

BLC NOTES - EPSOM DOWNS RACECOURSE 02 April 2024

IN ATTENDANCE:

Tom Sammes General Manager, James Wilcox Operations Manager
Bookmakers - Barrie Bass, Joe O’Gorman, Ian Govey, Dave Peckham.
Steve Clare & Andrew Boardley.

FEEDBACK ON 2023 TRADING FROM BOOKMAKERS

Although the Derby was impacted by several elements outside of the racecourse control - rail strike, protestors, early Derby off time, clash with FA Cup Final etc., trading at the Derby meeting was better than some feared, especially on Ladies Day. Some concern was expressed over the pitching in of the 8 bookmakers in front of the Upper Tattenham hospitality marquee where the usual 4 positions of 2 was altered.

Apart from a few highlights, many of the OFF meetings produced disappointing trading experiences for bookmakers.

2024 FIXTURES – Tom Sammes

BETFRED DERBY FESTIVAL

There will be seven races on Ladies Day commencing at 2.00 p.m. with the Oaks being run at 4.30 p.m.

On Derby Day the first race on the eight-race card will be at 1.25 p.m. The Derby off time will be 4.30 p.m. All timings subject to change.

Gates open to the public at 11.00 a.m. each day. Pitching in for Rails & Tattersalls will be at 10.30 a.m. on Ladies Day and 10.00 a.m. on Derby Day. Pitching in for Upper Tattenham and Lonsdale will be at 10.00 a.m. on Ladies Day and 9.30 a.m. on Derby Day.

The appointment of Tom & James to the Epsom team has the specific objective of bringing the public back to the Derby Festival and generally to Epsom Downs racecourse, whilst increasing customer satisfaction for all of our stakeholders.

Advance ticket sales for Derby Day & Oaks Day are already very encouraging, and the racecourse is hopeful of achieving a similar festival total public attendance to that of 2019, pre-epidemic, an increase of c.20% over last year.

A number of new initiatives will be in offered this year.

Firstly, the location of the After Party music stage has been moved from adjacent to the Parade Ring to the area in front of the racecourse administration building.

The pedestrian access tunnel onto The Hill will be closed and temporarily covered over. Pedestrian access to The Hill will be either via the Tattenham Corner or Rubbing House crossings. The usual vehicle entry points will be available.

The temporary stairway over the tunnel footpath, will not be in place. This will increase the space between the bar and bookmaker pitches where the tunnel used to be, enhancing customer and bookmaker experience. The covered over tunnel entrance will allow easier access to the After Party and to a food vending area adjacent to the Tattenham Hospitality Marquee, predominantly to support the After Party.

The Tattenham hospitality marquee will house approximately 900 people each day, with a further 500 places in the pre-sold Picnic Area directly in front of the marquee. Although Grandstand ticket holders will have easier access into the area around the Tattenham hospitality marquee than in previous years, both Hospitality & Picnic clients will conversely, have easier access into the Grandstand Enclosure. There is forecast to be limited movement of grandstand customers during racing, with the main benefit being for the after-party.

Within the Lonsdale Enclosure, a new covered viewing and relaxed hospitality area – Cedric's - will be available in place of the traditional hospitality marquee.

This year 300 places each day are budgeting to be sold (400 per day in the previous facility) with the opportunity to increase that number to c.750 in future years. For a daily charge of £200 Ladies Day or £215 Derby Day customers receive access to an exceptional private race viewing area, the opportunity to access Parade Ring via Grandstand Enclosure, an on-arrival drink & food offer, exclusive throughout the day food / drink / seating areas. Ticket holders from Cedric's will have easy access into The Lonsdale during the day.

2024 OFF MEETINGS

Season commences with afternoon racing on Tuesday 23 April.

Post Derby Festival has four summer evening meetings:

Weds 3 July; Music Nights - Thurs 11 July with the Overtones; Thurs 18 July - Platinum: ABBA tribute; Thurs 1 Aug - Massaoke.

Afternoon Racing on Fri 16 August; August Bank Holiday Family Raceday; Afternoon racing Thurs 12 Sep; Season Finale 29 September Beer Festival t.b.c.

TS shared his ambition for more fixtures at Epsom Downs in future, including hopefully an OFF Saturday. Bookmakers were supportive of that ambition, and also the overarching aim of growing public attendances.

TS mentioned that he welcomed suggestions from bookmakers that would help to increase public admissions or customer experience – tom.sammes@thejockeyclub.co.uk

THE HILL 2024

SC explained at the betting position bidding process finished last week and resulted in 63 successful bids, which when the existing betting positions at Rubbing House & Car Park 28 are include results in 69 bookmakers that will operate on Derby Day (40 on Ladies Day).

NEXT MEETING – SPRING 2025 t.b.a.