



The Federation of Racecourse Bookmakers Limited

Association of
Racecourse Bookmakers

National Association
of Bookmakers

Rails Bookmakers
Association



NOTICE TO ALL ON-COURSE BOOKMAKERS

A letter from David Thorpe, RCA Chairman, to all on-course bookmakers dated July 2008, outlines what the RCA says it understands to be the position and way forward with regard to the dispute over the tenure of list positions. This does not conform to our understanding and what we agreed with the Minister.

As you know, the Racecourse Association (RCA) initiated the entire dispute on 14th March 2007 when it announced in a letter to various bookmakers' associations, the NJPC and the Levy Board that 'from September 2012 racecourses will not recognise lists'. This letter has still not been withdrawn.

The primary aim of the Working Party set up by the Minister was to agree a mechanism for allocating on-course betting pitches from 2012 and for the respective associations to recommend to their members for adoption. Most disappointingly, no agreement was reached over how long racecourses should recognise list positions and, as far as we are aware, the RCA has recommended nothing to its members.

Since a solution was not reached at the Working Party, the Minister for Sport requested that we undertake test discussions at sample racecourses to resolve outstanding issues such as tenure, which we have agreed to carry out. Subsequent to consultation with their respective associations, the bookmakers who attended the Working Party will be approaching three sample racecourses. If these are successful, then we expect any agreement to set a precedent and lead to universal agreement on how long list positions will be recognised, whilst access charges may vary from racecourse to racecourse.

The period for which betting pitches are allocated according to the list must be the same for every racecourse, as was the case prior to the Gambling Act 2005. Individual on-course bookmakers are advised not to do anything to undermine universal agreement on tenure and we would advise all bookmakers to consult with their association before taking any action in this area. The Minister has stated that all options, including the legislative option, will be kept under review. If the test negotiations do not work, then we will be calling upon the Government to bring in secondary legislation that ensures list positions are recognised for the life of the racecourse.

With regard to issues surrounding the AGT, we would be surprised and disappointed if any racecourse chose not to recognise the transfer of list positions. Racecourses have already agreed to recognise seniority lists until 2012. With the appropriate disclaimers in place, there is no reason why racecourses shouldn't recognise transfers of list positions between licensed bookmakers on those lists until 2012. It does not make any difference to the racecourses which bookmaker operates from which pitch as long as all parties involved are fully aware of the status of the asset. Furthermore, it seems strange that while the RCA negotiated the AGT contract on behalf of its member racecourses, it cannot speak for its members on recognising the transfer of list positions, which could be enshrined in the AGT contract itself.

Our ongoing action will be as follows:

1. Racecourse visits as requested by the Minister for Sport.
2. Detailed feedback to members following negotiations.
3. Road shows for all bookmakers later this year.
4. Further and increased Parliamentary action.

In the meantime, we advise our members to do nothing on an individual basis that would jeopardize this process, which we feel is in the best interests of all on-course bookmakers.

Robin Grossmith. Director, Rails Bookmakers' Association.

Keith Johnson. Director, National Association of Bookmakers.

Barry Johnson. Director, Association of Racecourse Bookmakers.

16th July 2008.