



Tuesday, July 14, 2020

NYRA establishes new jockey safety protocols and travel restrictions for Saratoga summer meet

SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.Y. - The New York Racing Association Inc., (NYRA) today announced updated health and safety protocols to address the rise in confirmed COVID-19 cases among jockeys around the country.

Until further notice, Saratoga Race Course will be closed to out-of-town jockeys. In addition, any member of the regular NYRA jockey colony who travels to ride at any other racetrack will not be permitted to return to Saratoga Race Course.

"These measures prioritize the health and safety of the jockeys competing in New York, and are designed to combat the spread of COVID-19," said NYRA President and CEO Dave O'Rourke. "Unfortunately, the restrictive travel policies implemented today have become necessary as cases continue to rise in states across the country."

The 2020 Saratoga Summer Condition Book currently lists 22 active jockeys and three apprentice riders. This group is to be considered the regular NYRA jockey colony.

Out-of-town jockeys that are not currently riding at another racetrack may be considered for inclusion in the regular NYRA jockey colony provided the jockey does not ride at another racetrack beginning on Thursday, July 16.

Any jockey that rides at a racetrack outside of Saratoga beginning Thursday, July 16 will be considered an out-of-town jockey and will not be permitted at Saratoga Race Course.

Jockeys' Guild President and CEO Terry Meyocks voiced his approval of the additional jockey protocols.

"Under these circumstances, this is a common-sense approach to add a layer of protection for jockeys and ensure a safe and successful meet here in Saratoga," said Meyocks. "Our membership stands in full support of these new travel protocols and we will continue to work closely with NYRA as this situation continues to evolve and change."

All personnel working at Saratoga Race Course in any capacity are required by NYRA to produce a negative COVID-19 test in order to access the property. This policy is inclusive of jockeys, valets, NYRA employees, trainers and their staff, outside vendors and credentialed media.

"Health and safety need to come first as conditions around the country remain uncertain and inconsistent from state to state," said Appelbaum. "We are confident that these restrictions will support a successful summer at Saratoga and mitigate risk for these world class athletes."

In addition to race day safety protocols including standard health screening and temperature check, the jockey quarters at Saratoga Race Course have been substantially altered to provide maximum social distancing and reduce density. All areas accessed by jockeys during the regular course of a race day are closed to all outside personnel, including credentialed media, and are cleaned and disinfected throughout the day.

Jockeys and valets are not permitted access to the barn area. In order to work a horse in the morning, the jockey must meet the horse in the paddock and can then proceed to the main track.

Jockey agents must produce a negative COVID-19 test in order to gain access to the barn area. Races will continue to be drawn via Zoom.

All common areas as well as the jockey's dining area have been closed and will remain closed through the end of the meet.

NYRA offers a limited number of steeplechase races on Wednesdays and Thursdays during the summer meet. NYRA has consulted with the National Steeplechase Association on specific safety protocols to be followed by the steeplechase jockeys. This group of jockeys must produce a negative COVID-19 test in order to access the property and will be completely isolated from the regular NYRA jockey colony in a physically separate location. Following that day's steeplechase race, which will be carded as race one, the steeplechase jockeys will depart the property.

NYRA will follow current Centers for Disease Control (C.D.C.) and New York State Health Department guidance when determining the return of a jockey who has tested positive for COVID-19. This process will include a period of quarantine determined by the severity of the individual case followed by a series of diagnostic tests to rule out ongoing infection. NYRA will consider allowing a jockey to resume racing or training activities on NYRA property only when his or her physician has provided clearance to do so.

NYRA's COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan Committee, comprised of key NYRA staff members as well as representatives from the New York Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association (NYTHA), the Backstretch Employee Service Team (B.E.S.T.), Belmont Child Care Association (BCCA) and the New York Race Track Chaplaincy of America (NYRTCA), will continue to implement the most current health and safety protocols as described by the C.D.C. and the New York State Department of Health.

The 2020 summer meet at Saratoga Race Course will begin on Thursday, July 16 and run through Labor Day, Monday, September 7. Following the four-day opening weekend, live racing will be conducted five days a week, Wednesdays through Sundays.

Under current New York State guidelines, Saratoga Race Course will open without spectators in attendance. The 40-day meet will be highlighted by the 151st renewal of the Grade 1, \$1 million Runhappy Travers on Saturday, August 8 and the Grade 1, \$750,000 Whitney on Saturday, August 1.

Saratoga Live will present daily television coverage of the 40-day summer meet on FOX Sports and MSG Networks. For the complete *Saratoga Live* broadcast schedule, and additional programming information, visit <https://www.nyra.com/saratoga/racing/tv-schedule>

For more information about Saratoga Race Course, visit [NYRA.com/Saratoga](https://www.nyra.com/Saratoga).

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