jockeys

The British Racing School is putting on an additional Conditional Course from 25th – 29th June 2018. This is a Course just for Category ‘B’ Amateurs “converting” to Conditionals, and not for brand new applicants or Category ‘A’ Amateurs wanting to become Conditionals.

The Course is a lastminute addition to this year’s programme and there will not be another Conditional Course after this one until mid-August. Trainers wanting to apply for Conditional Licences for any of their employees (currently hold Cat ‘B’ Amateur Permits) over the summer need to send their online applications to the BHA as soon as possible.

For further information contact Max Milward by phone 0207 152 0145 or email licensing@britishhorseracing.com

Brydi Allison’s Assistant Trainer Travel Scholarship experience

It won’t be long before we launch the next Alex Scott Assistant Trainers Travel Scholarship. To give Assistant Trainers another illustration of the fantastic experience this award can offer, we have posted the report from last year’s scholarship winner, Brydi Allison, on the NTF website in the [page dedicated to the award](#).

Brydi’s work placement was with the McEvoy’s in South Australia. An interesting insight into the different regime followed in Australia can be gained from this small extract from her report.

“In my first week we had 10 two year olds trial at Murray Bridge. They quite often have horses trialling every week. Mr McEvoy has an excellent strike rate with two year olds. Every horse must trial and receive a barrier certificate before they are allowed to run. This is something that English racing does not do and is probably the biggest difference to English racing that I have come across.

“Trials are like ‘mini races’ that are done at racecourses under the rules of racing. Only licensed jockeys can ride in them and they wear their horse’s colours. These are not as competitive as an actual race. It is a great education for them and from watching Australian two year old races, I noticed they tend to run less green and more professionally than two year olds in Britain. You can also get older horses that trial which is good preparation for them getting back to full fitness if they’ve had a long break or injury lay-off from the track and haven’t ran for a while.

“Trial races are taken very seriously and are open to the public to view on the Internet and pundits can see how good some of the unexposed two year old are. I strapped a two year old filly called Kinky Boom at Morphettville. she won her trial by 6 lengths on the bridle. You don’t have stables at the racecourses in Australia so all the horses stand in tie-ups. I was amazed to see how patiently and well behaved the horses stand in them, even the two year olds who are experiencing this for the first time. The day after Kinky Boom’s trial she went to the Flemington yard and five days later she won her maiden at Caulfield very easily. “

Look out for news about applications for the 2018 Scholarship. It is sponsored by the Tim Dunlop Memorial Travelling Scholarship. The trustees were disappointed with the low response last year so Assistant Trainers need to show they want opportunities like this if the scholarship is to continue.

ROA Support of Staff & Owner BBQs Keeps Yards Sizzling

For a second year the Racehorse Owners Association will be offering contributions of £100 to trainers organising BBQs or other social events for their staff and owners during Racing Staff Week (1 – 8 July 2018).

The initiative, which saw contributions to 30 events in 2017, proved popular last year and provided an ideal environment for owners and staff to get to know each other better in a relaxed and informal atmosphere.

Owners have cited that an important element of their ownership experience is getting to know the member of staff that cares for their horse(s). It is hoped that these events will continue to develop owner/staff relationships, whilst also celebrating Racing Staff Week and the dedication of racing’s workforce.

Trainers will shortly receive an application form for the funding contribution via email. Alternatively, forms can be downloaded from the ROA website. Closing date for applications is **1st June 2018**. A maximum of 30 contributions are available, with successful applications

being drawn at random. BBQ organisers will be encouraged to take pictures and share them on social media using **#racingstaffweek** and **#ROABBQs**. Feedback on the events will also be invited.

For further information on the Staff and Owner BBQs please contact Chloe Martin on cmartin@roa.co.uk or 07725 031336.

NTF 2018 meeting dates

REGION	DATE	VENUE
North	Monday 25 th June	Ripon Racecourse
South West	Monday 2 nd July	Taunton Racecourse
East	Wednesday 4 th July	Rowley Mile, Newmarket
South East	Monday 16 th July	Epsom Racecourse
Central South	Monday 23 rd July	Oaksey House, Lambourn
West Midland and Wales	Monday 30 th July	Wolverhampton before racing
Council and Committees	Monday 6 th August	London

Regulation deadlines

- **25th May 2018** – General Data Protection Regulations come into force
- **1st June 2018** – tongue ties not permitted in German racing
- **2nd July 2018** – Racing Admin call centre at Weatherbys closes