

1010 Hurley Way, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95825
(916) 263-6000
Fax (916) 263-6042

CALIFORNIA HORSE RACING BOARD

Los Alamitos Race Course
4961 E. Katella Avenue
Los Alamitos, CA 90720

Contact: Mike Marten
(714) 820-2748
Cell: (714) 240-1870
Fax (714) 821-6232

CHRB ADVISORY

AUGUST 23, 2006

California Horse Racing Board Chairman Richard B. Shapiro issued the following statement Wednesday:

“Lava Man left no doubt he is a true champion when he won the Pacific Classic at Del Mar on Sunday and became the first horse ever to win the Santa Anita Handicap, Hollywood Gold Cup, and Pacific Classic in the same year. Doug O’Neill has done a marvelous job training this horse, and no one should take anything away from these achievements.

“Unfortunately, the trainer of one of the other horses in the Pacific Classic made some statements after the race that were harmful to the connections of Lava Man, including Doug O’Neill, and critical of the track condition. While I appreciate and understand that the statements have since been retracted, and were partly a result of emotions related to the illness of his father, I would like to shed some light on the situation.

“Steve Wood, the track foreman at Del Mar, and the Del Mar Thoroughbred Club did nothing out of the ordinary in preparing the racing surface for the Pacific Classic program. They have worked diligently and uniformly throughout the meet to provide the safest and most consistent track possible. Del Mar hosted more than 32,000 people to watch this race and, as has become customary, did an excellent job in all respects.

“In the Pacific Classic, all eight horses were tested for total carbon dioxide (TCO₂), or bicarbonate levels, and all eight tested below 35 millimoles – well within the legal limit. All testing was performed by the Maddy Laboratory at UC Davis. Of the eight, the horse testing with the lowest level was Lava Man.

“It is time that everyone recognize this is an exceptional horse that has been trained and managed superbly. The horse and trainer deserve our utmost respect for their great success.”

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