



Risk Management Plan to Resume Live Harness Racing at Vernon Downs

May 5, 2020

To:

New York Gaming Commission

One Broadway Center

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Schenectady, NY 12305-2553

The purpose of this document is to create a reliable, safe, and working plan to re-open/resume live racing at Vernon Downs in the Spring/Summer of 2020 while best protecting the participants against the nationwide pandemic (Covid-19) which has closed down most industry in the United States and beyond.

Horse racing is fortunate to be positioned to resume under current conditions, while providing the necessary caution to guard against further spread of the virus. Horse racing is unique in that the daily training regimen of the horse continues, veterinary work being done, and numerous ancillary services required whether there is live racing or if there is not. The horses must still be cared for and exercised regularly to maintain their health. The Horsemen and women of this sport take much pride in their safety practices while working with the horses 7 days a week.

Vernon Downs currently has 143 out of 890 stalls occupied on the premises with other local trainers and owners with farms nearby. They do not want to see the spread of any illness within their stable or around their horses and are fully aware of the seriousness of the current circumstances.

Racing, through the various on-line gambling platforms, can provide significant and welcome revenue to the State Of New York from the taxes generated on every wager made. Based on the current availability of live horse racing, Vernon Downs would become one of the first and few harness racing tracks that could be available for wagering.

With a simulcasting providing remote viewing and wagering, a strong security presence and a minimum of employees and horsemen on the grounds at a certain time, Vernon Downs-American Racing Inc., would be able to put both horsemen and normal employees back to work in a safe manner.

General Rules of Operation:

Personnel & Attendance:

No public shall be allowed in the grandstands or other general gathering areas. No pari-mutuel wagering, as live handle, shall be conducted on the premises. No food vendors or distribution of food will be permitted in the paddock or in the grandstand/apron. Trainers, grooms, and drivers are required to bring their own beverages and food and keep them in their respective vehicles.

Only essential paddock track personnel (estimated at 12), trainers, drivers and grooms permitted in the Secure Paddock Area (SPA) where the horses are held pre-race.

Essential Paddock Personnel Includes:

Paddock Judge, Horse Identifier, Equipment/ Numbers Person, Outrider, and two Starting Car Persons; Security (both inside and outside of the paddock); Farrier, Veterinarians. Numbers could be placed in respective horses' stalls prior to the arrival of any horses.

No one other than the paddock judge should be in the paddock office at any given time.

Procedures:

Track Security (including medical personnel) will remain outside of the SPA while logging the horses and handlers in while taking temperatures of all personnel via "no-touch" laser thermometers. Verification of licensure will occur upon arrival to the SPA with roaming security personnel enforcing the protocol.

Trainers/Grooms/Drivers shall be those holding a New York license. Those with any underlying health issues or symptoms of illness should not come to the SPA under any circumstances. This includes any person with reason to be concerned for their health as per the latest New York and US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines.

All participants planning to enter the SPA shall verify at home (per CDC guidelines) that they are not running a temperature above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit prior to leaving for the raceway.

Trainers/Grooms will be limited to no more than three persons per ship-in party, and their racing staff shall be reduced to following ratio:

- 1-2 horses – One Trainer or One Groom.
- 3-4 horses – One Trainer and One Groom.
- 5+ horses – One Trainer and up to Two Grooms maximum.

No Owners shall be permitted in the SPA.

Communications should be carried out electronically where possible.

All participants shall always maintain 6 feet of separation.

Hand Sanitizer will be available throughout the building for employees/ and in all areas in the barn and paddock for horsemen.

Vernon Downs Racetrack shall provide portable toilets to help with managing contact points.

Participants in the SPA should take care to reduce the number of bathroom trips for everyone's safety. Everyone including employees, Trainers, Drivers, and Grooms must always wear a mask and practice social distancing as required.

Health and CDC Guidelines will be available to everyone on site and each person on the grounds will have instructions how to access the CDC Health website for more protocol if Covid-19 shall become present on the property.

The Harness Horse Association of Central New York (HHACNY) must comply with all guidelines set in place for all Horsemen and Women to be able to work and race. The HHACNY shall work in concert with the track to monitor and maintain an accurate list of the horsemen and women participating each racing day.

Kelly Wildoner, Vernon Downs Regional Safety Coordinator, shall be available to both Horsemen and Employees to help implement strict Covid-19 protocol, be the contact person for New York Gaming Commission and institute protocol in the case of a suspected case of Covid-19 on property.

Designated Personnel shall aid in monitoring the SPA by filling the following roles:

Providing protective gloves and sanitizer stations where possible.

Provide instruction as needed on the best use of the protective gear.

Monitoring that participants always remain 6 feet apart.

Relaying information to the Paddock Judge.

Pre-assigned “runners” shall provide hot water and other items for trainers by taking buckets into the paddock, filling them, then returning them to the trainer. This will reduce the amount of people touching surfaces. The “runners” shall always wear protective gloves and masks and remain 6 feet away from all participants. (Alternative – one person mans the faucets and will fill buckets that are left for them to grab and fill. The person manning the faucet must wear protective gloves and mask).

Racing Offices:

Besides the Office of the Racing Secretary, other offices that would be allowed to operate would include the New York Gaming and Racing Commission, and the New York Racing Commission Veterinary Office. Desks must be set to allow for social distancing, and all racing officials must wear Personal Protection Equipment. To reduce the number of personnel in the race office, the bookkeeper could work remotely, and claims entered could be handled by the racing secretary. Claims could be placed in a drop box outside of the race office. Entries will be taken by telephone or online only and the draws will be done via teleconference. No agents will be allowed in the office.

Race Day Specific Activities upon Arrival – Trainers and Grooms

On race days, the following protocols shall be strictly adhered to:

Transportation:

Ship-in/receiving barns will be used as an extension of the paddock to ensure the proper number of stalls per trainer, with social distancing considered. As stated below, horses will be stalled in the paddock, grouped by trainer.

Transportation into the stable area is only permitted with security approval from Vernon Downs and hours for permitted shipping will be conducted by management.

Check-In:

Security personnel will log all those who enter by name, license, date, and time.

A work list for Employees and Horsemen shall always be made in advance and on site for Security to have and for CDC health guidelines posted at the entry points to be followed, this will include (Employees/Directors/etc.).

Upon entering the secure area and parking, all trainers, grooms, and drivers shall present themselves for temperature scanning by medical staff on site.

Anyone with a temperature exceeding 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit shall immediately leave the paddock area and their horses will be scratched (NO EXCEPTIONS, SO PLEASE CHECK YOUR TEMPERATURE BEFORE TRUCKING IN).

Upon passing the temperature scan, the trainer shall report to the paddock judge and report that the entries are on-site. Six feet of separation shall be maintained for this communication.

Paddock Procedures:

Horses will be pre-assigned stalls in the paddock, which will be conveyed to the trainers upon their arrival. Horses will be grouped by trainer, to cut down on the number of handlers needed and to eliminate the need for co-mingling of personnel between racing stables. Empty stalls shall be put in between grooms. Trainers shall remain in the general area of their horses maintaining 6 feet between other participants.

Lasix shall be administered by the designated veterinarian in the horses' assigned paddock stalls. Six feet of separation between all individuals shall be maintained.

Alternative: Lasix shall be administered by a veterinarian, licensed in the state of New York at a NYGC approved training center. Attending veterinarian will record time of administration and volume given and provide this information to the NYGC. This will eliminate the need for horses requiring Lasix to arrive four hours prior to their race and will reduce the number of personnel standing idle in the paddock.

All trainers and grooms must wear masks and gloves when bringing a horse to the race.

There will be no hitching or unhitching of race bikes in the paddock. One handler per horse (trainer or groom) will lead horses outside to be hitched prior to post parade. Same procedure will be followed post-race with drivers to remove their race bikes and relocate them for their next drive.

Horse and Handler Check-Out / Leaving:

After each race, the paddock stall area is disinfected with a bleach solution.

Thirty minutes after conclusion of the race, the handler must leave with the horse unless tending to other horses. Then the handler may remain and check on the horse.

Horses and equipment shall either be washed at home (preferable) or outside the trainer's trailer or other pre-assigned area.

Horses to be tested will report to the testing barn where the above protocol shall continue.

Race Day Specific Activities upon Arrival – Drivers:

Check-In:

Upon entering the secure area and parking, all drivers shall present themselves for temperature scanning. Anyone with a temperature exceeding 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit shall immediately leave the paddock area.

Drivers are encouraged to come prepared by having their colors on. Should drivers need to change, the drivers lounge may be available but with the following conditions:

Only two drivers in the locker room at a time. A safe distance of at least six feet must be maintained.

Drivers should vocally call out to see how many are in the locker room prior to entering the doorway.

Check-Out / Leaving:

Upon the driver's last race of the day, he/she should leave the paddock immediately after notifying the paddock judge.

Post Race Procedures:

There will be no winner's circle presentation or photo of the winning horse.

While waiting between races, drivers should maintain social distancing protocols.