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CHRB NEWS RELEASE

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**BOARD MOVES FORWARD ON JOCKEY WEIGHTS, HEALTH RULES**

SACRAMENTO, CA – The California Horse Racing Board approved for public notice and comment Thursday rule amendments to raise the minimum weights horses must carry in races and establish a minimum body fat content for jockeys. The proposals still must be discussed at a public hearing – no sooner than August – prior to final Board consideration.

Proposed by the Jockeys' Guild, the amendments would establish a minimum weight of 118 pounds in thoroughbred and Arabian races. The minimum weight for jockeys riding Appaloosas, Paints, Quarter Horses and mules would be 123 pounds. The only exception to the minimum weights would be apprentice allowances. Jockeys would be weighed in the nude, absent any riding gear, to determine their weights. If below the minimum, they would need to carry lead weights or heavier gear to make up the difference.

Under the proposal, every horse would carry an additional 10 pounds of riding gear, including the saddle, safety helmet, safety vest, all equipment, clothing, and accessories.

“We’ve all been made aware of the great health crisis that results from jockeys reducing to the point of abusing their own bodies,” said CHRB Vice Chairman Roger Licht. “These changes will help jockeys. And they will benefit the public because bettors will know that whatever they see listed in the program is the weight actually being carried.”

Darrell Haire, a Guild representative, said that if the amendments had been in place back when he was riding, “I wouldn’t have had to do what I did to my body.”

Along with raising the minimum weight, the amendments would establish a requirement that jockeys maintain a body fat content of not less than 5 percent. Jockeys who dip under that level would be given a warning and three days to meet the requirement or be suspended from riding. Compliance with the body fat requirement would be optional for jockeys licensed in the United States prior to December 31, 2003.

Licht noted that with a minimum weight of 118 pounds for the lowest-weighted horse in a handicap race, the highweight might have to carry much more weight than has been the norm in recent years.

CHRB Chairman John Harris responded, “The spread of weights in a handicap may not be as great as it has been historically. I guess that’s part of the trade-off.”

Representatives of the Thoroughbred Owners of California and California Thoroughbred Trainers, while not opposing the changes, did suggest that the Board move slower in the rule-making process to allow more time for discussion of aspects of the proposals, such as whether 5 percent is the appropriate standard for body fat and if the riding equipment and clothing really do add up to 10 pounds of extra weight.

Harris resisted any delays and said, “Let’s move forward – put this up for notice, solicit public comment, get all of the evidence on the table, and determine what issues we need to address.”

The six commissioners in attendance voted unanimously to approve the amendments for 45-day public notice. If there are no significant changes to the proposed amendments, they could be approved by the Board in August.

Haire said other state racing commissions have expressed interest in adopting the Guild proposals and most likely will be moving forward with their own rules while California completes the process.

In other business, the Board approved the license for the Del Mar Thoroughbred Club to conduct a thoroughbred meet from July 21 through September 8. During the discussion, Licht asked Del Mar President Joseph Harper if he intended to alter his stakes schedule – specifically, the hour at which the Pacific Classic is run – in order to accommodate a proposed national championship racing series.

“I believe the integrity of the California stakes schedule and Breeders’ Cup should not be compromised in order to facilitate the proposal,” said Licht.

Harper concurred and said, “We are not going to adjust our schedule to the detriment of our business in order to accommodate the program. In order for us to make changes, it has to work for Del Mar.”

The Board also approved license applications for the Solano County Fair (July 14 through July 26), Sonoma County Fair (July 28 through August 9), San Mateo County Fair (August 11 through August 23), Humboldt County Fair (August 12 through August 22), and California Exposition and State Fair (August 25 through September 6).

The State Fair will not race Monday, August 30, but will instead offer 17 races on Friday, August 27. Chairman Harris described the August 27 “double-header” as a “novel idea” and praised the Fair’s efforts to be innovative.

Representatives of fairs and horsemen in Northern California said there have been encouraging signs of interest from horsemen in other jurisdictions about running their horses on the fair circuit because the cost of workers’ compensation insurance is coming down as the result of a new law.

The Board conditionally approved the license application of Capitol Racing to conduct a harness meet at Cal Expo from September 24 through December 18 subject to Capitol submitting a required financial review by July 7 and addressing questions about the purse account.

The harness meet will begin two weeks earlier than was previously proposed (October 7) in

order to accommodate horsemen. The change will not add any racing days to the meet as Capitol will run some two and three-day race weeks to balance things out.

The Board heard testimony from harness interests and from management at Los Alamitos over that racetrack's decision to create a special section for wagering on harness races simulcast from Cal Expo. Those wagers cannot be placed outside of the special section. The change results from a matter that is under litigation. The item was placed on the agenda for discussion only.

Licht and Commissioner Jerry Moss, two members of the Pari-Mutuel Operations Committee, said they intend to fully explore the issue of rebates at the next committee meeting. Moss described rebating as a "threat to our industry."

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