

The Racing Committee was called to order at 2:10 p.m. by Regulatory Committee Chairperson Joe Faraldo.

1. Roll was taken by Michele Kopiec. Present were: Chris Antonacci, Steve Bateson, Sam Beegle, Dave Bianconi, Jason Bluhm, Marilyn Breuer-Bertera, Barry Brown, Cara Collins, Kim Crawford, Cathy Dessert, Sal DiMario, George Ducharme, Joe Faraldo, Mark Ford, Joe Frasure Jr., Rich Gillock, Jeff Gregory, Edison Hatter, Sam Hedington, Skip Hoovler, Jacquie Ingrassia, Rick Kane, Ben Kenney, Don Marean, Steve McCoy, Chris McErlean, Dr. John Mossbarger, Steve Oldford, Steve O'Toole, Scott Peine, Joe Pennacchio, Dr. Andy Roberts, Jason Roth, Ray Schnittker, Jason Settlemoir, Matt Sparacino, Dein Spriggs, Mike Sweeney, Ashley Tetrick, Mike Torcello, Gabe Wand, Cathy Webb, Shawn Wiles, Dr. Scott Woogen.

2. **2024 Proposed Rule and Bylaw Changes**

The following proposed rules were discussed and voted upon during the session:

- Proposal #1 – Accepted, to be implemented January 1, 2025
- Proposal #2 -Rejected
- Proposal #3 –Accepted as amended to amend first sentence to “...it shall be the responsibility of the track member to have **one state certified paramedic and** one emergency medical technician, or the equivalent...,” amend the second sentence to “...and staffed with **one** paramedic or state certified emergency technician...,” and delete “at least one licensed paramedic shall remain with the ambulance at all times.”
- Proposal #4 – Accepted as amended to remove the last sentence “Every non-extended pari-mutuel track member shall be equipped at a minimum with a red beacon-style warning light and siren for the use in the event of an accident.”
- Proposal #5 - Rejected
- Proposal #6 – Accepted as amended to remove “with black tape.”
- Proposal # 7 – Accepted
- Proposal #8 – Rejected
- Proposal #9 – Accepted as amended to add “**At all extended pari-mutuel tracks...**”
- Proposal #10 – Rejected
- Proposal #11 – Tabled
- Proposal #12 – Rejected
- Proposal #13 –Rejected
- Proposal #14 –Accepted
- Proposal #15 –Rejected
- Proposal #16 –Rejected
- Proposal #17 - Rejected
- Proposal #18 – Rejected
- Proposal #19 –Accepted
- Proposal #20 – Rejected
- Proposal #21 – Rejected
- Proposal #22 – Accepted
- Proposal #23 – Accepted as amended to remove “and/or is a carrier of.”
- Proposal #24 – Rejected

- Proposal #26 – Rejected
- Proposal #28 – Accepted
- Proposal #30 - Accepted

3. Regulatory Committee Update

- TC Lane provided an update on the USTA Officials Scholarship Program.
 - A full 60-hour accreditation course for racing officials was held June 18-25, 2023 at Saratoga Race Course in conjunction with the USTA and ROAP, with 16 of the 23 attendees seeking accreditation for harness. TC Lane, Michele Kopiec and USTA licensed presiding judge Scott Egger served as instructors in areas including judging responsibilities, communication, accident protocol, the eTrack system and FAS.
 - The USTA also provided scholarships to 10 individuals to attend the school in 2023. Within the budget for 2024, we have once again placed the suggested amount for continuation of the scholarship program. The ROAP course will be taking place in Minnesota this year, at Canterbury Park, with plans to incorporate Running Aces is in the works.
 - The USTA participated in an Ohio Judges meeting, coordinated by the OHHA, on June 10, 2023 in Urbana, OH. 20 Ohio racing officials attended to discuss race day conduct and safety, communication with drivers and other fair racing concerns.
 - The USTA conducted a 16-hour continuing education seminar for licensed racing officials at the Meadows Racetrack and Casino on November 19-20, 2023. The class was attended by 40 USTA-licensed and ROAP accredited judges from 10 states. Once again, new USTA Director Sal DiMario served alongside TC Lane, Michele Kopiec, and Ohio Presiding Judge Doug Thomas as instructors.
- Wendy Ross gave a recap of the outriding clinic that was held August 31-September 2, 2023 at Eldorado Scioto Downs and Winner Circle Training Center. The clinic was attended by seven individuals, several have found work outriding since.
- Steve McCoy discussed Coggins testing to question whether a Coggins test should be a requirement for Standardbred racehorses. In his research, he noted that of the 1.3 million of all horses tested in Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York, New Jersey, and Indiana were tested for EIA from 2017-2022, there were only three positive cases of EIA confirmed and these were not drawn from racehorses or horses in training. After presenting data, McCoy requested that the USTA adopt a policy statement to encourage state racing commissions to eliminate Coggins testing for horses that are in training and racing because such tests are no longer warranted. He will provide language for a rule change proposal to the current rule for the next annual meeting.
- Sam Beegle spoke on worker's compensation and questioned how jurisdictions handle it for grooms and warm-up drivers who are not listed on a trainer's stable roster. Sal DiMario explained the policy purchased by the Delaware Standardbred Owner's Association years ago to address this issue. Beegle asked the committee for assistance in coming up with a workable/affordable solution to assist, possibly something similar to what has been done in Delaware.
- Patrick Thompson Executive Director of the National Racing Compact (NRC). The NRC consists of 15 member states and 10 participating states. Allows owners, drivers and trainers to complete one application and one set of fingerprints to get licensed in multi-jurisdictions with one phone call to NRC. NRC currently has 3,700 licensees. A new website will be coming soon which will include online license application and the ability to add states for licensure.

4. Fairs Committee Update

- Jessica Schroeder provided an update on the USTA Matching Funds Program, which has assisted fairs and county horsemen's associations since 2006. Originally providing \$10,000 in advertising assistance, the line

item was increased to \$20,000 in 2012. The program has morphed over the years to help cover the cost of promotional items given away in the grandstand, in addition to advertising assistance, splitting the budget 50/50 for those two programs. With an increased interest in the USTA providing a bulk purchasing program to assist fairs in procuring promotional items, staff proposed increasing the Matching Funds Grant line item to \$30,000. A motion was made by Joe Frasure and seconded by Steve Bateson to request additional funding from the Finance Committee.

- TC Lane gave an update on the difficulty of acquiring starting gate insurance. At the moment, we are waiting for a copy of the policy for one state, to ensure coverage and share with other states. In one particular state, they have indicated that due to difficulty, they will be seeking an alternative method, either a “gentleman’s start” without a gate or simply using a truck as a “pace vehicle” instead of a gate. More to follow in the coming weeks.

5. **Pari-Mutuel Committee Update**

- By way of video, Michael Carter provided an update on the Strategic Wagering program. Overall, strategic wagers handled \$37.8 million in 2023, an increase from \$36.5 million in 2022, but still down from \$43.9 million in 2021. It was noted that one member track had more shortfalls than other racetracks, that could have cost the USTA approximately 1/3 of the budgeted dollars. Carter stressed that if a member track is struggling to hit their guarantee, they need to remember to follow the Standard Operating Procedures for submitting invoices for shortfalls. He also recommended that the board consider the makeup of the Strategic Wagering committee, to review committee members and make changes if deemed necessary.
- Mark Loewe discussed Grand Circuit Events and the Graded Stakes committee, highlighting the committee structure and the work that has been done thus far to research and grade races. Graded Stakes will roll out in 2025 and be included in pedigrees starting in 2026. Races in U.S and Canada will be graded.

6. **Driver/Trainer Committee Update**

- By way of video, Mike and Gail McNeely of VanGundy Insurance Agency, gave an in-depth overview of the disability income program with accidental death and dismemberment written by VanGundy, underwritten by Chubb insurance. There are no rate changes for 2024. As of January 1, 2024, there are 3,859 USTA members eligible for coverage with 131 opting in. Mike and Gail encourage directors to promote the program, similar to Joe Faraldo sharing details on social media, and welcome any suggestions to increase participation.
- In light of the failure of the Spyder 3D sulky in May 2023, Michele Kopiec gave a presentation on sulky testing standards, detailing the history of the current USTA rules and research done by the USTA and University of Dayton Research Institute (UDRI) that led to the testing procedures for sulky approval. Highlighted in the presentation was a recent visit by TC Lane, Michele Kopiec and Ron Taubert to UDRI, to review the fatigue acceptance and residual strength acceptance tests used by the university to ensure sulkies tested meet a minimum durability for safety. It was noted that due to the extreme force applied to sulkies during testing, i.e. up to 5Gs over 10,000 cycles, it was confirmed that the current testing procedure is still valid for sulky approval. However, it is of utmost importance that a sulky manufacturer produces each sulky with the same materials, dimensions and manufacturing methods as the one that is approved by the USTA and that sulky purchasers provide proper care and maintenance to ensure sulky safety.
- Steve Oldford provided a recap of the 2023 amateur driving club activity averaging 500 races per year and climbing. 2024 World Amateur Cup being held in Finland and John Calabrese will represent the U.S.

As there were no other matters to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.