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CHRB NEWS RELEASE

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BOARD APPROVES 2003 RACING CALENDAR

ARCADIA, CA – The California Horse Racing Board approved a 2003 racing calendar Thursday that is largely unchanged from 2002, including a 17-day fair meet at Fairplex Park in Pomona.

The 2003 calendar calls for 271 days of thoroughbred and fair racing in Southern California and 298 days in Northern California, which is two days fewer than 2002. The northern calendar has more racing programs than the southern calendar due to 30 days of simultaneous, overlapped meets in the north. For simulcasting purposes, the actual days on which racing is conducted in Northern and Southern California are virtually identical except during the Fairplex meet.

The schedule also includes 208 nights of quarter-horse racing at Los Alamitos and 190 nights of harness racing at Cal Expo.

The Southern California thoroughbred and fair schedule begins December 26 (2002) at Santa Anita Park with an 85-day meet that runs through April 20. The circuit shifts to Hollywood Park on April 23 for a 65-day meet through July 20, followed by meets at Del Mar (43 days from July 23 through September 10), Fairplex (September 12-28), Oak Tree at Santa Anita (31 days from October 1 through November 9), and Hollywood Park (30 days from November 11 through December 21).

The Northern California thoroughbred schedule begins with a 70-day meet at Golden Gate Fields from December 26 (2002) through March 30, then shifts to Bay Meadows for a 55-day meet from April 2 through June 15, followed by fair meets. Toward the end of the fair season, thoroughbred racing resumes at Bay Meadows with a 50-day meet from August 29 through November 2, then concludes at Golden Gate with a 35-day meet from November 5 through December 21.

The northern fair circuit begins June 11 in Stockton with a 10-day meet that runs through June 22, followed by meets in Pleasanton (11 days, June 25-July 6), Vallejo (10 days, July 9-20), Santa Rosa (12 days, July 23-August 4), San Mateo (12 days, August 6-18), Ferndale (10 days, August 7-17), Sacramento (12 days, August 20-September 1), and Fresno (11 days, October 1-13).

The quarter-horse meet at Los Alamitos runs from December 26 (2002) through December 21, while harness racing is split into two meets in Sacramento, the first from December 26 (2002) through July 26, then the second meet from September 24 through December 21.

In developing the 2003 racing calendar, Commissioner John Harris, who is chairman of the CHRB Dates Committee, noted that he and CHRB Vice-Chairman Roger Licht conducted numerous meetings and received input from all segments of the horse-racing industry, though they did not receive as much input as they would have liked from racing fans.

Harris listed several issues that were heavily discussed, such as the Fairplex dates in view of an effort earlier this year by management of the Los Angeles County Fair (LACF) to move the 2002 race meet from Fairplex to Santa Anita – a proposal that was rejected by the CHRB.

“The dates allocated for Fairplex (in 2003) are designated to be run at their Pomona facility, and any change to that would have to be approved by the full Board and the whole issue revisited,” said Harris. “The 17 days allotted would also need to be reconsidered if the venue were to change. Fairplex, in the dates hearings, seemed to indicate that they planned to utilize their Pomona facility.”

LACF President James Henwood told that commissioners Thursday that handle from all sources at the recently concluded Fairplex meet was down 5 percent from the previous year. “A drop of 5 percent, that is not the right direction. We cannot sustain that,” said Henwood.

In other business, the Board approved a license application by the Los Angeles Turf Club for a race meet at Santa Anita from December 26, 2002, through April 20.

Staff reported that handle from Advance Deposit Wagering (ADW) totaled \$121.4 million from January 25 through September 29. This represents 6.8 percent of the \$1.78 billion combined California on-track, off-track, and ADW handle during that period.

Licht, who chairs the CHRB Pari-Mutuel Operations (PMO) Committee, reported that these figures and other aspects of ADW were thoroughly discussed at a committee meeting Wednesday. He said it is important for the Board to scrutinize ADW to make certain that account wagering is “increasing revenue and not cannibalizing existing handle.” He also stressed the need for ADW providers to hire California labor for their operations.

CHRB Chairman Alan Landsburg, a member of the PMO Committee, indicated his desire to expand ADW to more than the current three providers (XpressBet, TVG, and YouBet).

Supervising Investigator Michael Kilpack reported on the CHRB security program, especially efforts by investigators to maintain a high degree of visibility in the stable areas at Del Mar and other racetracks. He noted that management at the various racetracks has cooperated by providing security personnel to supplement the CHRB investigative staff.

Following Kilpack’s report, Licht said, “I think you guys do an exemplary job, and I think nationwide that California is recognized as being in the forefront.”

Harris repeated his suggestion that one way to further enhance the security effort would be to place surveillance cameras in the stable area. CHRB Executive Director Roy Wood said that discussions and plans for surveillance cameras are well underway.

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