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CHRB NEWS RELEASE

OCTOBER 7, 2003

ENHANCED SECURITY FOR OAK TREE MEET, BREEDERS' CUP

ARCADIA, CA – Enhanced security is in place for the entire Oak Tree meet at Santa Anita Park – beginning with extra security personnel who were assigned to the stable area on opening day, September 28, and continuing intermittently to closing day, November 9.

This is in addition to a comprehensive security plan that is being designed to provide maximum security at a minimum of inconvenience to the public attending the Breeders' Cup at Santa Anita on October 25.

Racing associations have been supplying personnel throughout the year to work with California Horse Racing Board investigators in providing extra security for important stakes races, primarily by assigning guards to observe horses entered in Grade I races beginning approximately four hours before their scheduled races.

Raising their level of commitment to this program, the board of directors for the Oak Tree Racing Association decided to provide extra security for all 13 of its Grades I, II, and III stakes races, not counting the eight Breeders' Cup races, which have an even higher level of security under Breeders' Cup protocol.

“This came about largely at the recommendation of the two veterinarians on our board, Dr. Jack Robbins and Dr. Rick Arthur,” explained Sherwood Chillingworth, executive vice president of Oak Tree. “Not only have we extended the security to Grade II and Grade III races, but we are assigning personnel to the horses a full six hours before they race. Again, this was because Drs. Robbins and Arthur felt strongly that six hours would be more effective than four hours.”

The increased commitment was apparent opening day when 22 uniformed guards from a private security firm entered the stable area the morning of September 28 under the direction of Santa Anita Security Chief Dick Honaker and CHRB Supervising Investigator Michael Kilpack.

“These are mostly retired police officers,” explained Chillingworth. “We’ve asked the security firm to supply the same people each time, so that we don’t have to keep repeating the training program for new people. They all are equipped with radios to communicate with the CHRB and our own regular security staff in case something occurs with the horses they are watching and they need someone there immediately to help handle the situation.”

Honaker said personnel will begin providing 24-hour security in the quarantine area and at specially designated Breeders' Cup barns as they become occupied, perhaps as early as October 15.

Meanwhile, security requirements for the stable area are being strictly enforced. All vehicles are being checked. All persons entering the stable area must have proper identification. Licenses issued by the CHRB must be worn in plain view.

The CHRB and Oak Tree security forces are working with the Arcadia Police Department and dozens of other law-enforcement agencies in developing a master security plan for the Breeders' Cup and related events. CHRB and Oak Tree officials attended the latest in a series of planning sessions at the Arcadia Police Department late last month. Arcadia Police Chief Dave Hinig presided over the meeting.

"We are trying to achieve a balance between a high-profile presence and a friendly attitude," Hinig told about 40 representatives of city, county, state, and federal law enforcement agencies.

On Breeders' Cup day, Hinig said high priority will be given to traffic control with assistance from police officers in neighboring communities, the California Highway Patrol, and Caltrans. He said patrons will be moved as quickly as possible through the scanning devices that will be in place at all entrances to the racetrack.

"We are advising people to plan your day and come early, that way you are going to minimize the impact of traffic congestion and additional security measures for screening," said Hinig, noting that parking lots will open at 7 a.m. and entrance gates will open at 7:30, well before the scheduled 9:40 start of the first race on the program.

Oak Tree issued a news release last week indicating there would be restrictions on items that patrons may bring to the track. Bottles, coolers, backpacks, carryall bags, and large bags or containers will be absolutely prohibited, along with umbrellas, folding chairs or tables, Frisbees, balloons, skateboards, and roller blades.

CHRB Southern Region Security Chief Robert Nieto said he and CHRB investigators from other racetracks will work with CHRB investigators and track security personnel at Santa Anita to provide enhanced security in the backside on Breeders' Cup day.

As for the security of the pari-mutuel system, new procedures and safeguards have been added since the last Breeders' Cup to ensure the highest degree of integrity to the wagering system, especially for the Pick Six and other multiple-race wagers.

John Reagan, the CHRB senior management auditor, will be closely monitoring the situation, noting, "Everyone's on alert."

Additionally, a Breeders' Cup veterinary team will be working with the CHRB and Oak Tree official veterinarians during the entire week leading up to the Breeders' Cup races evaluating the health and racing soundness of the horses. If any team member observes anything unusual about a horse, the entire team will review and evaluate the matter along with the trainer.

Dr. Ron Jensen, the CHRB equine medical director, noted that although the Breeders' Cup team is very active and helpful during Breeders' Cup week, "The CHRB and Oak Tree veterinarians remain in charge of all veterinary activities, and CHRB rules and regulations concerning veterinary matters and drug testing are in force."

The three stewards for the Oak Tree meet, Pete Pedersen, Ingrid Fermin, and Tom Ward, all have Breeders' Cup experience. In fact, Pedersen has served as a steward at all five previous Breeders' Cups in California (1984, 1986, 1987, 1993, and 1997).

Remarkably, with 26 years of experience as a racing official in California, Fermin is the junior official on the Breeders' Cup panel. Ward has 35 years of experience, Pedersen more than 50.

"We've all been stewards for a long time and we're comfortable with what we do, even for something as big as the Breeders' Cup," said Fermin.

The CHRB is assigning a fourth steward, George Slender, to Santa Anita on Breeders' Cup day. Slender, who served as a regular steward at Del Mar and currently officiates at Los Alamitos Race Course, will be assigned to the paddock and will follow the Breeders' Cup horses to the starting gate.

"I'll be working alongside the track veterinarian, Dr. Ray Baran, and we'll be there to oversee things and make sure everything goes well," explained Slender. "We'll be in radio contact with the stewards upstairs."

An enhanced drug-testing program also will be in place for Breeders' Cup day, as recommended by the Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association and National Thoroughbred Racing Associations. Under Breeders' Cup protocol, more post-race urine samples will be taken from more horses, and those samples will undergo more extensive testing.

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