

BLC NOTES – BATH & CHEPSTOW RACECOURSES 11 May 2023

IN ATTENDANCE:

Bookmakers – Paul Gold, Martin Davies, Dax Oliver, James McNab.
Simon Tonge Executive Director Bath, Phil Bell Regional Director West, Graeme Fletcher
Regional Director East.
Andrew Collins & Steve Clare.
Apologies – Peter Sutton

TRADING FEEDBACK

Bookmakers reported broadly similar trading experiences at both tracks, in that the bigger racedays tended to be very good, but the remainder were much poorer.

The recent Good Friday meeting at Bath, and the Student Day in March at Chepstow were cited as particular highlights.

It was recognised that the NH field sizes were very good at Chepstow as was the top quality racing. Whilst Flat racing at Chepstow was not to top standard, again field sizes were good and the spectacle enjoyed by the summer racegoers.

The hot weather and lack of ability to water the track caused the unfortunate abandonment of the latter part of last year's fixtures at Bath. A discussion ensued concerning track irrigation there. Due to it being the highest Flat track in the UK, without any easily extracted ground water there is no possibility of a watering system being installed.

However, this year a water bowser will be employed, which, whilst it will be insufficient to change the going, will assist with the management of the ground.

The ARC 'Day at the Races' spectator package consisting of entrance, pie, pint & racecard was recognised as excellent value and both tracks and especially useful to support the quieter racedays.

Annual Membership was discussed – generally an older demographic, but the ARC 18-25 Membership initiative was recognised as a worthy attempt to encourage regular visits from the younger racing fan.

Disappointment was expressed by Chepstow bookmakers at the removal of the additional betting positions in the proximity of the old parade ring. PB confirmed that it was due to H&S considerations in particular overcrowding.

PB did agreed to consider on site, with bookmaker reps, if an opportunity existed for a new betting area elsewhere.

At Bath the lack of PA coverage to the paddock new betting area was discussed. ST informed the meeting that a new PA system was currently being installed and that a full coverage audit would be done as part of that.

2023 SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

BATH – 90's Racenight 9/6; Ladies Day 17/6; Rum & Reggae Night 4/8; Wurzels Cider Night 19/8; Proms in the Park Tour 9/9; Gentleman's Day 16/9;

CHEPSTOW – Trade Centre Group Summer Racing 2/6; ABBA Party Racenight (+500 students) 10/6; Ladies Evening with the Dreamboys 14/7; Caribbean Night 28/7; Family Funday 28/8; Jump Season Opener 13&14/10; Military Raceday 8/11; Coral Welsh Grand National 27/12.

This summer at Chepstow a series of Live Nation major non-raceday music events will take place:

Lionel Ritchie 30/6; Lewis Capaldi 1/7; George Ezra 2/7.

At these events the racecourse will be promoting racing at Chepstow to the broader audience.

AOB

The question of an extension to the Bookmaker Licence with the Racecourse which is due to expire in 2052 was raised.

This has been raised a number of times over recent years both direct with racecourses and the RCA.

The previous response was repeated, in that, in principle racecourses do not oppose such but that a proposal must be developed by bookmakers and the associations, and presented to the RCA to considered and responded to on behalf of racecourses.