

Row brews over new anti-doping rules



Rupert Arnold of The National Trainers Federation is unhappy with proposed changes

The BHA is again in the hot seat having unveiled plans to change a number of rules relating to doping. As usual the BHA claims that this is only after consultation with the National Trainers' Federation, but the suggested new rules have failed to find favour with many trainers. The BHA says that they hope to have a set of anti-doping rules that are clear both for those that are bound by them and those who have to enforce them. Their premise is that some rules have been tightened whilst changes have

also been made to allow lower penalties for inadvertent breaches of the rules eg contaminated feed from a third party supplier. The stumbling block is the BHA's insistence placing strict liability upon the trainer which essentially reverses the universal principle of 'innocent until proven guilty.' This will put the onus on any defendant needing to prove innocence which can be virtually impossible to do in cases where the source of any prohibited substance cannot be satisfactorily explained.

ITV extend coverage to 2023



Some of the ITV team - Ed Chamberlain, Ollie Bell, Francesca Cumani and Matt Chapman

It's generally thought that ITV and Channel 4's coverage has been good for racing - especially during lockdown when viewers were desperate for any live sport. Their presentation has been excellent being involving, informative and exciting by providing insights behind the scenes rather than just broadcasting live racing. It'll be interesting to see if the increased viewing figures are

maintained once the pandemic ends. Audiences have been at their highest since records began in 2003 and there's been recognition of the coverage with a Bafta for broadcast of the Grand National and presenters Ed Chamberlain and Francesca Cumani receiving the Sports Presenter of the Year Award. Subsequently ITV have announced continuation of free to air coverage until 2023.



Tom Marquand and Hollie Doyle

Racing's amazing double act

Jockeys Tom Marquand and his partner Hollie Doyle have taken the 2020 season by storm - both amassing over 100 winners each and grabbing top flight prizes in the process. We've been lucky enough that both have ridden for Homebred too. It might be expected that they met as a result of race riding, but they were actually competing against each other many years earlier in pony races and Tom lost out to Hollie in his very first race. Hollie had already been pony racing for some years when Tom started aged 14. Initially, because both were away from home, they spent the weekends together 'messaging about with ponies' and riding out for David Evans at his Abergavenny stables where Hollie had started working. Hollie then made the move to Richard Hannon's yard. Because Hollie was so light - just seven and a bit stone - she started working at the gym.

This meant she became a lightweight jockey strong enough to be feared by all in tight finishes. Tom was also at the Hannon yard and his future quickly unfolded to reveal him as a top jockey and, in the eyes of many, a champion in waiting. Tom and Hollie now live in Hungerford close to the major training base of Lambourn. It's likely that they'll be at the very top of the tree for many more seasons yet, justifying their title as racing's golden couple.

Did you know?

The Tetrach, now mostly forgotten, was described as possibly the best 2-year-old of his generation - and possibly the greatest ever.



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WINNING POST

THE REGULAR NEWSLETTER FROM HOMEBRED RACING

WINTER 2020/21

Study The Stars (2nd from right) fighting out a close finish at Chepstow



Exciting times ahead!

Expert opinion on our new filly



Our two-year-old Eaux De Vie

It would be difficult to get a better opinion than from leading jockey Tom Marquand who's ridden our two-year-old filly Eaux De Vie in her first two races. Tom says 'She's still very green and learning all the time and she'll have learnt plenty from her first two runs which have been over a much shorter trip than she needs. But on her second run, she got in amongst them and was clearly doing her best work at the end. I guess the plan will be to give her another run to get a handicap mark before she's stepped up to a more suitable trip - but she's definitely going in the right direction!' Pitstop has shown a lot more than her dam in her introductory runs and the hope must be that she can improve on Delagoa Bay's 5 wins

And not just that all owners seem likely to be back on the racecourse soon! But our two new youngsters, Study The Stars and Eaux De Vie, have shown that there's lots to look forward to in the new year. It's fair to say that things haven't quite gone to plan for Study The Stars, who was well fancied for a Class 2 race at Glorious Goodwood, but it means he's now exceptionally well handicapped for the new season.

His work at home shows that he's got what it takes to make great improvement to exploit his lenient mark and we always thought he'd make a better three-year-old. Similarly, Eaux De Vie has been running over shorter distance than ideal and looks sure to improve, as suggested by jockey Tom Marquand, with a bit more time and longer distance. We're confident that there's so much more to come from them both!



Lafontaine - overdue another win!

Did you know?

Ruby Walsh is the only jockey to have won all four Grand Nationals - English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish.



Otterly unexpected!

We'd been puzzled that although the geese made their usual re-appearance on our lake in early spring, they made little effort to nest. We also noticed a lack of other wildfowl usually resident or visiting. But walking along the bank, weighed down with buckets of feed on our regular early morning rounds to check on the horses turned out, we were amazed to see an otter splashing around. It was during the spring floods and we guess that he was looking for calmer waters away from the raging torrent of the River Teifi. When fencing in the valley the boys had seen a big salmon wriggling upstream and no doubt the otter had just followed his nose up the stream to find us!

Snapshot

Eaux De Vie in the paddock at Lingfield before her racecourse debut ridden by the excellent Tom Marquand.



Black cat spooks Derby punters

In 1929 Lord Astor's Cragadour was a red hot favourite to win the Derby until punters were spooked by news that a black cat knocked over a silver statue of his runner that had been on display in a London shop window. Punters soon hedged their bets on Mr Jinks,

a grey from Ireland, and by the day of the race the two were inseparable in the betting. However, the word from Ireland was that the unconsidered Trigo was better and would win - and did just that at 33/1 - ridden by apprentice Joe Marshall.



Mehmas - starring role as first season stallion

Spotting new talent

It's always a challenge to select the first season sires likely to be most successful - and season after season, the stallion fee is revealed as having little bearing on ultimate success. Happy to report that the spring issue of Winning Post identified freshman sires with modest fees who were likely to do well. These included Mehmas, Kodi Bear and Adaay who currently occupy 1st, 2nd and 4th positions in the leading first season sires table. Mehmas has done exceptionally well siring over 35 winners for a modest fee of just over £5,000. Last season's most expensive new stallions included Golden Horn (£40,000) and Muhaarar (£20,000) and they're still struggling to justify their price

tags languishing in 36th and 50th places in the current rankings. It would seem that certain studs have a particular knack of identifying good value - Whitsbury Stud especially having recently launched leading duo Due Diligence and Adaay - Sergei Prokofiev is their latest recruit so one to watch when his progeny reach the track in 2023.

Did you know?

Lester Piggott won the 2000 Guineas in 1992 aboard Rodrigo De Triano as a 56 year old grandfather.



Champion jockey Oisín Murphy

Any owner would be delighted when the champion jockey chooses to ride your horse - but that's not always a guarantee of it being given the best possible chance. Lafontaine is a case in point when the morning papers suggested that she'd be around a 16/1 shot for the 6.00 at Wolverhampton at the end of October. But with the champion on

board, she started joint favourite. Lafontaine didn't have a chance as Murphy never attempted to put her in the race, prompting suggestions that he should refund us with his riding fee. Maybe when you're top dog you don't always feel you have to try? Murphy now has to face up to the consequences of a failed drug test.

Increasingly risky



Jockeys are being advised to take out their own insurance cover after the Professional Jockey's Association scheme ended at the end of November when sponsorship by the Stobart Group ceased. The policy paid out £100,000 to any jockey no longer able to ride as a result of injury. Although the PJA is seeking another sponsor, the association is concerned that individual cover might not be affordable for all riders. This career ending cover is a significant issue for jockeys but they will still be covered under the Professional Riders Insurance scheme which is funded by owners contributing £16 + for every ride over and above their riding fee.

Time up for racing's formbook



Phil Bull - founder of Timeform

The famous Timeform annuals have published their last issues. The business was founded by Phil Bull in 1948 and established itself as the essential guide to racing form, describing every horse on the flat and over jumps and giving each a rating. But as with other printed publications, the industry has moved on as we all switch online for information. But Timeform still remains the respected authority.

Racing's finances in greater turmoil

The Covid pandemic has had an additional and severe impact on racing since 50% of race-goers income is from race-goers being able to attend. But the issue of financing racing has been looming large for decades as the industry struggles to replace the current levy arrangement to ensure that bookies pay the correct amount for the product from which they derive massive profits. The stumbling block has always been to ensure that racing gets a fair share. Existing arrangements have been based around profits - but as any accountant knows, these are figures that are easy to manipulate and the bookies also complain that racing is now a smaller part of the overall industry. It's unlikely that either side is ever going to agree a formula

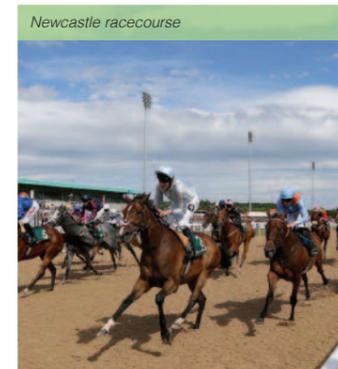
that suits both parties and it'll probably need government intervention to impose a solution. The mechanism is already in position as HMRC is suitably closely involved with the racing industry through the VAT scheme. So as with any business, HMRC is able to see exactly what the numbers are and where they're derived

from and basing the bookies' contribution on turnover rather than profits would be the best result for racing. A scheme which simply enables HMRC to return a fixed percentage of betting turnover to racing's coffers would seem to be a realistic alternative to yet another 'voluntary' agreement which will never end the squabbles.



Bookies need to pay a fair price

Racing in another league



Newcastle racecourse

A new Racing League is to be launched in 2021 when Newcastle will host the inaugural fixture on July 29th. The format will include 12 teams each consisting of between 2 and 4 trainers, three jockeys and 30 horses competing across 36 handicaps racing over distances between 5 and 12 furlongs with each race worth £30,000. Each team will have bespoke colours and there will be 6 meetings - all covered by Sky Sports who are the key players in this new initiative - and all run on ARC tracks.

Even more competitive for new stallions

The intake of new stallions in 2019 was unusually strong including top flight winners Roaring Lion, Saxon Warrior and Cracksman and first indications of their likely success will be revealed this autumn when their first foals reach the sales. The ill-fated Roaring Lion stood at £40,000 whilst Saxon Warrior commanded £30,000 and Cracksman £25,000. Stallion owners will hold their breath to see how their offspring are received as this will determine future fees. Cracksman will be the first son of Frankel to stand in Europe but there has to be some doubt as to whether this powerful galloper will produce the early types the market always demands. Roaring Lion suddenly came to prominence after a rather slow start, but again there has to be some doubt whether he'll produce speedy two-year-olds and whether he has sufficient numbers to let him feature in the top half of the first season stallion lists.



Sioux Nation looks guaranteed to make the top in 2022

Saxon Warrior finished behind Roaring Lion on the track but may precede him in the new stallion rankings in 2022. But there's likely to be better value found amongst those standing at lower cost as high stud fees are no guarantee of success. Havana Grey, at £8,000, can be expected to enhance Whitsbury Stud's knack of launching successful stallions at a realistic fee, whilst Coolmore's July Cup winner US Navy Flag (closely related to Whitsbury's Due Diligence) looks sure to do well. But it's Coolmore's other

Putting owners in the picture

Jockey Club Racecourses have relaxed rules about photography and filming on their racecourses allowing owners and race-goers to make use of smart-phone footage for their own personal use. Content may also be used across social media platforms, but any content should not be exploited commercially or licensed to third parties. This is a reality check for racecourses since it would now prove virtually impossible to police photography and filming on the course. The original and outdated rules were in place to protect professional photographers who have to pay significant fees to cover race meetings and hope to make a return from selling images to winning and other connections.

Did you know?

The world's most successful jockey Russell Baze rode an amazing 12,842 winners - well ahead of nearest rival Laffit Pincay with 9,530 wins.