

PRESS RELEASE

Facts and Timeline

On 19 January 2023, an invitation was issued to all 17 Trainers in Mauritius to be present at a Fixtures and Programming Meeting on 23 January 2023. This meeting was attended by most Trainers. At this meeting, the HRD called for feedback regarding the date for the commencement of the season. The majority of Trainers were in favour of commencing the season on 18 March 2023.

Of the detractors, one Trainer was particularly vocal about not being ready, with the cornerstone of his issue being that he intended to compete for the Championship this year and this date was not convenient for him. Two other Trainers who were significantly less vocal, also noted their reluctance for the season to start on 18 March 2023 and a fourth Trainer when questioned merely stated, he will run his horses when they are ready. There were no other objections to commencing the season on 18 March 2023. Accordingly, this commencement date was agreed.

On 23 January 2023, at 16:12, the Racing Executive Officer received a letter of objection from Trainer P Merven via email. This letter, which was signed by four Trainers, cited four main issues namely: Lack of Training Facilities, Jockeys Insurance, Track Conditions and Safety and Equal Opportunity. The HRD addressed each of these concerns individually in reply in a letter dated 24 January 2023. The crux of the reply was that, access to training facilities were de facto freely available, Riders had in fact been insured as required, management of the track over a longer period was one of the reasons why we should start on 18 March 2023 and despite what was being suggested, every Trainer has an equal opportunity to commence the season and have at least some of their runners ready within a minimum of 7 weeks. Consequently, the HRD is of the view that there were no valid grounds contained in this letter.

On 25 January 2023 at 15:01, after a conversation with a member of the HRD staff, Trainer Merven emailed the same letter of 23 January 2023 to the Racing Executive Officer however, this copy illustrated the signature of four more Trainers, one of which is under review for having 4 horses remaining in his stables.

Subsequently, on 25 January 2023, in addition to the other Trainers who indicated such, the HRD received a further communication from another Trainer who stated he could have as many as 10 runners ready to race on 18 March 2023.

Summary and Effect

For the sake of brevity, the above discussion can therefore be set out as follows:

19 January 2023	All Trainers Invited to Fixtures and Programming Meeting
23 January 2023	Majority of Trainers attending meeting vote for season to commence on 18 March 2023
23 January 2023	Four Trainers raise objection to start on 18 March 2023, citing several grounds
24 January 2023	HRD considered grounds and rejected such as a basis to set aside decision of majority at official meeting
25 January 2023	Four further Trainers sign same letter of 23 January 2023
25 January 2023	HRD advised by one further Trainer that as many as 10 more horses could be ready on 18 March 2023

Therefore, the HRD has followed due process by holding a meeting of Trainers, calling for feedback and noting the views of the majority at the meeting.

Trainers who elected not to attend and not to be represented at the meeting when the vote was taking place, did so on their own accord and not due to any limitation by the HRD.

The HRD has noted the subsequent signatures of the Trainers, on 25 January 2023 however, at this date the decision to race on 18 March 2023 had already been taken. Additionally, as stated, the HRD is of the view that there are no valid grounds contained in the letter of 23 January 2023. Therefore, four subsequent signatures do not change the fact that from a content perspective, the issues raised are not legitimate.

The HRD is the custodian of regulation in Mauritian Horse Racing. This entails balancing the needs of the Owners, Horses, Trainers, Jockeys, all other stakeholders and each of their competing interests in racing.

After considering each of these factors and the facts of the matter, the HRD has arrived at the conclusion that its decision to commence racing on 18 March 2023 is appropriate.

Journalism

The HRD has seen some of the information contained in the press, and is quite dismayed at the level of journalism on display. The HRD has and always will have an open-door policy for licensees who wish to obtain clarity on decisions and who wish to express further views on matters. However, it is apparent that certain members of the press have used the disagreement regarding the starting date for the season to once again punt their personal agenda. The cost of which is to the Mauritian public and the brand of horse racing. There are blatant untruths contained in certain newspapers. Journalists who are meant to provide commentary on certain discourse in the public domain are instead acting as judge and jury. Nevertheless, we urge people to not be swayed by these agendas and rather get excited for the Mauritians favourite sport to return to their weekly viewing by 18 March 2023!

Sunday, 29 January 2023