

BLC NOTES - SANDOWN PARK & KEMPTON PARK RACECOURSES 28 March 2023

IN ATTENDANCE:

Sarah Drabwell G.M. Sandown; Simon Durrant G.M. Kempton; John Hooper; Benny Jones; Russell White; Andrew Boardley & Steve Clare.

Apologies – Mick Howard; Tony Styles.

TRADING FEEDBACK FROM BOOKMAKERS

Bookmakers reported that betting turnover and tickets seemed to be holding up at Sandown, compared to other racecourses.

Naturally betting turnover followed higher attendances, and in particular the Saturday fixtures were performing well.

At Kempton the smaller public attendance at AW fixtures usually meant there was enough trade for just a handful of bookmakers, but on occasion business can exceed expectations especially when a commercial business meeting includes an afternoon or evening at the races for participants.

Bets paid for by debit cards was increasing both in percentage of overall turnover and more bookmakers are introducing the facility. Payouts on the card are much more streamlined than they were originally. Commission rates charged by debit card machine operators do impact profitability.

Bookmakers reported that they found it was important to use card readers which automatically rejected any cards that were not debit (rather than credit etc.).

Bookmakers also recognised their responsibilities in checking that customers were over 18 and that further compliance checking by local authorities and the gambling commission was in future quite likely.

However, cash remains the predominant way to pay for bets.

Cash machines on site are important to bookmakers but it is recognised that it is increasingly difficult for racecourses to find operators for such.

The cashback facility by the Tote – up to £45 on a £5 stake bet with them is helpful to on-course bookmakers.

A possible New Betting Area was suggested by SD, consisting of two positions by the Parade Ring Bar. Further news in due course.

NEW SEASON RACECOURSE PLANS

SANDOWN PARK

2023 fixture list unchanged from last year.

SD explained that the racecourse has a higher than average level of attendance by males.

The strategy to increase attendances was aimed at a broader target audience.

Generous discounts on advance ticket purchase are available online.

In addition, JCR have recently introduced a free to join 18-24 Racing Club which provides 50% discount to all admission prices.

The racecourse will continue to work with Invade to bring Student Day/s to Sandown.

There would be some new races for Tingle Creek Friday with the intention of building this race meeting into a Festival over the next few years.

Following analysis of the three music nights in 2022, it has been decided to rationalise into one major event this year, with Tom Jones on Wednesday 26 July. Whilst bookmakers accepted that Tom Jones attracts a customer profile a request was made to review the DBB multiple nearer the event – SD agreed to do so.

KEMPTON PARK

69 fixtures this season comprising AW and NH.

The 2022 King George Winter Festival two day meeting remains the highlight. Not opening the Silver Ring on the second day meant that the other enclosures were more vibrant. This will happen again in 2023.

The Easter Saturday meeting has been moved to Easter Monday and will be featured live on ITV.

All weather remains the 'bread & butter' for Kempton Park. The Wednesday night special restaurant package of £45 per head has been very successful.

Bookmakers asked that consideration again be given to allowing bookmakers to bet inside during the especially inclement weather months of January & February – SD.

The possibility of a New Betting Area behind the stand by the paddock was discussed again, SD to consider with AB.

SD confirmed that redevelopment discussions had been paused and that the promotional strategy was to underline that racing and events remain at Kempton.

AOB

It was appreciated that bookmakers were persevering with the advance online badge/ticket purchase process. Whilst there remained occasional difficulties most bookmakers were able to obtain their requirement.

A request was made that in racecourse promotional material it was stated that all bookmakers accepted cash. – SD/SDu

A debate ensued concerning the two finishing lines at Sandown.

Bookmakers were thanked for their attendance & contribution.

Next meeting date first quarter 2024.