

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

CALIFORNIA HORSE RACING BOARD

12235 Beach Blvd., Suite 7
Stanton, CA 90680
(714) 890-7001
Fax (714) 890-7006
Contact:
Mike Marten
(714) 890-7004
Pager: (714) 212-0325

CHRB NEWS RELEASE

JULY 25, 2002

BOARD APPROVES INCREASE TO JOCKEYS' HEALTH FUND

DEL MAR, CA – The California Horse Racing Board on Thursday approved a 30-percent increase in funding for the health and welfare program for California jockeys by allocating \$884,235 to help cover increased costs for health insurance, dental insurance, vision benefits, and monthly payments to disabled riders.

The Horse Racing Law provides for a health and welfare program for California jockeys and their dependents that is funded by uncashed refund tickets – money held by the Thoroughbred Owners of California (TOC) resulting from the failure by fans to turn in pari-mutuel tickets for scratched horses and canceled wagers and races. This fund exceeded \$1 million last year. Any fund balance beyond the money allocated to the health and welfare fund eventually goes to the State of California as unclaimed personal property.

Chris McCarron, who recently retired from riding but continues to represent the Jockeys' Guild in various matters, explained that California is one of only two states that provide a funding mechanism to help subsidize the cost of health insurance for jockeys. The other is Delaware. Jockeys still pay premiums for health insurance, but the state allocation reduces their premiums. The Jockeys' Guild administers the program. To be eligible for the California subsidy, a jockey must ride at least 100 mounts in a calendar year, at least 50 of which must be in California. Currently 110 jockeys participate in the program.

“This money is a huge, huge help,” said McCarron, “and we are grateful to the CHRB and the TOC for their support.”

McCarron also took the opportunity to speak under general business on the subject of shock wave therapy (SWT) on horses, which involves the use of a machine to transmit energy waves through the skin to underlying soft tissue and bones. While this treatment can be beneficial in the treatment of certain orthopedic conditions, it also appears that the treatment can produce an analgesic effect (pain relief), which makes it a safety issue for horses and riders.

“The Jockeys' Guild is on record as opposing any use of shock wave therapy at the racetrack,” said McCarron.

The CHRB recently issued a directive establishing restrictions on SWT at California racetracks and training facilities. Effective with the start of this Del Mar meet, horses receiving SWT treatment cannot be entered to race for seven days following the treatment. Furthermore, all SWT machines must be registered with the CHRB official veterinarian and can only be operated by veterinarians. All SWT treatments must be confidentially reported to the CHRB official veterinarian. In addition to the CHRB directive, management at Del Mar notified veterinarians and horsemen Wednesday that all SWT treatments at Del Mar must be administered at the equine clinic.

CHRB Chairman Alan Landsburg advised McCarron that the Board directive establishes a process to bring SWT under some control, and that the Board will determine how the restrictions are working after the first month.

In other business, the Board approved license applications for race meets at Bay Meadows from August 30 through November 3, at Fairplex from September 13 through September 29, and at Cal Expo (Capitol Racing) from September 27 through February 23. The Board authorized Bay Meadows to race Wednesday, September 4, concurrent with the racing program at Del Mar.

The Board authorized the Oak Tree Charitable Foundation to distribute \$97,000 to 47 beneficiaries, approximately 53 percent to charities associated with the horse-racing industry, including \$20,000 to the California Thoroughbred Horsemen's Foundation and \$8,000 to the Racetrack Chaplaincy of America's Southern California Council.

The Board authorized the Pacific Racing Association to distribute \$68,300 to 17 beneficiaries, approximately 68 percent to charities associated with the horse-racing industry, including \$13,000 to the Winners Foundation.

#