

Perth Local Joint Pitch Council

Minutes of the 13th Meeting held at Perth Racecourse on Wednesday 23 November 2005

In attendance:

Chair and secretary	Haig Jenkinson	Betting Ring Manager
	Morag Reid, Sam Morshead	Perth Racecourse Executive
	Cumbie Bowers	Fife & District Bookmakers
	James Cameron	Rails Bookmakers Association

1 Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

Council agreed that the number one pitch in the second line would be available for use on all days during the 2006 season. The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman.

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.

SM indicated he would acknowledge receipt of minutes via email.

3 New Grandstand and On-Course Bookmaking (review of last season)

CB told Council that he felt the introduction of the one-enclosure in 2005 had been of significant detriment to the Tattersalls bookmakers in relation to the Rails layers.

SM suggested the way forward was to have an integration of the Rails with the Tattersalls positions now that there was one enclosure throughout the grandstand. SM asked if this was a possibility. HJ explained to Council the current policy from the NJPC regarding Rails and Tattersalls lists.

JC indicated the Rails would oppose any integration or relocation from their current position.

CB indicated that, in principle, Fife and District Bookmakers felt the Rails should be moved from their current location but he felt there were not the procedures available in the current NJPC rules to do so in a fair way. He reiterated his opposition to the 1:1 mechanism relating to new areas.

HJ told SM that at the recent bookmaker open meeting concern was voiced that since the building of the new grandstand the area at the bottom of the ring was increasingly remote from other racecourse activities and it had been suggested that SM could perhaps introduce corporate marquees in the area beyond the last ditch bar to stimulate this area. SM told Council that he would look at the possibility. However, he could not have marquees obscuring viewing from the main grandstand and this would necessitate a certain style of unit.

4 Designated Numbers 2006

The Council members had previously been furnished with documentation regarding bookmaker attendances in 2005 together with opt-in/ opt-out details. Further, members had been issued with crowd attendance figures during the 2005 season.

It was unanimously agreed that the Rails and Dewhurst numbers remain unchanged at 4 all days for both areas.

CB told Council that Fife and District BPA had indicated they would like to see the numbers in the Silver Ring remain unchanged on all days with the exception of the Sunday meetings. CB told Council that with the new policy of sending members of the public with picnic hampers into the centre of the course crowd attendances in the Silver Ring on these essentially family days had increased significantly in 2005. CB told Council the current bookmaker numbers could not cope with the volume of demand in this area and proposed that the number be increased from 9 to 12 on the two dates Sunday 11 June and Sunday 16 July.

Furthermore, CB asked that the NJPC auction a further 3 positions in the Silver Ring prior to the 2006 season to establish a further "waiting" list for this ring.

JC was opposed to an increase in numbers from their present status. He told Council that it was unfair to bookmakers who had purchased a position in the Silver Ring to now find the numbers increasing by 3.

SM and MG indicated that they had been approached by members of the public indicating they found queues to place bets unacceptably long and they felt as a customer service issue there was a requirement for an increase in bookmakers. MG told Council crowd figures in the centre of the course had been in the region of 3,000 at the Sunday meeting in June 2005.

The proposal to increase the number to 12 on the 2 Sundays was passed by a majority. The remaining days stay the same.

Turning to Tattersalls, CB indicated that due to the shift to the one-enclosure policy and the resultant crowd flow changes that had resulted throughout the whole grandstand area he sought a reduction in numbers of Tattersalls bookmakers by 3 on all days with the exception of the Friday of the April Festival. CB told Council a reduction in numbers was required to give those who bet on a regular basis a chance of success. That the bookmakers opting-in from the waiting list were adversely affecting the SP margins and that while the Rails had increased turnover with the new racecourse policies Tattersalls bookmakers were struggling and a short term measure was needed to help them.

JC felt it was important that all those who wanted to bet had the opportunity to do so. He indicated that a reduction in numbers would restrict this opportunity.

SM agreed that betting to sustainable percentages was important to the long term income of the racecourse and a ring working to healthy margins contributed to this and if there were too many bookmakers chasing too little business this was not ideal.

Having said that, SM indicated he was reluctant to cut bookmakers numbers when they regularly turned up and supported the racecourse. SM expressed concern that the Fife and District BPA felt it was necessary to cut the numbers on the first two days of the April Festival meeting and the two Sunday fixtures.

CB told SM there was not enough money circulating the ring on these particular days to sustain the bookmakers attending. He told SM that crowds on the Sundays in particular were not punting crowds.

JC told Council that he would not support any proposals that cut numbers from their present levels and suggested that the new evening fixture on 1 August should be set at 39.

After much deliberation, SM indicated he would be prepared to accept the proposals put forward by CB on the explicit understanding that he was offering his support for one season only and that, for the time being, he was prepared to be persuaded by the arguments as portrayed.

However, SM indicated that with a concert planned for the evening of Tuesday 22 August he believed it warranted 33 bookmakers. CB accepted SM's proposal.

By a majority the new evening fixture on Tuesday 1 August was set at 33.

The numbers set for the remaining fixtures were passed by majority and are as shown at the end of the minutes.

5 AOB

SM initiated a general discussion amongst members regarding recent press comment and speculation surrounding an industry starting price.

CB asked SM to note that he felt the decision of the management to disallow anyone to bring food onto the grandstand side of the racecourse was proving detrimental to the Tattersalls bookmakers.

SM told Council that the only area suitable for picnics in a one-enclosure grandstand was the centre of the course and he would continue to divert members of the public to this area should they have food with them. SM told Council that attendance levels in all areas of the racecourse had increased. CB felt any additional crowds in the grandstand enclosure were not bookmaker orientated.

SM declared that the admission prices in 2006 would remain unchanged.

Asked about the possibility of bookmakers / staff purchasing annual members badges, SM indicated he would review the current position and inform Council members prior to the new season.

MG will again supply bookmaker car park stickers to HJ for distribution.

HJ told SM it was of even greater importance with the increase in numbers on the Sunday fixtures that there was a clear defined area for bookmakers to pitch up. SM told Council there would be fewer funfair stalls in the centre of the racecourse in 2006 and CB agreed to mark out appropriate bookmaker positions in advance of the two Sunday fixtures.

PERTH DESIGNATED NUMBERS 2006

Tattersalls:

36 28 Apr, 11 Jun, 16 July
33 26 Apr, 27 Apr, 17 May, 18 May, 1 Aug, 22 Aug, 20 Sep, 21 Sep
30 6 July

Rails:

4 All days

Dewhurst:

4 All days

Silver:

12 11 Jun, 16 July
4 All other days