

## Notes from Haydock Park Bookmaker Liaison Committee Meeting

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2018

### Attendees:

Jason Fildes – General Manager, Haydock Park Racecourse  
Dickon White – Group Betting Director – The Jockey Club  
Tim Brown – Bookmaker  
Keith Johnson – Bookmaker  
Mark Sawyer – Bookmaker  
John Hutchinson - Bookmaker  
Ron Hall – Bookmaker  
Anthony Bywater - Bookmaker  
Neil Pateman – BRM, AGT

### Apologies:

Steve Clare - Jockey Club Racecourses' Betting Consultant

## Agenda

### Welcome & Introductions

DW & JF welcomed everyone to the first Haydock BLC. All attendees were encouraged to participate in the meeting. DW outlined that a number of successful BLC's had already been staged, and that the outline agenda that was produced for this meeting, had proven to be helpful in structuring other meetings. Everyone was asked to respect the agenda that had been produced and to give all an opportunity to speak.

As with other meetings, notes would be produced and distributed to all attendees. After approval, the notes would then be published onto the AGT website.

### 2017/18 (to date) Review of Trading – Haydock Park only

MS opened the review of trading by stating that he had experienced a large decline in turnover at midweek fixtures when there was only one enclosure. Betfair Chase day was good and recent Easter fixture was OK also. MS felt it was strange that although midweek Jump fixtures had seen a decline in attendances, admission prices had continued to rise. He was also disappointed that the multiple used to calculate the DBB remained at 5 x when he believed an agreement had been reached to only charge 3 x.

RH added that he worked on the Saturday fixtures, and he felt that Tensational days worked well. He was disappointed that the 2-4-1 tickets that used to be available to female racegoers had been removed. DW explained that this was done following a complaint from a male racegoer who had legal support to his challenge.

AB stated that he could not justify the cost to trade midweek. The Silver Ring was also perceived to be too expensive. However, the Easter promotions offering 2-4-1 badges had worked well.

KJ outlined his position and stated that midweek Jumps fixtures at all racecourses were really struggling, and unviable for bookmakers. Small field sizes were not assisting either. The good days at Haydock Park were holding up well but the poor days are very poor. The belief that when it was one enclosure that Rails would always do well was not correct, they struggled on many days also. He agreed with RH that the Friday evenings were not what they were. Music nights were not always good for bookmakers, even when there were large attendances, because they were not punters. He asked whether the multiples could be looked at for music nights, as Newmarket had done. KJ also asked whether Haydock had considered an annual betting badge for bookmakers.

JH stated that he felt that the Saturday fixtures were just full of drinkers and that midweek was also poor. He had sold a Haydock Tattersalls pitch due to the poor performance and had bought one at Newcastle. The midweek fixtures were nearly unworkable in Tattersalls. The March date (Howdens

Joinery/Molson Coors) used to be good but not anymore. He added that there was not enough focus on the racing programme and that it was boring. What happened to the Fixed Brush hurdles and the Champion Hurdle Trial was poor. The Friday evenings contained one maiden supported by five poor handicaps. JF responded by stating that prize money at Haydock would be over £5million in 2018, this was the highest ever. Successful innovations had included the Challenger Series (although JH had stated that this clashed with a Carlisle fixture). JH finished by stating that the Be Friendly (Silver) enclosure should be open at all fixtures as this was what encouraged people to come racing for the first time.

TB (Tattersalls 55) said that midweek was unviable at Haydock. He added that the one-enclosure policy massively favoured the Rails bookmakers. He also stated that even though he was a poor number, he often bet within the top 10 pitches outlining that many bookmakers were not turning up. He also was disappointed that there was only one entrance open (County) that drove racegoers away from the Tattersalls ring. He questioned why bookmakers had to pay the Annual Marketing Fee. The one enclosure policy undoubtedly favoured the top 10 pitches. It was also frustrating that sponsors (online betting companies such as Smarkets) were given lots of time to promote online offers and these were often not as favourable as what was being offered in the betting ring. The PA announcer at Easter was not good enough (JF explained that it was last minute change due to illness, etc.) and he did not promote the ring. JH added that Lee Mackenzie who was used in this role occasionally was excellent.

#### 2018 Haydock Park Plans

JF presented Haydock Park plans for 2018, key items presented included;

Marketing plans and investment for 2018 including local residents 2-4-1 leaflet delivered to 116k homes, digital marketing campaigns, radio advertising and working with other JCR racecourses and RUK with targeted offers.

JF outlined that there would be 18 x one-enclosure days in 2018, these would be published on the AGT website. For all of these fixtures, it would be £10 to get in if you pre-purchased and registered. All agreed that this was a good offer. MS asked if racegoers only had to pre-register once to take advantage of the offer. JF also stated that he was happy to support bookmakers with a limited number of complimentary badges if they were bringing local punters to the course on these fixtures. There was still a concern that the £20 admission price on the gate was too expensive, and could Haydock do more to support with this. JF agreed to review. JH still felt that there should be two enclosures for these fixtures and suggested that Tattersalls should be £5 and County £10 (pre-registrations).

JF added that Haydock were looking to build the brewery day in September (trying to replicate John Smith's day at York). The other key Saturday fixtures in the Summer were trading well at this stage. However, no complacency.

MS asked if bookmakers could assist with distributing the 2-4-1 leaflets to their customers. JF supported this.

JF also outlined that entrance to the Be Friendly enclosure would be £10 if you pre-purchased. All asked whether the admission price on the day could remain at £10. AB stated that the current pricing made it too expensive. JF added that there would be 3 x Disco Nights during the Summer and this activity would be targeted at the Tattersalls/Be Friendly areas.

JF outlined the two music nights that were scheduled; Plan B on the 21<sup>st</sup> July (5k expected) and Paloma Faith (14k) on the 10<sup>th</sup> August.

JH asked whether Haydock would consider staging seven race cards in the evening with 25 minute gaps. All attendees agreed that if there were small fields declared then these should be run at the

front of the card, rather than at the end. JH also added that the Walrus Hunter Chase in February should be at the start of the card and not at the end.

JF added that there would be 3 x Family Days; Temple Stakes in May, Easter Saturday (already staged) and Thursday in August.

TB asked whether Haydock had stopped food being brought in by racegoers, JF said this was not the case.

JF stated that due to a couple of issues the Be Friendly stand would not be available for use until the 26<sup>th</sup> May. The Easter fixture caused some problems for Be Friendly bookmakers and JF agreed to review this. AB asked if a sign could be produced in the area to outline what days the enclosure will be open.

RH also added that he was surprised when certain bars were not open on key fixtures in Jan and Feb when the Oaks Bar (Makerfield) was not open.

#### Bookmaker Access/Car Parking

JF presented the multiples that would be charged for each day, but agreed to review these on midweek and music fixtures.

All agreed that access and car parking at Haydock Park was good, and were appreciative of how security managed the bookmakers.

#### Bookmaker Numbers & Rings

DW stated that JCR would review all bookmaker numbers within each ring over the next 12 months, however, no decisions would be taken without full consultation with the BLC's. TB responded by stating that under no circumstances should bookmaker numbers be altered. Any changes would be driven by bookmakers' self-interest, once again.

#### Marketing Fees/ Promoting the On-Course Market

DW outlined how the AMF's had been invested at Haydock Park and that marketing budgets over the past few years had grown to try and attract people to come racing. TB stated that the AMF's should not be allowed. JH also added that other racecourses such as Sedgefield and Stratford were far more proactive by having races sponsored by on-course bookmakers and giving them the opportunity to promote themselves by means of interviews over the PA on those days. AB also asked if Haydock were planning on staging a "free" raceday that could help also.

JH also stated that big screens should be used primarily to show race action, including racing from other meetings taking place around the country, rather than a plethora of adverts and endless replays of the race which has just taken place. The use of the big screen at Aintree when the "partnership" with Sandown (Becher/Tingle Creek day) was trialled was excellent in his view.

#### Role of the BRM's

DW stated the importance of the BRM's at Haydock. JH stated that there were some poor BRM's and KJ asked if they could be made more visible at Haydock. JF would speak with Mark Ryan to agree a location after each race where the BRM would be found (similar to Aintree).

#### Think 21/under 18 Gambling

DW stated that bookmakers (and racecourses) needed to be more vigilant on this matter, and that a co-ordinated approach was required to deal with the local authorities and the Gambling Commission.

### Health & Safety in the Betting Rings

JF thanked the bookmakers for their support in ensuring their pitches were kept tidy. TB stated that a number of the anchorage points within the Be Friendly needed attention. KJ also mentioned that in warm weather, bookmakers should be allowed to use their discretion if they wanted to use umbrellas to protect themselves from the sun.

### AOB

#### Pitch Renting

DW outlined that JCR would be working with AGT again on looking at pitch renting across courses.

#### Each Way Betting Terms

Bookmakers were made aware that a proposal had been received from a bookmaker to amend the each way terms, to allow them to offer an additional place but with an increased fraction, targeted at large field size races. DW stated that the bookmaker needed additional support from bookmakers if this was going to be implemented.

#### Saturday Fixtures

KJ stated that he felt that on the busy Saturdays, the gates opened too late and he witnessed racegoers leaving the site. He also added that the PA announcers needed to help bookmakers more with regular announcements (a script could and should be provided). The Rule 4 announcements and promotions were still an issue although he stated at Ayr on Saturday at the Scottish Grand National meeting it had been handled well.

PA – TB complained that the volume of the PA was sometimes too loud that you could not hear what the punters were saying.

RH mentioned that there seemed to be a lack of Irish runners in Haydock races, unlike at some of the Scottish courses and Cartmel. Could Haydock look at travel allowances to assist? Jump racing field sizes at Haydock were poor.