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CHRB NEWS RELEASE

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CHRB MOVES TO SET MINIMUM JOCKEY WEIGHT, HEALTH STANDARDS

ARCADIA, CA – The California Horse Racing Board took initial steps Thursday to establish minimum weights for horses to carry in California races, paving the way for thoroughbred jockeys to weigh as much as 116 pounds without feeling business pressure to engage in unsafe weight-reducing practices.

The minimum weight for some other breeds, including quarter horses, will be even higher at 118 pounds if the proposed rule amendments, which the seven racing commissioners unanimously approved Thursday for 45-day notice to the public, are given final approval following a public hearing, perhaps at the April 28 Board meeting.

A key element of the proposal is to exclude all jockey attire and equipment from consideration in meeting the weight assignments for races, but to list the true weight of that additional gear in the official program along with what the jockeys weigh themselves, plus any added weight to meet assignments for the race. Thus, the total weight listed in the program will reflect all weight being carried on the back of each horse. Under existing rules, some items are excluded from the weights, such as safety vests and safety helmets, but jockeys carry other equipment onto the scale in meeting the weight assignments. Under the changes, all of that gear will be counted separately.

Furthermore, to promote better health and to help prevent the cycle of self-abuse caused by jockeys engaging in unsafe weight-reduction practices, the amendments will establish minimum body fat levels for jockeys. However, this provision will be optional for 24 months, commencing June 1, 2005, for any jockey licensed in the United States before December 31, 2004.

Barry Broad, an attorney representing the Jockeys' Guild, indicated the California rules are the first step in a national campaign to raise the minimum weights for all riders in the country.

"We can take this on the road, but we get nowhere if we don't start somewhere," said Broad in response to a suggestion from Tom Robbins, the racing secretary at Del Mar, that any weight changes should be done nationally, because he believes California will lose horses to other states if those horses are required to carry more weight under California rules.

Robbins and the racing secretaries from Hollywood Park (Martin Panza) and Santa Anita (Rick Hammerle) were joined by Drew Couto, president of the Thoroughbred Owners of California, and Ed Halpern, executive director of the California Thoroughbred Trainers, in expressing their belief that increasing weights as proposed would have a detrimental effect on California racing.

The racing commissioners rejected requests to delay action from horsemen and racing executives, who said they needed more time to address various lingering concerns.

“We’ve been discussing this for one year already,” said Commissioner Jerry Moss, “and now it is up to this Board to accomplish things.”

Chairman John Harris pointed out that if the CHRB does not act, the jockeys might go to the State Legislature to address this issue, and take it out of the hands of the Board. He felt if that happened, the racing industry could lose control of the issue.

Commissioner Richard Shapiro noted that horsemen, racing secretaries, and others could voice their concerns during the 45-day notice period. And during that time, he urged them to meet with jockeys and/or representatives of the Guild to work things out.

Specifically, under the proposed changes:

- The long-standing scale of weights will be eliminated. The minimum jockey weight for a jockey riding an Arabian or thoroughbred horse shall be no less than 116 pounds. The minimum weight for a jockey riding an appaloosa, paint, quarter horse, or mule shall be no less than 121 pounds.
- The minimum jockey weight in handicap races shall be no less than 112 pounds. If an apprentice allowance is used, then the minimum weight may be reduced by the amount of such allowance.
- Male jockeys shall maintain a minimum body fat content of 5 percent. Female jockeys shall maintain a minimum body fat content of 10 percent.
- A jockey’s body fat content shall be measured and recorded by the clerk of scales once each day of racing. A jockey whose body fat measures within 1 percent below the minimum level shall be warned, then suspended if the minimum standard is not met within three days of the warning. A jockey whose body fat drops more than 1 percent below the minimum shall be disqualified from riding.
- Every horse shall carry a minimum of 10 pounds of riding gear, not including equipment worn on the horse’s head, tail, or legs, nor foul-weather gear, nor other specific items. Items to be considered in the 10-pound minimum include the saddle, safety gear, all jockey attire, the whip, goggles, and pads.

In other business, Commissioner Moss, who chairs the Pari-Mutuel Operations Committee, reported that the Committee decided at a meeting Wednesday to move forward on some recommendations of the NTRA Players Panel, including revisions to rules for multiple-race wagers.

“We’ve set a few things into motion,” said Moss. “One change is to list possible payouts in the Pick 6 after the fifth leg of the wager. Another, if the surface is changed (from turf to dirt), that race will be considered an all-win situation.”

Commissioner John Sperry, who also serves on the Pari-Mutuel Operations Committee, noted his support for another of the Panel's recommendations to provide either refunds or consolation payoffs when horses are scratched from multiple-race wagers, instead of the current practice of substituting the race favorite for the scratched selection.

The Pari-Mutuel Committee also heard Wednesday from representatives of the Pari-Mutuel Employees Guild, who voiced concerns over the service being provided by Autotote. The Committee and CHRB staff will continue monitoring those areas of concern.

The Pari-Mutuel Guild representatives raised a different issue at the Board meeting Thursday. They said no jobs have been created for organized labor by Advance Deposit Wagering providers (i.e. Yobet.com, XpressBet, and TVG), despite assurances given to the Guild when the enabling legislation, CHRB regulations, and the issuance of licenses were being considered several years ago. Former CHRB Chairman Alan Landsburg testified Thursday on behalf of the pari-mutuel employees. He said the industry must keep its commitments and honor those hourly workers who are so critical to racing.

Commissioner Sperry agreed, "It was the intent at the time to provide union jobs to replace union jobs lost. To date, you (the ADW operators) have not complied."

Commissioner Marie Moretti noted that TVG, at least, has created jobs in California, though not necessarily union jobs. She said she had been under the impression that even more jobs would be generated through the creation of wagering hubs in California, which has not occurred.

Vice Chairman William Bianco said, "I think we got snookered (when the regulations were adopted and the ADW operators were approved). I was told they were going to create union positions. That didn't happen. If I am still here when those licenses come up for renewal (at the end of 2006), I will look at them a lot differently."

Chairman Harris stated that he felt this issue was one in which the CHRB may not have any standing, as it involves a labor/management issue under the purview of the National Labor Relations Board. He felt that although he personally supports the maximization of California jobs, the CHRB should not get involved in mandating what the union was asking for.

The Board referred to the Racing Dates Committee the matter of allocating race dates for harness racing for the latter half of 2005. Both the California Exposition and State Fair (Cal Expo in Sacramento) and Los Angeles County Fair (Fairplex in Pomona) have requested harness dates for next fall. The Racing Dates Committee will take up this matter quickly and make a recommendation for full Board consideration at the March 24 meeting in San Mateo.

The Board approved the application for license by Churchill Downs California Company to conduct a race meet at Hollywood Park from April 20, 2005, through July 17, 2005. Hollywood Park President Rick Baedeker reported the association would be prepared to conduct TCO2 testing, as is currently being done at other operating racetracks, if the CHRB testing program for TCO2, subject to a change in the law, is not yet in place. Baedeker also summarized the track's marketing plan, which contains elements supported by a CHRB fans/marketing committee.

Los Angeles County Fair President James Henwood outlined a \$90 million proposal to create a Fairplex Park Equine Complex, which would be developed in three phases, beginning with the enlargement of the existing five-eighths-of-a-mile dirt track to a full mile in 2007, and the construction of a new turf course. Other improvements include new barns and expanded stabling for year-round training, additions to and renovation of the existing grandstand, and constructing a third oval for harness racing. He said industry support and commitments would be required to bring about the full project.

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