

CHAPTER 3

RACING/PROGRAM PRINTING

The dissemination of entries and past performances has become more complex and critical as simulcasting has enormously spread out the market area for a Host track's races.

At the same time, Guest sites and associated off-track networks now face the formidable challenge of presenting vital information to their fans not just on their own race card, but numerous others as well.

I. Racing Dates, Stakes Schedules, and Post Time Schedules

Racing dates should be announced as soon as approved by the Racing Commission. Stakes schedules should be completed and distributed as soon after approval as possible. To aid in sale of your races, you should distribute Post Time Schedules for each racing day showing number of races planned, post times for each race, and scheduling of major stakes in their tentative race numbers. Wagering formats should also be included.

When stakes nominations close, send a copy of the nomination list along with press release to all potential customers. Include race number and post time for scheduling purposes.

Because of possible delays associated with approving the above information, you are encouraged to provide racing dates, stakes schedules and post time schedules to Equibase as soon as a tentative schedule has been completed. Equibase will keep this information confidential and will not distribute it without specific approval by the track.

Changes to post times are just as critical as race schedule changes because simulcast outlets attempt to coordinate wagering on multiple cards for their patrons. It is imperative that changes are communicated as soon as possible to Equibase for immediate update of the data on web sites.

NOTE: Confirmed race dates and times are available on the NTRA Calendar maintained by Equibase, online at <http://calendar.ntra.com>.

There are racetrack management systems, e.g. InCompass Solutions' Race Track Operations (RTO), that can apply direct updates to the NTRA Calendar for the following data elements:

- Post time;
- Entry days;
- Scratch dates;
- Scratch times.

II. Expeditious Completion of Entries

The earlier races are drawn, the better chance you have of selling them. The majority of Thoroughbred tracks are currently on a 48-hour entry schedule, not ideally enough time for

aggressive dissemination of information to the public. The time lost when entries close late reduces the period to less than 48 hours. Several tracks use a 72-hour minimum entry schedule to allow more time for program creation and distribution.

Also-eligibles and scratch times seriously impede the delivery of a past performance program to handicappers the day before a race card. Guest tracks are looking for competitive races with full fields to fill their simulcast schedules. Late closing of entries could result in the loss of a sale of a race to a simulcast site. Multiple full card simulcasts also have placed a premium on the public's need to obtain past performances a day in advance.

For maximum effectiveness, distribution of entries and past performances to fans requires either 72-hour entries with a 48-hour scratch time, or 48-hour entries with scratches off the program. An advantage of the latter is also-eligibles still can be accommodated in this system.

A. Wagering Formats

Incorrect wagering formats continue to be the most common cause for a file to be redistributed to racetracks and simulcast facilities. Resends require direct communication between Equibase and receiving facilities and may result in delays in the dissemination of your race card, incorrect wagers in programs, and negative impacts on wagering pools. Every effort must be made to provide correct wagering formats in the original file provided to Equibase.

B. Also-Eligibles (AEs)

Also-eligibles exist to assure a full field with maximum betting interests, particularly in the event of scratches. The advantage of full fields in building handle is obvious.

AEs can prevent advance publication of a past performance program if they cannot effectively be assigned a program number for wagering purposes. The same is true for Main-Track-Only (MTOs) entries. Accurate program numbers are a necessity for the integrity of a wagering pool.

Tracks need to evaluate the potential impact of AEs on field size versus dissemination of past performance programs, including to Guest sites.

C. Scratches

Scratch times of less than 48 hours preclude the publication of an advance past performance program unless all scratches are off the program as drawn at entry time.

Racing fans are best served by having jockeys named at the time of entry to ensure race program information is as complete and accurate as possible.

D. Scratch Overlays

Some tracks include scratch overlays into their program production rather than deleting the runner(s) from the race and re-numbering. In this case, the scratched runner(s) is kept in the program and carries a betting number. Tracks that include scratch overlays, however, clearly mark the runner(s) as scratched so as not to confuse the wagering public.

E. Coupled Entries

Coupled entries require careful attention for simulcasting and the preparation of official printed programs. Wagering on a race cannot be conducted with incorrect program numbers.

One source of problems is original entries usually are sent to participating tracks on overnights which list by post position order rather than by program number. **Overnights need to clearly and prominently list coupled entries.**

A second source of difficulty is the vastly different rules for coupling entries among the various states. If you are merging pools, Guest sites need to know the Host state rules for coupled entries and the procedures followed by the Host track in the event of a scratch.

Host and Guest each have a vested interest in averting program errors that will prevent an outlet's participation in the wager. Errors cost Host and Guest revenue, while the affected fans are irritated needlessly.

Customers also deserve to be informed of the rules regarding coupled entries of Host tracks with which their wagers are being merged, particularly when different from those in the Guest site's state. Bettors are more accepting of different rules before the race rather than after.

F. Simulcasting of International Races

When planning to serve as Host/Hub for inbound international races, Equibase must be contacted as soon as possible. There are several steps involved in arranging for the foreign data to be included in the program and past performances that require advance notice.

III. Procedures for Program Production

Nothing should be considered more important than the information provided to the racing public. There are many factors that need to be considered when producing a quality product. **The three most important factors when producing a program are accuracy, timeliness, and consistency.** We are not only producing the live program at our own racetracks, but each track is responsible for providing this information for simulcasting as well as the electronic delivery.

A. Information to Equibase

i. Racetracks Using RTO System

Users of InCompass Solutions' RTO system work directly within a centralized database and transfer data automatically to Equibase. There are no file transfers required between the racetrack and Equibase. Once the racing office or program department flags the overnight and final recap/program pages as "final" and complete, the information for that day is locked in the RTO system. The following procedures transmit data to Equibase upon approval and finalization by the racing office.

- Production of overnight and/or early proofs;
- Production of final recap and/or program pages.

Once all information, including wager types, program numbers, post positions, odds and horse names, etc., are quality controlled by the racetrack and validated within the RTO system, the data is transferred to the Equibase database automatically and is available immediately for dissemination to the industry.

If an error is discovered after the racing office or program department flags the race information as final, the file must be unlocked by Equibase to permit changes to the information.

It is critical all changes made after the program has been flagged as final be reported to Equibase so the system can be unblocked, allowing tracks to change their data. Racetracks should not allow their printers to make those changes. Instead, racetracks must first contact Equibase to unblock the file, update their data, and then have the corrected data reposted by Equibase.

Furthermore, when tracks contact Equibase to unblock a final file, Equibase should be advised of the change(s) being made so that information can be distributed to the industry.

ii. Racetracks Not Using RTO System

The following procedures must be followed to ensure programs are printed when needed.

As soon as entries are drawn, the file and overnight **must** be sent to Equibase for past performance data retrieval.

To eliminate errors due to re-keying of information, the file used for actual program production is the same file that needs to be sent to Equibase. This will allow Equibase to provide information to all receiving sites in an accurate and timely fashion. The file that is sent to Equibase needs to contain the following:

- The file must meet Equibase Level 5 electronic file specifications.
- As specified by Equibase, all fields must be complete.
- After the initial send to Equibase, the file must be resent if the file contains an unidentified horse. Prior to final printing of program pages, the file must be re-sent to Equibase after scratches so you may retrieve any corrections made to the information. It is very important, due to ongoing operations, that you call the Equibase offices prior to re-sending an entry file.

All the documents listed below need to be sent to Equibase as soon as they have been produced. To ensure the quality of information, Equibase needs these documents faxed or emailed directly, not by broadcast fax or by placing the number on a fax-on-demand list.

- Overnight and/or early proofs.
- Final recap and/or program pages.

Before your program information is sent to Equibase for distribution, please make sure that all data has been quality controlled and all changes have been made to both the electronic file as well as the corresponding documentation. Equibase will disseminate all data within one hour of receipt of the final program information. Please make sure all changes are sent to Equibase **immediately**.

B. On-Site Program Production - Live and Simulcast

i. General

As stated earlier, program production is for simulcasting and electronically-distributed products as well as the live racing audience.

There are several factors that must be considered when producing the live program.

- *Entry Draw Time Schedules* vary from track to track. If your track produces the program 24 hours prior to post time, you need to make sure any track you're taking – single race or multi-card – has the same production schedule as you. The track from which you are taking races may not be able to provide you with the final program information necessary to completed your production process
- *Wagering Formats* are different at every track. When including a single race on your live card, verify that the race fits into your card so your wagering (Pick 3, Daily Double, etc.) will not be affected.
- *Field Size* will affect your program production as it pertains to the number of runners in a particular race that can be handled by the tote system at your track. Prior to scheduling a simulcast race, please verify what your tote system can handle, especially if you are going to commingle your wagering pools with the sending racetrack.
- *National Wagers* that include several tracks must be coordinated to include the above three topics. Tracks have varied and different rules and restrictions. Prior to planning an event of this nature, all areas **must** be addressed before the bet is announced. Remember to contact Equibase well in advance of the draw of races involved in a special wager to ensure the timely dissemination of data.
- *Simulcast Between & Simulcast Races as Part of Live Card.* As with National Wagers, all tracks have different rules and restrictions. Before planning your simulcast schedule, single or multiple cards, all of the above areas must be addressed prior to the production schedule being set.

With simulcasting an integral part of our industry, we need to make sure the information provided to the public is accurate and timely. To assure the customer gets this information in a timely manner, the items contained within this program production section need to be considered. With a mixture of live racing and simulcast racing cards, a decision must be made as to how many different programs are to be published and what race cards are to be contained within each.

ii. Advance Sales Off-Site

If a track offers advance program sales at outlets in its market, it must supply programs to a newspaper delivery service two nights prior to each racing day, since their normal delivery runs are at 5-6:00 a.m. This would allow one full day of advance off-track sales. In order to make this deadline, all program data must be to a printer by early afternoon of Thursday for Saturday racing, for example.

iii. Advance Sales of Programs - Multi-Race National Wagers

To be successful, past performances for such wagers must be in a bettor's hands well in advance of the bet since they add a significant number of races to an already full card, requiring additional time for handicapping. These past performances should be available to

bettors via the *Daily Racing Form* or Equibase programs the night before the wager.

iv. Electronic Program Delivery

Demand for advance wagering information has generated the development of consumer accessible methods of obtaining programs by fax machine and/or personal computer. Tracks must recognize the technological advances and the new opportunities they bring. For more detailed explanations of these systems refer to the Information Delivery section (Chapter 6) of this manual.

C. Related Information

There are several important pieces of information that don't directly affect the program production but are still extremely important to the overall process. Although not directly affecting this process, the timeliness and accuracy are equally as important.

i. Racing Dates/Condition Books

Racing dates need to be made available to Equibase as soon as they have been approved by your state racing commission. Condition books also need to be made available to Equibase as soon as available. For racetracks using the RTO system, the condition book automatically will be transferred to Equibase upon the release of the information by the racing office.

Because of the possible delays associated with approving the above information, you are encouraged to provide racing dates, stakes schedules, and post time schedules to Equibase as soon as a tentative schedule has been completed. Equibase will keep this information confidential and will not distribute it without specific approval by the track.

Changes to racing dates, stakes schedules, and post times throughout the year should be forwarded immediately to Equibase. This includes changes associated with holidays, television coverage of your races, and any other modifications to this data. Equibase places these schedules on the NTRA's website to provide a comprehensive source of this information to the racing public.

The race day and post time schedule drives all system processes for Equibase and, if the data is not updated or accurate, it will cause delays for the host track and simulcast receiving sites and incorrect data being made available to the simulcast sites and wagering public. Therefore, Equibase must be notified of any changes as soon as they are available.

ii. Stakes Schedules

As with condition books, stake schedules, including name, date, conditions of race, and grade, must be made available to Equibase as soon as the schedule for each race meet is known.

iii. Post Times

Post times also need to be made available to Equibase as soon as they are known. As post times change regularly, it is necessary that the various schedules, weekends, holidays and special events are made available as soon as they have been decided upon by the host race track