



BRITISH HARNESS RACING CLUB

Nicky Hannon
Irish Harness Racing Club

17th March 2011

Dear Nicky,

Opinion on a breakaway racing association in Ireland

Further to our discussions on this matter, I outline below my concerns. However, I must point out that whilst these views are mine, they have been peer reviewed by a number of BHRC Council Members, but not debated by the Council, nor legal opinion sought.

I understand that a body of your licence holders based in Cork, wish to disassociate themselves from the IHRC and in essence break away from the IHRC setting up an alternative racing association and governing body. This to me precipitates a number of issues which I will comment on as follows:

1) The IHRC is the established governing body in Ireland. Of long standing and good repute it is recognised internationally, has been represented at a number of World Trotting Conferences (always with favourable comments, I might add) and works very closely with the BHRC. When the UKSRA broke away from the BHRC in the late 1980s and when Germany not too long ago had a break away organisation, these separate bodies were not recognised either domestically or internationally. Therefore such a move would bar participants from racing under IHRC and BHRC rules.

2) The tacit reciprocal agreement between recognised governing bodies internationally means that the IHRC is welcome to look at, consider and endorse the rules of the BHRC, as we do with USTA, Cheval Francais, HRNZ, Standardbred Canada etc. Indeed I helped the Russian Racing Association draft its rules on whip use. However, these rules are the copyright of each governing body and if an unrecognised, unaffiliated body started using our rules we would have no alternative but to consider taking legal action. As we both know drafting, debating and finalising the rules of racing is no small task. Your colleagues in Cork would have to start all over again, for to do otherwise would be nothing short of piracy. A matter the courts do not take lightly.

I hope that this matter is resolved amicably and to the mutual satisfaction of all concerned. I have got to ask myself why here, why now? Both countries are poised to embrace our own totalisator system with an internet based live stream off track facility, something that may well re finance our racing and even the talk of the project has sparked interest in our sport from Turf TV and some of your people want to break away? They will not be entertained within this initiative if they are not fully on board. As the Americans say, "Go figure".

Kind regards

Gordon Garnett
BHRC Chairman