



The Horsemen's Newsletter

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Rule change places new limits on claims

Trainers will be limited to one claim slip per horse, under a rule change expected to take effect by the end of April.

If a trainer is named on more than one claim form, a drawing of the forms will be conducted to determine which claim will be entered.

The new rule also prohibits owners employing the same trainer to claim horses from one another.

The Maryland Racing Commission gave final approval for the rule change at its March 18 meeting.

Medication alert

While Maryland is proceeding judiciously and awaiting results of research before taking action on rules regarding steroids, neighboring states will implement race-day bans in the near future.

At Pennsylvania tracks, the ban begins on April 1.

Delaware and Virginia will have rules in place for the opening of the Delaware Park meet (on April 19) and Colonial Downs (on June 9).

Maryland horsemen shipping to race in these states are advised to familiarize themselves with the rules and procedures, so as to avoid potential penalties.

MTHA's Board of Directors election

The MTHA's election for the Board of Directors, held every three years, will take place again this summer. All 15 directorships will be up for election. Terms are three years.

Details will appear in upcoming issues of *The Horsemen's Newsletter*.

Legislative update

With the state facing a gaping budget shortfall, the MTHA withdrew bills that had been introduced in both the Senate and House to establish a purse enhancement. The MTHA took this action upon the advice of legislative leaders; it was evident that the bills would not pass.

"MTHA representatives are pursuing other means to possibly secure some form of enhancement for purses and the breeders' fund," said MTHA President Richard Hoffberger.

"While the odds against this happening may be insurmountable, we will continue to advocate until the end of the legislative session, in the hope of obtaining funds to tide us over until prospective slots revenue becomes available," added Mr. Hoffberger.

In other legislative action: The

MTHA, along with various segments of the industry and the Maryland Racing Commission, is supporting a bill that would apply the customary formula for division of revenue between the Purse Account and Maryland-bred Fund to prospective monies derived from slots.

In the slots bill approved last November, the formula is set at 85/15—marking a departure from the 89/11 split that has been in effect for many years. Part of the intent of the industry's 15-year agreement signed in 2006 was to establish and maintain divisions of revenue; thus the change is in direct violation of that agreement.

Senate Bill 784, to correct this portion of the slots bill, passed the Senate by an overwhelming margin and is now under consideration in the House.

Make sure you—and your employees—are registered to vote

Maryland's racing industry has a huge stake in the outcome of the November 2008 statewide election. The ballot will include a referendum asking voters to say YES or no to the slots program.

This will be the most important vote that many of us will ever cast.

Now is the time to ensure that you are registered to vote in the election. If you have not voted recently, or you have moved since the last time you voted, your registration may not be valid.

The MTHA can guide you through the voter registration process. For assistance call Bobby Lillis at (410) 265-6843.

Trainers are urged to pass along this information along to employees.

Every vote counts!



Horsemen rallied for the cause in Annapolis last fall. Soon it will be time for the next step—the referendum to take place this coming November.

Industry must get behind slots referendum



Frederick W. Puddester, a former Maryland budget secretary, is heading a statewide effort to promote the passage of the slots referendum.

The effort, like all political campaigns, will be significant.

All major groups that can benefit from the passage of slots have been asked to participate and help pay for the effort.

The MTHA agreed to participate, even as the group was being formed.

Magna Entertainment Corp. has yet to make a commitment to help fund the lobbying effort for the slots referendum to take place in November.

Its reluctance apparently is based on concerns that Laurel Park is not named as a site in the slots legislation that was approved in the 2007 special session of the Maryland General Assembly.

"We obviously hope that Magna will take this issue into further consideration, and throw its considerable weight behind the cause," said MTHA President Richard Hoffberger.

"While the legislation is not site-specific, it was clearly designed to include Laurel as a site," Mr. Hoffberger continued. "If Magna joins in efforts to secure passage of the referendum, the likelihood of passage increases and so do Magna's chances of having slots at Laurel."

"If Magna doesn't participate in the slots effort, its chances of being awarded a license could be dim."

Added Mr. Hoffberger: "Obviously, it's important for all stakeholders to help fund the initiative. The teachers' union has stepped up to the plate, along with various segments of the racing industry, including, of course, the MTHA."

Meanwhile, Magna is noncommittal.

"Do I think we are leaning toward being supportive? Yes, I do," Magna's executive vice-president of racing, Scott Borgemenke, told *Thoroughbred Times*. "I would be less than honest with you if I said we are on board."

Hoofprints

Raffetto to lead NSA

Lou Raffetto, former president and chief operating officer of the Maryland Jockey Club, has accepted the newly created post of chief executive officer of the National Steeplechase Association (NSA).

Mr. Raffetto was fired last November from his position at the MJC, which he had held since January 2001.

He and his wife, Fran, intend to keep their home in Howard County, and commute to the NSA office in Elkton, Md.

Jockey Club offers microchips

The Jockey Club is making microchips available for purchase at a cost of \$20.

Microchips are not currently a requirement for Thoroughbred registration and participation is voluntary.

For more information, or to place an order, visit www.registry.jockeyclub.com.

The First Saturday in May

The award-winning documentary *The First Saturday in May* is set for showing at the E Street Cinema in Washington D.C. between Friday, April 18, and Thursday, April 24. Consult theater listings for exact dates and times.

Committee bulletin

Bowie

Backstretch chairman Phil Capuano reported that the track surface has frequently been sealed; workouts have been limited because of the hard surface.

Thoughts, from page 4

ing industry in Maryland, as our tracks are stymied in their ability to provide sufficient purse money.

When, and if, the slots program drafted by our legislative leaders becomes a reality in this state, schools, police and fire departments, and programs for the disabled and needy will benefit, along with other public institutions. But most

important to us, you will see a major turnaround in the horse industry.

Please vote YES for slots. You won't regret it.

*/Arnold A. Heft,
MTHA Director,
Legislative Committee Chairman*

Filmmakers John and Brad Hennegan followed six horses, including Barbaro, on their paths to the 2006 Kentucky Derby, providing a rare behind-the-scenes glimpse of the action.

A trailer of the movie can be viewed and downloaded at www.thefirstsaturdayinmay.com.

Unwanted Horse Coalition

The Unwanted Horse Coalition, a broad alliance of equine organizations that have joined together under the American Horse Council, is concerned that some horses may slip through the various safety nets within the industry.

Its mission is to help educate the horse industry about this issue and help people learn to "Own Responsibly."

For more information call (202) 296-4031 or visit www.unwantedhorsecoalition.org.

National Handicapping Tour

The 2008 National Handicapping Tour, sponsored by the National Thoroughbred Racing Association and Daily Racing Form, is now underway. For information visit NTRA.com

Free rabies vaccinations for cats

Dr. James M. Casey, a practicing veterinarian as well as a trainer, offers free rabies vaccinations for cats. For more information, contact Dr. Casey in Barn 28 at Laurel Park.

RMTC Web site

The Racing Medication and Testing Consortium Web site has added many updates and improvements. The address is www.rmtcnet.com.

International Equine Summit

The "Equine Economy in the 21st Century" is among numerous topics to be addressed during the inaugural Kentucky International Equine Summit 2008 at the Radisson Plaza Hotel in Lexington, Ky., on April 28 and 29.

For more information visit www.kyeequinesummit.com.

MTHA Web site:

www.mdhorsemen.com

To find out about the MTHA's many programs and services, visit www.mdhorsemen.com.

Medication and claiming rules and an archive of *The Horsemen's Newsletter* are also posted on the site.

