



Dear OQHRA Racing Members,

Hello friends! I hope everyone is enjoying the little break in summer heat, the crisp fall mornings are a welcome relief. We are nearing the end of the 2021 racing season and I want to take this opportunity to thank you for choosing Oklahoma. Like 2020, this year has had it's share of highs and lows. The volatile climate of our economy has not missed the horse racing industry. While the horse market is strong, the gaming side saw a lot of fluctuation. Although, it does seem to be leveling off now, near levels that were normal before COVID. As we have dealt with the highs and lows this year, we have not done the best job of relaying to all of you the details of why you have seen cuts, increases, reductions etc. As I am starting to get my feet under me in this new position, I wanted to share with you some of the issues that we have faced in 2021 and explain how we arrived at the decisions that were made. OQHRA is a membership organization; we work for you. I want to be as transparent and forthcoming with all of you so that together we can keep Quarter Horse Racing across our state and country thriving.

Short Fields/Low Entry Numbers:

This is a problem that has been felt across the entire country in 2021 and was not exclusive to Oklahoma. There are many theories about what is causing the problem. If you look at the Quarter Horse Foal Crop Report for 2019 from AQHA (which would be the foaling year for this year's two year old's) the overall foal crop was down 18,720 horses and Oklahoma's crop was down 1,199. Now, this does not tell us by discipline so we know those are not just race horses, but we can assume the decrease is significant on the racing side. The good news – 2020 foal crop report shows an increase of 50,734 horses over the previous year and Oklahoma's foals increased 2,739! Hopefully, that means that 2022 will see a return to full fields and plenty of horse population. This will help with many problems; full fields garner more handle, and more handle yields larger purses!

Will Rogers Downs:

The second condition book is now available online. For the remainder of the meet, we will generally run only 9 races per day. Prior to the beginning of the meet we (OQHRA) look at all the income that has been generated since the final day of racing the year before. We then must project what the income will be through the end of the meet this year to determine our budget. We then deduct the stakes program out of that amount and find our overall budget for overnight races. We are allotted to run 270 QH Races. Right off the bat, for QH 33 of those races are considered stakes races (Trials, Finals and Overnight Stakes) with a budget of \$625,500. For 2021 that left us with 237 Overnight races and a budget just under \$2.4 Million Dollars. As we started making the budget and looking at the purse scale for 2021, we took into consideration that we have had trouble having full fields leading into the WRD meet, so we knew we could expect short fields and low entries at WRD as well. The OQHRA Board decided to cut the overnight races (for 2021) to 199 overnights. This would keep our average purse higher. While we struggled between giving up racing opportunity and keeping the purses at a level you can afford to make a living this was not an easy decision to make. Ultimately, we can't make more money available. What we have is what we have, however, we can offer more or less races if need be. The board voted to drop 38 overnight races for 2021, offering 199 total overnights. After discussion with the racing secretary, we left the first book with more races so that we could watch the income and see if by chance it would increase after the meet got underway, unfortunately, the income is right where we projected, and we need to continue with the plan to only run 199 races or cut purses. Again, we feel with the current number of entries that cutting races is a better alternative than cutting purses.

Fair Meadows/TATPF:

Nearly all the purse money for Fair Meadows comes from the TATPF (Tulsa Area Tribal Purse

Fund). Any casino operated within a 20-mile radius of FMT is required to pay the TATPF a percentage of their net gaming revenue. The state statute says no less than four hundred total races, which shall include conducting no fewer than an average of four races per day for Thoroughbred horses. This means that if we do not run at least 400 races the Tribes will not be required to pay their gaming percentage to the TATPF. The TATPF is used to fund purses at FMT and WRD. For 2021 nearly \$2 million from the TATPF was used towards purses at FMT, \$198k to OKB at FMT, \$935k towards purses at WRD and \$291k to OKB at WRD. By statute, we are required to offer no less than 500 races over 12 weeks at Remington Park and no fewer than 270 races for QH and 60 races for Paint and Apps at Will Rogers Downs. At RP and WRD it says that if both the horsemen's organization and the racetrack request fewer or more races/days that the OHRC shall approve it, allowing us to reduce the number of races like we have at WRD. This approval is only for the meet requested and they cannot decide to offer us fewer races next year as a result. At Fair Meadows it is uncertain if that same condition applies. OQHRA is unwilling to risk the income from the tribes to the TATPF so we have not been willing to reduce the number of races there. When COVID happened, the Tribal Casinos were shut down for an extended time. This hurt the TATPF considerably. Thankfully the OQHRA board has been good stewards of the money and had purposefully built up a savings in the TATPF. This savings was used in 2020 to keep racing possible at FMT and WRD. The purses were reduced slightly, and most of the money used was saved from previous years. Without that, it is unlikely we could have conducted a full meet at either track in 2020.

Purses – Gaming and Handle:

As I have learned while trying to educate myself more in this area, our purse levels really do not change. Obviously 2020 and 2021 had major changes because of COVID but prior to 2020, historically since about year two after the implementation of gaming, the purses have been the same. That is because the number of machines is capped, and we get the same percentage off the same number of machines. The money played in the casino and bet on the races is virtually the same each year resulting in the same purses year over year. I have many ask why the purses have not increased much in years and this is the best explanation of that.

After explaining the details, I hope that you can see we are still in recovery mode. The financial hit was essentially a smaller cut and spread over the next year so that it wasn't so painful. Hopefully, if we don't see another crisis in our economy 2022 will be back on track and we can begin rebuilding all our savings so that we will be prepared if we find ourselves in a similar situation. Overall, I believe that Oklahoma has been resilient. I applaud our horsemen; I know the last two years have not been easy. Thankfully through the partnership of OQHRA, the horsemen and the racetrack management we have been able to keep racing and paying out the most purse money possible. If I have missed something you would like to know more about or have a question, please do not hesitate to call me, stop me when you see me or send me an email. I am happy to share with you the details! Further, OQHRA board meetings are always open to horsemen who would like to attend. Our board members contact info is listed on our website OQHRA.com, and they are elected to serve you, so do not hesitate to reach out and visit with them as well. On that note, our 2022 OQHRA Director Elections are currently underway, please watch your mailbox for a ballot and be sure to participate in electing directors that will be speaking and making decisions on your behalf!

Sincerely,
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