



The Federation of Racecourse Bookmakers Limited



Association of
Racecourse Bookmakers

National Association
of Bookmakers

Rails Bookmakers
Association

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RESPONSE TO NORTHERN RACING PROPOSAL FROM BOOKMAKER ASSOCIATIONS

It was announced in the Racing Post yesterday that Northern Racing Ltd have proposed to continue to allocate betting pitches according to the existing seniority lists until 2042 with certain conditions attached, but only in respect of existing betting areas and without a dispute resolution mechanism in place.

The proposal was not put to bookmaker representatives in the course of negotiations. It is however a shift from the RCA's originally stated position that 'from September 2012 racecourses will not recognise lists or transfers of picks as between betting operators', at least in respect of the 9 Northern racecourses.

Robin Grossmith from the FRB and Rails Bookmakers Association (RBA) said 'it is a step forward and maybe the first rung on the ladder, but we must be cautious. As ever with these things, the devil is in the detail. For example, the proposal does not include a dispute resolution mechanism and does not apply to new betting areas, both of which are essential'.

Keith Johnson from the FRB and National Association of Bookmakers (NAB) said 'we presume that this is not a 'take it or leave it' scenario, but rather a step towards an accommodation that is acceptable to both sides. It is hoped that this signals a change in stance from the RCA and their members generally, thus providing the starting point for progress towards the essential UK-wide agreement for tenure.'

The pitch tenure dispute was raised by numerous MPs in a debate yesterday and there was strong support for the bookmakers' position. The debate can be found on the UK Parliament website - <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmhansrd/cm090513/halltext/90513h0002.htm>

Gerry Sutcliffe MP, the Minister for Sport, stated the following in response: "If we do not get a solution that meets the requirements of all sides, I will consider legislation, because this can and should be resolved. I will not allow discussions to take place until we reach the deadline with nothing happening. That would be the wrong thing to do. I give assurances to my hon. Friends that we will deal with the matter."¹ The Minister also reiterated that "there should have been discussions between the racecourse operators and the Federation of Racecourse Bookmakers".

Barry Johnson, representing the FRB and Association of Racecourse Bookmakers (ARB) said 'We are heartened and reassured by the Minister's comments. We will continue to engage with all relevant parties, including Northern Racing, and will continue to support necessary measures to ensure that all bookmakers' assets at all racecourses are protected. As yet, the critical issues remain unresolved; duration of tenure, dispute resolution and new betting areas.'
