

# Mandatory Monitoring Barns a First for Cup

For the first time in Breeders' Cup history, horses entered in all championship races were required to pass through a race-day monitoring barn, keeping in step with security measures set up by the New York Racing Association earlier this year.

All horses that raced on Breeders' Cup day, Oct. 29, were required to assemble in one of four barns on the Belmont Park backstretch at least six hours prior to their scheduled race. Three barns were used to accommodate Breeders' Cup contenders, while one barn was used for horses in the two undercard races.

In a leading effort to address the growing public concern about the use of performance-enhancing drugs in sports, NYRA implemented the race-day security measures in May at the opening of Belmont's spring meet. In doing so, the Elmont, N.Y., venue became the first Thoroughbred racetrack to require every horse in every race to enter a security barn prior to competition.

"We want to provide integrity and comfort to the highest level possible for all the participants and also for the pari-mutuel process," NYRA senior vice president Bill Nader said.

Security personnel check horses into the security barn and monitor horses going in and out, Nader said. Private veterinarians are only allowed in for emergency situations, and a NYRA-employed veterinarian administers the bleeder medication Salix for approved horses. A trainer or owner must employ a groom or staff person to accompany each horse to the security barn.

Requiring horses to be sent to a race-day monitoring barn was initially met by some complaints from horsemen who said it was inconvenient and costly. There was also some confusion on the backstretch early in the morning of championship day among trainers who said they weren't properly notified of which barn to take their horses to and about stipulations on what equipment they could take into the barn.



Horses get some exercise before a race near one of Belmont's monitoring barns

Trainer Jeff Mullins, who also had horses in the first two races, said the racetrack didn't open early enough to accommodate the exercise schedule of his horses who had to report to the security barn at 6 a.m. He also said he wasn't notified of which of the detention barns to take his horses to or given a list of equipment allowed in the security facility.

"It's terribly organized and you need to know what you can and can't do, you can't just show up and have them start frisking you," Mullins said.

Nader said he could see how there could be confusion with such a large event, but as of one day after the event he hadn't heard of any complaints.

"Really, the majority of horsemen going into this situation knew what we were trying to accomplish," Nader said earlier in the week. "Some complained about the inconvenience, the additional labor,

and things like that, but anytime there's change, there's going to be a little bit of resistance. Overall, I think it has been greeted with enthusiasm and understanding."

There were no exceptions for European horses that were shipped in for the Breeders' Cup and were quarantined upon arrival. They also had to report to one of the security barns six hours before post time.

Nader estimated the security-barn operation will cost NYRA an additional \$500,000 a year, but said it is well worth the time and expense.

"We do almost \$3 billion a year on our races and we give away approximately \$120 million in purse money," Nader said. "Championships are won and lost at NYRA tracks and resumes are really built here, not only for champions but for horses that go on to be top stallions or tremendous broodmares. So we felt it was incumbent upon us to be an industry leader and pave the way.

"This is something that all racetracks should entertain moving forward. The perception—whether you believe it to be a problem or not—of a problem with performance-enhancing drugs in any major sport is not going away."

By Amy Whitfield

## 'BIG EVENT TEAM' ON THE SCENE AT BELMONT PARK

In addition to race-day monitoring barns, a special security team was in full swing patrolling the Belmont Park barn area in the days leading up to the Breeders' Cup World Championships Oct. 29.

The 10-plus member team is funded by the Racing Medication and Testing Consortium and managed by the Thoroughbred Racing Protective Bureau. It marked the first time such a security team was present Breeders' Cup week.

The "Big Event Team" was established earlier this year for Triple Crown races and has been received well by horsemen, said Pete Lang, supervising agent with the TRPB, who has headed up the BET since its inception this spring.

"The primary goal is to keep the integrity of the sport on a level field for everyone," Lang said. The team established for the Breeders' Cup was made up of investigators from state horse racing commissions, racetrack security directors, and TRPB agents.

Team members could be seen patrolling the barn area as early as Wednesday prior to the Breeders' Cup. Lang said their purpose includes talking to trainers and veterinarians about rules and regulations in the stable area and in general to "make sure everyone is on the same page," Lang said. The security team was separate from detention barn personnel.

"We are the eyes for the New York State Racing and Wagering Board," Lang said. "So if we see something, we'll stop whatever we see, but at that point we'll contact someone from the board and they'll come and take control."

By Amy Whitfield