

CALIFORNIA HORSE RACING BOARD
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Statement on Current Racing Conditions from Richard B. Shapiro, chairman of the California Horse Racing Board, and Vice Chairman John Harris.

To our valued racing fans, owners, trainers, breeders, employees, and all concerned parties:

Unfortunately, since the beginning of the year, the Southern California thoroughbred racing circuit has been disrupted due to the failure of the new Cushion Track to drain properly. This failure has resulted in cancelled racing programs, a total of seven to date, and disruption to morning training schedules. Simulcast locations also have been negatively impacted.

We want to convey our deep concern to all parties relying on racing for their livelihood and we wish to explain the steps being taken to rectify the situation. We have been in constant contact with the management of Santa Anita to best understand what arrangements they are making to retrofit the track at the earliest possible date. They have advised us of their timetable, which has been devised to minimize the loss of additional race days and provide a safe, fair racing surface for the remainder of their race meeting.

We have also been in contact with Hollywood Park, and are pleased that Santa Anita and Hollywood Park are working together on a contingency plan to move racing to Hollywood Park should the track at Santa Anita not be successfully repaired. We are pleased that all parties expect that racing could be relocated on 48-hours notice, should that become necessary.

Recognizing the loss of racing opportunity and racing days, we have advised Santa Anita that they will be permitted to schedule additional races both on weekdays and weekends subject to daylight and horse inventory. We also have advised them that the Board would consider some make-up days, again to try and recoup some of the lost racing opportunity.

Simply stated, the CHRB stands ready and willing to assist the stakeholders and participants in the industry to lessen the impact of this unfortunate situation.

Some have questioned the overall performance of the synthetic surfaces and the decision of the industry and our Board to mandate them at our major racing venues. In the near future, we intend to conduct open discussions with all segments of the industry to best assess the performance to date. Studies are currently commencing to evaluate how to better maintain these tracks and at the same time keep them safe and fair. Participating in these studies will be all segments of the industry, including veterinarians, scientists, manufacturers, track owners, horse owners, and trainers.

Our Board remains resolute in our commitment to improving California horse racing in all respects. We welcome constructive input and comment from anyone. In an effort to better communicate with all parties, it is our intention to provide periodic updates as necessary to keep all parties informed as to the current situation.

We thank everyone for their patience and understanding during this difficult period.