



BRITISH HARNESS RACING CLUB

Totalisator Gambling...an initiative by the sport for the sport

The winter of 2010-11 has been an era ushering in the likelihood of change, within Harness Racing in Britain and Ireland. For decades we have put on good racing but every attempt to inject money into our sport has failed. Basically we race for our own money. Whilst Totalisator or Pari Mutuel betting is not new, the use of the internet to facilitate both on and off track gambling is relatively new. Greyhound, Thoroughbred and Harness Racing abroad, have not been slow to pick up on this opportunity. Now tested, the time might be right for us to try this venture.

Where we stand is that a number of meetings have been held between Etote/Datatote, BHRC as well as IHRC members and promoters. A lot has been learned by all involved. However we are coming to a point where decisions have to be made. Are we going to go ahead or decline. The following points are critical to the future of this initiative and indeed our sport.

• You have a sport not a product - Edwin Osborne Etote/Datatote.

To take this forward we need not only to supply horse races but supply information. The BHRC has done a lot of work on this, all stemming from the William Hill series. A new bespoke IT system is in place, form guide developed and any number of tweaks to our system have been made over the last two and a half years. We need to beef up on the recording of races and the transmission of pictures but that is all feasible. This administration side of the game makes our sport into a product. Ireland is working with us on this and their help has been invaluable.

• Build it and they will come - David Hood

Paraphrasing Kevin Costner's lines from the film *Field of Dreams*, David believes this will work. But what do we build? The preferred option at this stage is the building of three trailers, similar to a fast food van, selling bets not burgers. Linked via a satellite dish to the hub at Bristol of Etote this will allow racing from hard tracks and grass tracks to both have a Totalisator alternative on course and for the millions watching around the world (Boxing Commentator Michael Buffer) to bet on harness racing in Britain. The rationale of three trailers is one for Scotland, one for Northern England, one for Wales & West. And on big race days like Tregaron, Appleby and Musselburgh we go mob handed with two or even three trailers. Ireland is already ahead of the game because they have the trailer built, all they have to do is buy the kit.

• Who gets what, who does what - Gordon Garnett

The share of the cake is critical. Current predictions are a return of 75% to the bettor, about 4% to HMRC (Taxes!), 4% to Fraud/Laundering control, 12% to Etote/Data Tote, 5% to the sport. On track betting will put 17.5% into prize money. Whenever someone logs on to the website the track will get 50% of the fee, £2.50. So if only 100 people log on that's a race sponsored. A thousand logging on starts to make a big difference. I am not in a position to advise as to the fairness of this, but we are new, this is a risk venture and I am convinced if we do well, returns to the sport and gambler will get better. Trotting in France gets 8% for instance. However all of this comes at a cost.

The three trailers may well, in total, kitted up, make a big dent in £50,000. The BHRC will incur costs in delivering information in the way needed and promoters will have to get the trailers with operatives in place on race days. So how is this to be funded? We all licence holders, big breeders, big stables, promoters, clubs and associations need to chip in. I am particularly pleased that the charge is being led by Anthony Fettah, Huw Evans, Stella Havard, Jackie Maguire and Jason Podmore to set meetings up and pledge their own money in many circumstances to make this happen. This is truly *by the sport for the sport*.

I might not be the first, I know I won't be the last but I will pledge £500 towards this project, so to finish on a quote, that of John F Kennedy *think not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country*.

Gordon Garnett