



**Meeting of the NSA Board of Directors.
Conference Call
March 27, 2020 @ 1 p.m.**

NSA Board Members: Robert Bonnie, Sean Clancy, Tom Collins, Kate Dalton, Peter Fenwick, Jack Fisher, Doug Fout, Alfred Griffin, Michael Hankin, Mason Lampton, Virginia Lazenby, Jeff LeHew, Meriwether Morris, Guy Torsilieri.

NSA Board Members absent: Eve Ledyard

NSA Staff: William Gallo, Peter McGivney, Don Clippinger

NSA Counsel: Alan Foreman

NSA Safety Committee: Reynolds Cowles

NSA Stewards Advisory Committee: Duncan Patterson

Steeplechase Owners & Trainers Association (SOTA): Kathy Neilson

Chairman Guy Torsilieri called the meeting to order just after 1 p.m.

1. Opening remarks.

Al Griffin welcomed the Board and noted the challenging times for the country, racing and steeplechasing presented by the coronavirus. He urged us all to work together under these difficult circumstances.

2. Approval of the minutes.

The minutes from the January 17 meeting were unanimously approved without amendment.

3. Racing report

Bill Gallo provided a report on the revised spring racing schedule given cancellations as a result of the coronavirus. Middleburg, Fair Hill at Shawan Downs, Foxfield, Cheshire, Virginia Gold Cup and Iroquois have rescheduled their meets. He noted that the schedule was tentative depending on status of efforts to address the coronavirus. Mr. Gallo noted that some purses were reduced for maiden races as, if entries warranted, they would be split. He noted the work with SOTA to adapt racing conditions to the current situation.

4. Committee reports

Dr. Griffin asked Committee Chairs to report on work since the January board meeting.

Administration. Robert Bonnie and Mike Hankin gave an abbreviated report on the work of the Committee as the bulk of the Committee's work was later discussed in executive session.

Promotion and Growth. Dwight Hall summarized the Committee's work. He noted that the NSA has hired the Andrews Agency to provide public relations assistance on communications, social media and the NSA website. He noted the Committee's interest in making the website more user friendly. On social media, NSA needs to move beyond Facebook. Mr. Hall spoke of the committee's interest in attracting new owners, soliciting existing owners for patron memberships, and in improving relationships with the flat tracks. Mr. Hall then noted the committee's discussion of development of a steeplechasing app that could serve as a platform for different race meets. Jack Fisher asked about the cost and feasibility of the app and Mr. Hall said it would be expensive to develop. Mr. Hall also discussed improving the experience of horse owners by appointing ambassadors to work with existing and new owners, making them feel welcome, and enhancing their racing experience. Mr. Hall concluded by noting the committee's interest in looking for opportunities to add sanctioned races to existing point to points, such as the Cheshire Point to Point has planned for this year.

Video Production. Dr. Griffin reported on the evolving situation on livestreaming for NSA race meets. He noted the initial plan to use a pay-per-view service but that the vendor withdrew in February in anticipation of the impact from coronavirus on sporting events. Dr. Griffin then noted his discussions with the Stewards video vendor, Alliance, and the potential of that vendor to provide livestreaming, immediate posting of race videos on social media, and next day posting of videos on the NSA website -- all at a very reasonable cost. This is on hold as a result of the coronavirus. However, Alliance is interested in developing a weekly video program, during "down time," with Megan Connolly as host.

Rider Relations. Sean Clancy reported on the committee's work, noting extensive discussions on the development and mentoring of young jockeys. He noted the committee's interest in looking at racing opportunities at the point to points for young jockeys and its discussion of apprentice races at NSA meets. Mr. Clancy noted that jockey relations with stewards and race meets appear to be improving thanks in part to the Jockey Association run by Forrest Kelly. Mr. Clancy discussed immigration issues and discussions with an attorney specializing in the field on ways to better address the issue. He discussed the committee's deliberations on improving invoicing by jockeys. Mason Lampton asked about alternative ways to provide a pathway for young jockeys to become licensed. Mr. Clancy noted the two new apprentice races scheduled at Fair Hill at Shawan Downs.

Safety. Reynolds Cowles began his report by noting the committee has been revamped and condensed. Dr. Cowles recommended the British Horseracing Authority's strategic plan for horse safety called *A Life Well Lived*. Dr. Cowles noted the committee's work on the redesign of the Easy-Fix national fence. He then discussed the new concussion protocol worked out with the Jockey's Association and others. He noted that medical protocols have been updated for spring meets. In advance of the spring season, the committee has sent a reminder to vets updating race protocols and providing reminders about preplanning and communications.

Dr. Cowles discussed the new shoe rule worked out with Kathy Neilson and others. Dr. Cowles said the committee is working with officials at **The** Jockey Club to update steeplechase data. He noted the upcoming meeting of the Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred Association where voiding of claims rule and a new whip rule will be discussed. He noted that NSA **is** in compliance with most best practices but that biosecurity is one area where additional work may be needed because of the unique circumstances of steeplechase meets. Dr. Cowles notes the committee's discussions regarding continuing education needs for some steeplechase trainers to run at flat tracks. Lastly, Dr. Cowles noted the committee has produced pre-race video for vets, stewards, and race meets.

Stewards Advisory. Duncan Patterson reported on the committee's work. He noted the committee's work on jockey licensing and the committee's emphasis on safety of all jockeys. Mr. Patterson noted the need for confidentiality in many of the Committee's deliberations.

5. Treasurer's Report

Mr. Lampton reported that entry fees are way down given the impacts of the coronavirus. At the same time, NSA is saving on both video and staff expenses and therefore expects a net operating loss of only \$39K. He noted that the NSA will need to draw a small amount out of the investment account until racing starts in June. Mr. Lampton noted the portfolio has held up well despite the market's significant losses. He noted that if June races don't run, the NSA has some opportunities to cut additional expenses. Mr. Clancy asked about how budget decisions would be made in light of continuing challenges. Dr. Griffin explained that the executive committee would decide on routine budget issues but that his desire was to have the support of the full Board for significant budgetary decisions. Tom Collins noted that it may be possible for the NSA to take advantage of the recently passed federal stimulus legislation. Dr. Griffin asked Mr. Lampton to examine the potential for the NSA to take advantage of the law's provisions.

6. President's Report

Dr. Griffin expressed his thanks to everyone during these challenging times. He noted the hard work by Bill Gallo to manage a constantly changing schedule. Dr. Griffin noted his priorities in enhancing NSA board communication with our constituencies, in developing young riders, and improving outreach to owners. With respect to the later, he noted his interest in asking board members to call new owners to check in, to thank them and to ask them about any needs they may have.

7. Foundation report

Jack Fisher reported on the work of the Temple Gwathmey Steeplechase Foundation. The Foundation has paid for development of the new Easy Fix fence. The Fund has budgeted \$150K to pay for drug testing, the yearbook, race splits and other expenses this year. Mr. Fisher noted that the Foundation hopes to raise \$250K annually and that 12 people have pledged \$10K per year. Mr. Fisher noted the Foundation's interest in working closely with the NSA. Dr. Griffin offered appreciation to Mr. Fisher for his leadership of the Foundation and suggested that the Foundation could work with the Administration Committee on ways to enhance the NSA's working relationship with the Foundation.

8. Old business

There was no old business

9. New business

Mr. Clancy asked that the NSA provide timely information on course reports for the revised spring schedule. He asked that the NSA regularly communicate changes to the schedule and conditions to horsemen. Mr. Clancy noted the need to also communicate the revised point to points schedule and any changes to the Saratoga conditions and schedule to horsemen. He noted the particular importance of the point to point races to horsemen this year.

Ms. Neilson asked about communications around jockey apprentice races and issues related to jockey licensing. Mr. Hall acknowledged the need to communicate on this issue.

10. Executive Session

As is its regular practice, the Board went in to executive session.

The meeting was adjourned just after 3 p.m.

Robert Bonnie
Secretary
