

END OF MEETING REPORT

Hollywood Park Race Track, Spring/Summer 2007

The recently concluded Hollywood Park Spring/Summer meeting consisted of 61 days of racing. Average daily attendance increased 4.8 percent from 6,148 to 6,443 with an on-track per capita amount of \$263. Average daily on track handle increased slightly from \$1,675,068 last year to \$1,697,597 this year. Total average daily handle, however, soared to 11.3 million, representing a 8.9 percent increase from last year's meeting. (Advance deposit wagering, which increased 27 percent from the previous year, drove the overall increase). Business was particularly strong on Friday nights which averaged attendance of 9,689, led by the Cash Call Mile card which attracted 14,683 racing fans. Interestingly, Friday night per capita wagering was \$152.

Kentucky Derby Day was a particularly good one at Hollywood Park. Total handle was 27.7 million dollars, which represented the second-highest handle in Hollywood Park's 68-year history (second only to the 1997 Breeder's Cup handle). Perhaps the biggest wagering news came with a 10.8 million dollar pick six pool—the result of a four day carryover. This pool represented a North American record and paid thirteen winners \$576,064.40. Michael Baze won the riding title with 73 wins while Doug O'Neill and Jeff Mullins shared the training title. Lava Man, off of the strength of his third consecutive Hollywood Gold Cup win, was voted Horse of the Meet in the annual media poll.

The Stewards conducted 25 inquiries which resulted in 8 disqualifications compared to 37 inquiries and 9 disqualifications last year. There were 216 claims, 76 California bred races and 104 rulings. The quality of riding was quite high evidenced by the low number of disqualifications and the fact that that only five riding suspensions were levied, all of which were three days in length.

As a general matter, the meet was successful and progressed smoothly. However, there are several issues that deserve mentioning. First, Hollywood Park, as part of its license agreement, agreed to take entries 72 hours before race day. On two occasions, the Racing Office did not receive enough entries to fill an eight race card. This creates a dilemma for all involved. There appears to be several solutions to this problem: (1) the Racing Office should delay entries for a day; (2) run the number of races that it deems sufficient (less than 8); or (3) cancel racing for that particular day. For the stewards, the resolution seems to be that should this happen in the future, the matter will be referred to the Commission for adjudication.

The level of riding at the meet was quite high as already mentioned. The dynamics of the jockey's room is very positive and supportive; and overall, the Board of Stewards enjoyed a good working relationship. We continued our Thursday film review which was not that well attended, but that was partly due to

the fact that there were not many controversial races to review both in terms of suspensions and disqualifications. They continued nonetheless with eye toward Del Mar, as the aggressiveness of the riders seems to increase when the meeting moves south. There were a couple of riders who didn't exactly agree with a stricter sign-in policy, in which the first time a rider neglects to sign in, he or she is warned and the second time the rider fined \$50.00 dollars. We found that the sign-in sheet has worked quite well with respect to the accuracy of weight and keeping track of jockeys when they enter the room.

We had several shoeing issues during the meeting. On roughly six occasions, either trainers had illegal shoes or had spread shoes on their way to the paddock/receiving barn. On almost every occasion, the horseshoe inspector was unable to correct the problem but was rescued by private blacksmiths. On at least one occasion, the horse had to be scratched. The Board of Stewards will contact Hollywood Park in an effort to encourage it to hire Victor Tovar who is the horseshoe inspector at Santa Anita, Del Mar, and Fairplex, and does a superior job.

The lasix list has also been a bit of a problem, mostly impacting out of state horses. Unlike other states, California requires that horses be placed on the bleeder list prior to entry. When horsemen fail to do this, it puts the Official Veterinarian and by extension, the stewards in a difficult position. Clearly, the horse should not run without lasix if it is a known bleeder. We have reached a compromise with the Official Veterinarian in which we fine the trainer \$300.00 for the violation and allow the horse to run with bleeder medication. One trainer was fined \$1500.00 for a second violation, because we felt that he was more than put on notice after the first infraction.

We also found ourselves in a constant battle with the Racing Office over errors that should occur occasionally but not on regular basis. Clearly, we prefer not to fine the office for every mistake, because it is responsible for many entries and we must work with it in cooperation the entire year. Obviously, there comes a time when a penalty becomes unavoidable. A hearing will be scheduled at Del Mar for a gelding mistake in the program that was attributable to the Racing Office. At the start of the next racing meet, however, the stewards need to make it clear that we expect more from leadership and communication in the Racing Office.

We did have an incident on the turf course midway through the meet in which a horse made a jumping movement and appeared to hit the rail near the five eighth's pole. It turned out that there was some irregularity in the rail in that area because of a wet spot on the turf course. Films were ultimately inconclusive. The CHRB filed a complaint against Hollywood but failed to adequately demonstrate that there was CHRB safety rule violation (Chaney dissenting). At the very least, we made it clear that should these types of irregularities be necessary in the future, stewards and riders must be apprised of the situation.

Two other issues that deserve mention are the fact that we had very few formal hearings in which evidence was taken, due to the fact that most major medication violations are adjudicated by stipulated agreement. Our practice is to have an expedited formal hearing in order to approve the agreement and redistribute the purse. Owners rarely show up for these hearings, but are always noticed. Also, Cushion Track seemed to hold up well throughout the meet. There was some discussion about the addition of wax toward the end of the meeting which was eventually accomplished after the meeting closed. There were a couple of injuries during the meeting, but mostly on the turf course, which seemed to be quite firm for the entire meeting.

Attached is a list of the rulings issued by the Board of Stewards for the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

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