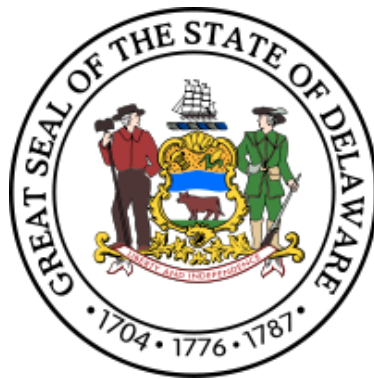


2024 Annual Report



2024 Delaware Harness Racing Commission

Mission Statement

To protect, promote, serve and regulate the Harness Racing Industry and uphold its honesty and integrity in a competent and impartial manner.

Purpose

The Delaware Harness Racing Commission (DHRC) regulates and oversees the sport of harness racing in the state of Delaware.

Objectives

1. To protect, preserve and promote agriculture and horse racing through effective and efficient efforts to prevent and eliminate corrupt practices.
2. To ensure fairness in any decision affecting licensees and patrons; and ensure due process in administrative proceedings.
3. To be responsive to the public and licensees and provide information concerning industry and DHRC operations.

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2024 Delaware Harness Racing Commission

Summary of Activities

Purse, Race and Handle Statistics

Delaware enjoyed a successful harness racing season in 2024, with 144 race days and 2,077 races total with 16,593 starters. Including stake races, Bally's – Dover (Bally's) and Harrington Raceway Inc. (HRI) distributed approximately \$8.2M in purse funds for 2024.

Commission Rules/Procedures

Through adherence to the highest standards of integrity, the Delaware Harness Racing Commission (DHRC) effectively regulated the sport of harness racing in the First State. Various improvements were made to internal procedures and regulatory protocols. The latest amendments to USTA's rules were reviewed and appropriate revisions were adopted into the DHRC rules. The DHRC works closely with the Association of Racing Commission International (ARCI) and utilizes the recommended penalty matrix guidance along with other guidance, but the DHRC opposes both the federal Horse Racing Safety and Integrity Act and ARCI acquiescence to the effort. Continuous review and improvement are standard practice. Human and Equine drug testing protocols are continuously assessed and improved.

Equine Drug Testing

Both the frequency and quality of the drug screening programs are continuously assessed and adjusted for improvement. In 2024, a total of 2,559 pre-race tests were completed in-house. Industrial Lab continues to service the Commission by providing analysis of post-race (blood/urine) and out-of-competition (blood) samples. A total of 2,068 (blood/urine) post-race samples and 158 out-of-competition samples were collected and analyzed in 2024 including multiple sampling events at qualifying races. In 2015, the DHRC passed new rules related to the use of cobalt. In 2024 Cobalt use is still monitored.

Licensee Drug Testing

In 2024, 6,642 breathalyzer screenings were conducted (for alcohol presence) and 30 human (saliva) samples were collected for drug testing (full spectrum analysis). The continued monitoring of possible drug use/abuse in human and equine participants is paramount to maintaining the highest standards of integrity in Delaware horse racing. Our drug testing sample collection and analytical protocols, as well as testing parameters, are constantly monitored for quality improvement. The DHRC has been tracking federal and local marijuana related statutes and making the necessary updates to our policies.

Ownership Review Project

Beginning in 2018, the Commission has initiated a comprehensive ownership review project. The Ownership Review Project is currently ongoing. People/stables are contacted by the Chief Investigator to provide ownership information. Investigation can uncover hidden ownership and other violations. People/stables are held accountable by the Rules and Regulation of the Commission if found in violation. The DHRC has continued the Ownership Review project, adding new owners and trainers to the list each year.

Budget

It is important to remember the state fiscal year (SFY) runs from July 1st to June 30th and the annual report is based on the calendar year. In general, the following relates to the 2024 calendar year. Casino revenue is a source of funding for the DHRC and DSBF operations. Some costs are directly paid by the tracks, such as laboratory services (not shown in the DHRC Operating Budget), and other costs are covered by funds channeled through the Lottery Office to the DHRC. The majority of the DHRC budget is provided from lottery accounts and not the purse account. The SFY2024 DHRC budget was approximately \$1.6M, including personnel, travel, contractual, supplies, and fingerprints. DHRC operations are performed well within budgeted parameters.

In Conclusion

Delaware horse racing is a vibrant and healthy industry, contributing more than \$182M to the State's economy annually and accounting for over 1,540 jobs. However, the reductions in gaming revenue and total handle over the last few years cannot be ignored. The DHRC is mindful of and responsive to this situation. Many DHRC cost saving measures have been implemented and that practice will continue. The DHRC constantly reviews internal procedures, and we will continue the practice of on-going assessment and improvement to reduce costs and increase efficiency. The DHRC will also continue to identify methods and measures (education, rules, procedures, testing, and investigation) to ensure the integrity of racing in the First State.

It will take all stakeholders (regulators, politicians, casinos/tracks, horsemen, and support businesses) working together to ensure the continued success of this important industry, which contributes significantly to our history and economy. Solutions which consider the needs of and provide a positive impact to both the horsemen and casino/tracks must be identified and implemented.

2024 Delaware Harness Racing Commission

Delaware Harness Racing Commission

Chairman, Beverly Steele

Vice-Chairman, Patt Wagner

Commissioner, George P. Staats

Commissioner, Jack Berberian

Commissioner, Stephanie Liguori

Executive Director, Robert Schiewe

Counsel, Michelle Whalen, DAG

Counsel, Victoria Groff, DAG

Administrative Specialist, Donna Krol*

Administrative, Darlene Parker*

DHRC Veterinarians

Linda Molesworth, DVM

Claire Wellman, DVM

DHRC Judges

Presiding Judge, Dan Kazmaier

Associate Judge, Brian Manges*

Associate Judge, Brent McLaren

Alternate Judge, Norman Short (fill-in)

Paddock Judge, Bob Delisi*

Investigative Unit

Chief Investigator, Lauren Torres

Investigator, Alyssa Anderson

Investigator, Handley Orr

*Denoted personnel trained in more than one job function

Office of Licensing

Holly Ventura*

Diane Acker

Equine Identifiers

Trish MacDonald*

BAC Technician

Robin Killen

Chief Paddock Inspectors

Nikki Tome*

Paddock Inspector

Lynn Dodenhoff*

Morgan Nichols*

Faith Savage*

Cara Parker*

DE Standardbred Breeders Fund

Administrator, Judy Davis-Wilson

Blood Gas Analyst

Wes Gerardi*

Jennifer Hobbs*

Trish MacDonald*

Personnel Training and Conferences

Cross training continues to be a cornerstone of the DHRC personnel management strategy. Cross training strengthens both the individual employee and the operation. Cross training improves morale and operational flexibility. DHRC personnel are cross trained in multiple job duties whenever possible; and as noted on the personnel roster, many DHRC paddock staff have been trained in multiple job functions.

DHRC personnel are also encouraged to utilize the state training/education programs through OMB. The state offers courses in First State Financial system (FSF), management education, personal skill building and others.

Personnel Accreditation

Judges working at Delaware's Harness tracks are fully licensed by the United States Trotting Association (USTA) and accredited through the University of Louisville. Judges regularly attend continuing education sessions through the Racing Officials Accreditation Program (ROAP); www.horseracingofficials.com

2024 Delaware Harness Racing Commission

Licensing Office Activity

LICENSE TYPE	FEE	# Issued	Year to Date
OWNER 1 YR	\$50.00	288	14,400.00
TRAINER 1 YR	\$50.00	4	200.00
DRIVER 1 YR	\$50.00	7	350.00
OWN/TRNR/DRIVER 1 YR	\$50.00	24	1,200.00
OWNER 2 YR	\$100.00	46	4,600.00
TRAINER 2 YR	\$100.00	5	500.00
DRIVER 2 YR	\$100.00	0	0
OWN/TRNR/DRIVER 2 YR	\$100.00	6	600.00
OWNER 3 YR	\$150.00	130	19,500.00
TRAINER 3 YR	\$150.00	15	2,250.00
DRIVER 3 YR	\$150.00	5	750.00
OWN/TRNR/DRIVER 3 YR	\$150.00	24	3,600.00
AUTH. AGENT	\$50.00	3	150.00
VENDOR	\$50.00	5	250.00
VENDOR EMPLOYEE	\$20.00	8	160.00
GROOM	\$20.00	184	3,680.00
TRACK PERSONNEL	\$20.00	56	1,120.00
TOTAL LICENSES		846	\$53,310.00
FINGERPRINTS PROCESSED		175	
APPEALS	\$400.00	9	\$3,600.00
FINES		91	\$38,500.00
TOTALS			\$95,410.00

2024 Delaware Harness Racing Commission

Equine Drug Testing Program

TYPE	2022 TOTALS	2023 TOTALS	2024 TOTALS
No. of Starters	15,990	16,194	16,593
Pre-Race Testing (BG, In-house)	1,550	1,695	2,559
Post-Race Testing (Industrial)	3,754	3,664	2,068
Out of Competition Testing (Industrial)	0	34	158
Cobalt	275	35	120
GRAND TOTALS	5,579	5,428	4,905

Human Drug Testing Program and Searches

TYPE	2022 TOTALS	2023 TOTALS	2024 TOTALS
Human (Urine) Drug Testing	62	44	30
Breathalyzer (In-house)	6,642	6,463	6,687
GRAND TOTALS	6,704	6,507	6,717
Truck/Trailer Searches	87	34	23

2024 Delaware Harness Commission

Racetrack Handle and Purse Statistics

These figures are summed from the Monthly Administrator's Report

	2022 Totals	2023 Totals	2024 Totals
Live Racing Days	147	148	144
Races	1,958	2,050	2,070
Races Per Day (avg)	14	15	15
Total On-track Handle	\$1,297,989	\$1,532,770	\$1,262,688
Total Off-track Handle	\$68,586,718	\$76,301,483	\$63,519,275
Total Live Handle	\$69,884,707	\$77,834,253	\$64,781,963

	2022 Totals	2023 Totals	2024 Totals
Total Purse Paid Harrington	\$10,860,631	\$10,490,748	\$14,070,641
Total Purse Paid Bally's Dover	\$17,019,150	\$17,846,559	\$17,628,535
Total Purses Paid	\$27,879,781	\$28,337,307	\$31,699,176