



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CONTACT:
Krista Lisser (217) 670-9283

Illinois Department of Agriculture and Illinois Racing Board Announce Patron Free Live Racing

SPRINGFIELD, IL – Horse racing is returning to Illinois tracks in June. The Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) worked with various stakeholders to bring patron free standardbred and thoroughbred racing back on tracks around the state while adhering to the social distancing guidelines. The move is an effort to provide economic relief to the horse racing industry, as other states have done.

“These conditions necessitate changes to keep horse racing going in Illinois” said Domenic DiCera, Illinois Racing Board, Executive Director. “The return of live horse racing in Illinois is welcomed by many hardworking men and woman that work and are committed to this industry.”

“We have been working almost since the start of the pandemic to find a way to get horses back on the tracks in Illinois,” said Jerry Costello II, IDOA, acting Director. “We think the safety guidelines that have been laid out for social distancing of personnel while at the track, as well as the other precautions being taken to protect the horseman will allow for a safe racing environment, while maintaining the integrity of the sport.”

“It is great to see racing return to Illinois,” said Jockeys’ Guild Regional Manager, Jeff Johnston. On behalf of the jockeys that reside in Illinois and others that regularly plan their summer around Illinois racing we are thankful we can get back to work. We appreciate the state of Illinois working with the Jockeys’ Guild to ensure protocols are in place to protect jockeys, valets, and other racetrack workers and we look forward to the day when we can hear fans cheering in the stands.”

Only licensed essential personnel for the care of racehorses, and those necessary to conduct live racing will be allowed on the grounds. Wagering will take place online since no spectators are allowed in the venues.

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