

Newcastle Local Joint Pitch Council

Minutes of the meeting held at Newcastle Racecourse on Wednesday 2 November 2005

In attendance:-

Chair and secretary Haig Jenkinson, Betting Ring Manager
 Jon Ridley, Northern BPA
 Simon King, Rails Bookmakers Assoc.
 David Williamson, Executive Director Newcastle Racecourse
 Jim Allen, General Manager Sedgefield Racecourse

1 Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

In relation to agenda item 2 – designated numbers 2005 – Paragraph 3 the word “Newcastle” should be substituted with the word “Sedgefield”.

The minutes were approved and signed.

2 Future LJPC Minutes

HJ told Council that it had been decided by NJPC Council Members, who included representatives of the RCA, RBA and NAB, that, with immediate effect, future minutes from all LJPC meetings would be posted on the NJPC website and thus available to all to view in their entirety.

HJ indicated that as approval of minutes was not actually official until convening the following meeting of the LJPC he would furnish the minutes to LJPC members at the earliest opportunity in order that he could seek “approval” of the minutes from members prior to posting on the website.

3 Northumberland Plate Meeting Update

DW told Council members that the Northumberland Plate meeting continued to grow in popularity and, in particular, corporate bookings demand was difficult to satisfy with availability being limited. To this end, DW told Council that Northern Racing were currently looking at the option of erecting additional temporary corporate grandstand facilities in the centre of the racecourse. DW asked Council to lend their support to an application being made to the Levy Board for an additional betting ring area in front of this centre of course grandstand should it be approved by Northern Racing. Council agreed unanimously to support an application by DW of up to 6 bookmakers positions in the centre of course. (actual number of bookmakers and how selected to be further discussed should DW go ahead with proposals) For the avoidance of doubt, any number being from those currently betting and not in addition to the designated numbers set for the meeting.

Whatever the outcome of the above, DW intends to locate a new marquee on the Members lawn area and seeks to provide additional ground space for those in the Premier Enclosure. With this in mind, DW asked Council to support a temporary fence running from behind the nearest Rails pitch to the Brandling House entrance of the tarmaced area adjoining the parade ring going in a diagonal line to the corner of the top of the parade ring steppings next to the third line in Tattersalls. Along this fence will be a stewarded gate which will represent the dividing line between the Premier Enclosure and Grandstand Enclosure.

SK supported the intention but asked that should the area immediately behind the Rails bookmakers become congested that stewards would act to keep crowds flowing smoothly. DW will put his most experienced stewards on this gate.

JR asked if the entrance on the walkway whereby the jockeys access the parade ring could in some way be increased to create better crowd flow and DW indicated he would hinge one fence panel to facilitate this. Council agreed unanimously that DW should go ahead with this temporary fence trial for the entirety of the 3 day Northumberland Fixture in 2006.

4 Designated Numbers 2006

HJ had previously furnished members with attendance records and opt-in / opt-out details together with crowd figures for 2005.

JR asked DW reasoning behind why the track had acquired fewer fixtures in 2006 than in 2005. DW indicated that it gave the racecourse more time to build up to the highlight of the year at Newcastle – the Northumberland Plate Meeting.

SK proposed that numbers remain unchanged on the Rails throughout 2006. SK commented that Rails attendances on occasions were disappointing but effectively Rails bookmakers were voting with their feet regarding viability of certain fixtures and he saw little point in changing this. The Council unanimously accepted SK's proposal that numbers remain unchanged.

JR commented that the 2006 fixtures on Wednesday 10 May and Tuesday 16 May had no clashes with local racemeetings, which had been the case with the corresponding fixtures in 2005, and therefore believed they may require an increase in the Tattersalls designated number. JR proposed increasing the number to 34 which was unanimously agreed.

Although JR felt that the fixture on Saturday 18 March would be difficult to fill with Wetherby in opposition he did not seek a reduction in the numbers set and felt bookmakers would decide. The racemeeting on April 8 which clashes with the Aintree Grand National fixture was set at 44 in 2005, this had been decreased by 10 from the previous year due to poor bookmaker attendance, this fixture continues to prove disappointingly attended, there were 24 opt-outs in 2005 with a total attendance of only 28 in Tattersalls. Council unanimously decided once again to cut the numbers by a further 10 in an attempt to obtain “correct” sustainable numbers. A full set of the unanimously agreed Designated Numbers for 2006 is attached.

5 AOB

JR opened by indicating that it had been requested at the “bookmaker open meeting” that consideration be made by Newcastle Executive to allowing bookmakers to park their cars as close to the betting ring as possible on the quieter days and, preferably, in a location close to the former Silver Ring betting area. JR was critical of those who had instructed bookmakers must use standard joints without them going into the practical implications of doing so. JR felt that if those who implemented the policy had themselves had to carry joints around racecourses they would have come to a different conclusion regarding the practicality of so doing. DW will consult with his Health and Safety officer regarding the issue before returning to JR.

JR indicated that because bookmakers were not parking in an orderly manner in the bookmakers’ car park area this was making it difficult to get the optimum number of cars parked in the space available. This was exacerbated on the busy days and asked DW if effective stewarding could be put in place on these occasions. DW agreed.

HJ stated that it had been raised at the “open meeting” that some anchorage points lid were damaged thus making it difficult to secure the joints. DW will investigate this.

NEWCASTLE DESIGNATED NUMBERS 2006

FLAT:

Rails:

10 30 June, 1 July
8 All other meetings

Tattersalls:

72 1 July
66 30 Jun
44 1 May, 29 Jul, 28 Aug
34 8 Apr, 10 May, 16 May, 29 Jun, 18 Jul
28 All other meetings

National Hunt:

Rails:

8 25 Feb, 25 Nov
6 All other meetings

Tattersalls:

52 25 Nov
48 25 Feb
40 18 Mar, 16 Dec
26 All other meetings