

26/05/2020

Dear Annual Badgeholder,

At the end of another month of moving parts and as the nation moves towards this "new normal", I wanted to update you on the latest news from York Racecourse.

Before doing that, I do hope you and those important to you remain fit and well. I am pleased to report that everyone at the Racecourse remains in positive spirits, albeit most of the team (including Debbie Shirt) continue to be on furlough.

As you may have seen in the media, at the request of central Government, the British Horseracing Authority (BHA) continues to develop a plan for the resumption of racing, albeit initially under strict "behind closed doors" protocols, for as long as is required.

To best facilitate this plan, a new provisional national fixture list was published by the BHA on Friday 22nd May, relating to 1st June until the end of August, it is intended to help trainers prepare their horses and for the teams at racecourses to prepare the tracks.

This draft fixture list allocates slots to York Racecourse starting with a still busy if rejigged July, being Thursday 9th July, Saturday and Sunday 18th and 19th July, then Saturday and Sunday 25th and 26th July. The traditional dates for the four-day Welcome to Yorkshire Ebor Festival are unchanged, being Wednesday 19th to Saturday 22nd August.

To create the national flexibility required by this new fixture list, unfortunately it does mean that the scheduled racedays with a crowd for July have been cancelled. So, sadly, these dates will now be added to your pro rata credit for 2021.

As the Welcome to Yorkshire Ebor Festival remains on its original dates and lies nearly three months away, we think there is no need to rush to any changes. York Racecourse will respond to any updated advice from either Government or the BHA, as the nation continues its response to the Covid-19 pandemic. We would very much like to be in the position to welcome you to this meeting but we will just have to see what the national guidance is regarding mass gatherings nearer the time. We will keep you posted and thank you for your patience.

It is to be stressed that racing nationally (and at York) will only resume after the current phase of lockdown restrictions have been eased, moreover would only be on the basis of having full support from Government and Public Health Authorities. It is noted that all of York's fixtures lie beyond the planned current Step 3 of the Government's national roadmap, which is scheduled for 4th July.

The planning remains focused on the health of those delivering the activity, its participants and the wider public. There is an understandable high level of detail in what is an evolving operational plan and York's first raceday under this new fixture list is over six weeks away. The plan includes an appropriate health screening regime before the event and on arrival, rigorous cleaning procedures across the venue and adherence to social distancing measures.

In terms of any fixtures held "behind closed doors" at York Racecourse, in order for these to comply with the Government's rules around avoiding mass gatherings and maintaining social distancing we have been instructed these must be strictly "not for the public" events, I am afraid this applies to even our closest supporters. I urge you to not make any plans to pop down to the Knavesmire, even to stand in the centre of the course, as we do not want an informal mass gathering to form inadvertently. The message we are sending to the wider world as endorsed by the police is clear, "behind closed doors" racedays are not appropriate

to attend for anyone bar those who are working, even outside the venue. Given the police advice, we will be required, in developing this plan, to obscure key views of the racing action, to close car parks and provide neither catering nor toilets. If national guidelines were to be changed by July 9th, please rest assured you are in our plans.

It is hoped the rescheduled racedays from York will be covered by ITV, however in addition to this, I am pleased to confirm that provision will be made for all York Annual Badgeholders to follow the action on Racing TV. To those of you already supporting the channel, a heartfelt thank you, for potential newcomers, please await the technical details of how you will be able to watch the action from those days.

We understand that the next level of detail as to what races will be staged at York (and elsewhere) will follow from the BHA in the weeks ahead, however I hope it will contain some familiar names.

For now, thank you again for your support and we will continue to keep our website updated with any further updates or news.

James Brennan

Head of Marketing and Sponsorship