



NEWS RELEASE

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EVALUATION OF STEWARDS, POINTS OF EMPHASIS PLANNED BY ROAP FOR 2007

The Racing Officials Accreditation Program (ROAP), launched in July 2005 to improve the integrity of racing by accrediting all racing officials, stewards and judges, has developed an annual performance evaluation program for stewards and judges and a list of points of emphasis for judging races in 2007 that will be provided to state racing commissions by year's end. The initiatives were announced during last week's University of Arizona Symposium on Racing & Gaming in Tucson.

"We have had several inquiries from racing commissions asking for suggestions on how to properly evaluate the job performance of their stewards and judges," said Stan Bowker, executive secretary of the Virginia Racing Commission and chairman of ROAP. "With the help of executive directors John Wayne in Delaware, John Blakeney in Ontario and Bob Leitner in Washington, we have developed the key elements that should be included in a program to evaluate stewards and judges.

"The ROAP program envisions annual evaluations, and we believe the reviews will show that stewards and judges, by and large, are doing an outstanding job of enforcing the rules and regulations of each racing commission and maintaining the integrity of our sport. In situations where improvements are needed, the reviews will provide opportunities to discuss performance changes."

In addition to the performance evaluation program, ROAP also will be recommending to each racing commission a number of points of emphasis that they should consider directing their stewards and judges to concentrate on in 2007.

"In today's age of simulcasting where 88 percent of handle originates off track, it is more important than ever to develop consistency in the way stewards and judges handle certain situations," Bowker said. "Consistency of officiating is characteristic of other professional sports, and we believe that horse racing's patrons will be better served if stewards and judges handle certain situations the same no matter where a track is located."

ROAP's Stewards/Judges Advisory Committee, chaired by Dr. Ted Hill, The Jockey Club steward at the New York Racing Association tracks, developed the following points of emphasis for 2007:

- Uniform posting of the inquiry sign
- Requiring jockeys to ride horses out to the wire
- Uniform review of race video before declaring a race official
- Routine communications with all stakeholders, including owners, trainers, jockeys, track management, fans and other racing officials

Unlike other professional sports in which the league office requires consistency among all its members, racing commissions make their own determinations for their respective states. The proposed stewards/judges evaluation program and the 2007 points of emphasis will be sent in late December to each racing commission, which will then determine whether to implement the measures in their jurisdiction.

“Most industry stakeholders and certainly the wagering public do not realize the amount of experience and training possessed by stewards and judges, nor the amount of retraining they're subjected to, in order to fulfill the all-important responsibilities of protecting the integrity of horse racing and trying to maintain a level playing field for all participants,” Bowker concluded.

ROAP is a 501(c)(6) organization whose board of directors is made up of representatives of 15 industry organizations. Stewards and judges receive their accreditation and continuing education credits through this program. Rich Wilcke at the University of Louisville and Wendy Davis at the University of Arizona direct the schools and training used in achieving accreditation.

Additional information about ROAP is available at <http://www.horseracingofficials.com> or by contacting Emily Holmes at (859) 224-2702 or eholmes@jockeyclub.com.