

HISA / HIWU Media Briefing – June 8, 2023

HISA CEO Lisa Lazarus and HIWU Executive Director Ben Mosier met with media Thursday, June 8 at Belmont Park ahead of the 155th running of the Belmont Stakes. Lazarus and Mosier were joined by NYRA Executive Vice President of Operations Glen Kozak for opening remarks and then took questions from the media.

Speakers:

- Lisa Lazarus, CEO, Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority (HISA)
- Ben Mosier, Executive Director, Horseracing Integrity and Welfare Unit (HIWU)
- Glen Kozak, Executive Vice President, Operations, New York Racing Association (NYRA)
- Michelle Pujals, General Counsel, Horseracing Integrity and Welfare Unit (HIWU)
- Mandy Minger, Director of Communications, Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority (HISA)

MANDY MINGER: Okay, thanks everyone for joining us. We really appreciate you being here today. I'm going to introduce the speakers today and then afterwards both Lisa and Ben will have time to answer some questions. Glen is going to have to leave us. So right here in front of me is Lisa Lazarus, our CEO of HISA; then we've got Glen Kozak, NYRA Executive VP of Operations; and then Ben Mosier, Executive Director of HIWU. They'll each give some brief opening remarks, and then there'll be an opportunity to ask questions.

GLEN KOZAK: Okay. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you all for joining us here today. On behalf of the New York Racing Association, and the thousands of people who contribute to horse racing across the state, it's an honor to be joined with you here today for this important conversation. Now, I prioritize safety and integrity above all other considerations and we're committed to implementing responsible risk mitigation strategies, coupled with significant financial investment in our racing surfaces and safety protocols informed by data and relevant expertise. These investments include the complete renovation of all racing and training surfaces at Aqueduct in Saratoga over the last four years. At Belmont Park, we have installed a new synthetic pony track which has provided our staff with invaluable firsthand experience working with a synthetic surface in all varying weather conditions.

This investment is critically important because we will be installing a new one-mile synthetic surface here at Belmont, as a fourth racing surface, and also for training, next year. We have closely followed and studied the evolution of synthetic surfaces both here in North America, as well as in Europe. They hold promise when it comes to reducing injuries and we will embrace that technology moving forward. NYRA's organizational commitment to safety is why we advocated so strongly for the passage of the Horse Racing Integrity and Safety Act and it's why we've worked so closely with the Authority to ensure trainers, horsemen, and riders were educated and informed throughout the implementation process.

Ensuring we're providing the safest possible environment for training and racing is a shared responsibility among racing participants, track operators, and of course HISA and HIWU. Here in New York, we're confident that HISA will achieve the type of reforms long supported and advanced by NYRA including a national approach to medication control, and the strongest anti-doping authority the sport has ever seen.

This effort flows through nearly everything we do here at Belmont, as well as Aqueduct and Saratoga Race Course. From enhanced veterinary scrutiny to a focus on data-driven solutions, NYRA seeks to continually improve and refine everything that we're doing that's safety related.

That's a quick overview. I know one of the quick questions is what we're doing and how we're monitoring the air quality and what's taking place. So in consultation not only with the New York State Gaming Commission, but also with HISA – the protocols have just been released from the New York State Gaming Commission on what steps are taking place as far as the monitoring at the different levels and the consultations that'll take place. It's very similar to what we do with the other protocols with heat index. It's just something that certainly in New York we haven't had to deal with in the past. So, getting this together, I think it shows how the Gaming Commission, HISA and an organization like NYRA has been able to implement a plan that puts the best interests of the horses and the riders in place. It's something that we will continue to monitor over the next coming days. The nice thing to see is the numbers are trending lower. They're still high up in Saratoga, but with the three different weather services that we're currently using, there is a trend showing that the numbers will start to diminish this evening and then we should be in a much better situation for tomorrow. But, that will take place in consultation with the New York State Equine Medical Director and NYRA's chief veterinarian as well as NYRA to focus on training for tomorrow. It's out of our control and we're just monitoring the weather and the information that's available.

LISA LAZARUS: Well thank you all for being here today. I really appreciate your interest in our safety protocols, our anti-doping protocols and obviously you all covering the sport because that is very important to us.

It goes without saying this has been a challenging Triple Crown season, but I think the silver lining, to the extent that there is one in all of this, is that we now have the infrastructure to address these problems long term with one national governing body working with local forces in the commission and the race track, we're able to come up with, I believe, solutions that hopefully are going to help us to minimize risks of injuries down the road. I think one of the things that's really different about HISA and, I hope will be transformational, is that we do have the ability to collect so much data. I think it's that data and that information, if we organize it properly and look at it with the right experts is going to give us, you know, information that allows us to really respond accordingly.

You know, we've put in place a number of different protocols and oversights. We're very lucky to have Dr. Durenberger here who knows this racetrack very well. She spent a lot of time in New York, helping us to make sure we can give support to NYRA and provide us with an extra layer of review with regards to equine safety and injuries.

This Belmont Stakes will be the first Triple Crown race ever run under HISA's new anti-doping program. I know some of you may not yet be convinced that it's going to be the panacea or a big game changer, but I can tell you that it is and we are really lucky to have the Horseracing Integrity and Welfare Unit running it.

The efficiencies, the insights, the professionalism, from where I sit, have really been exceptional and I think you'll be interested in the coming weeks and months to see, hopefully, some of the outcomes. So with that I'm going to pass over to Ben Mosier, who's the Executive Director, and I'm happy to answer questions once we're done.

BEN MOSIER: Thanks Lisa. To piggyback on Glen and Lisa, very thrilled to be here. Again, our first Triple Crown race, we've been up and running since May 22. We appreciate the opportunity to work very closely with NYRA this week, as well as all the other tracks that are running this week, which are running uniformly now. So, same rules across the nation, not just at Belmont.

The last two and a half weeks we've collected samples from more than 3,500 covered horses at 22 tracks. Test types include post-race, out of competition, vet's list, TCO2, as well as testing on claimed horses and covered horses that suffered injuries or fatalities. All of the samples being collected are by HIWU trained and certified collection personnel, whether it's employees or contractors through us or under state voluntary agreements. And they're being supported on site by a paperless documentation system, a paperless collection system, through an iPad.

All these samples are being sent to six different laboratories that we've partnered with through negotiations. All six are RMTC-accredited, and they've been announced previously but happy to do that if you have questions.

All these same laboratories, importantly, meet all the same standard performance specifications. So all samples are being tested and analyzed at the same levels for the same substances across the board, doesn't matter what state those samples are coming from.

Our investigations unit is up and running. We have strong partnerships; we have investigative staff, we have partnerships with tracks and associations as well as state racing commissions to utilize the investigative personnel that are nationwide. And we have several anonymous whistleblower platforms that have been up and running since May 22, as well, with a lot of incoming information.

We're also taking on all investigations for HISA as well, so all Racetrack Safety and ADMC Program investigations are managed and the information flows through our team.

As I said before, the protocols that I've described are not just happening here at Belmont, but they are happening uniformly at all tracks, every weekend, every day.

We've inserted intelligence-based testing strategy. So for instance, this weekend, all entrants for the Met Mile and for the Belmont have been out-of-competition tested, as well as numerous other horses racing throughout the weekend, whether it's random or targeted testing. We have a big staff here this week, specifically investigations partnering with NYRA, working closely with the security measures that NYRA puts in place, specifically on the horses running in the Met Mile and the Belmont.

All samples this week will go to the UC Davis lab, that's important to note for everybody. Standard turnaround time, just a reminder, is 10 business days from the time of receipt of those samples at the laboratory. And again, I think it's important to reiterate the uniformity that is now in place across the nation.

Very humbled by the opportunity to work alongside so many professionals. The NYRA team is doing a great job as well as all those nationwide that we're working with. I've worked in the anti-doping space for 13 years and I can tell you that uniformity, efficiency, intelligence-based strategy are definitely the cornerstones of what we're trying to do in this program. We're just getting started, but we're very excited to help level the playing field, hold bad actors accountable, and most importantly, protect the athletes who cannot advocate for themselves.

My team and I look forward to what's ahead for us in the coming months. With that, we're ready to take questions.

REPORTER: How many positives do you have so far, out of 3500, and what kind of information are you getting on the whistleblower platform?

MOSIER: So, we have a very fast and efficient reporting public notice for positive cases. We don't have any reported at the moment yet.

I can walk through what that looks like though to make sure you're very aware of that. So, the program is split up and classifies substances into two buckets: banned substances, controlled medications, right?

If there's a banned substance positive case, after the A sample, the primary sample is analyzed, we receive that, we can do our internal investigation, and once we serve a notice to the covered person, and all other relative parties, there will be a provisional suspension put on that covered person and horse. At that time, the announcement will be made, and made public on our website. So that's for the banned substances.

For controlled medications, in both cases, the covered person always is allowed to have the B sample or the split sample analyzed, but the banned substance is what triggers the provisional suspension. Controlled medications, the covered person can either deny the split sample analysis, at that time we would announce again our website, but if they do want to do B sample or split sample analysis, we will wait until that B sample is confirmed, which is a 15-day business day turnaround and then we would make that public.

REPORTER: And then the other question was on the whistleblower line, what kind of information? You said a lot of information is coming in.

BEN MOSIER: Well, I mean a lot by volume. So we have a lot of people. It's just a brand new system. We partnered with a group called Real Response and the volume has really been great over the last several weeks and people are actually using it, trusting us. But I can't speak to the information coming in.

REPORTER: I wasn't asking for specific trainers or whatever but, does it lean toward any particular subject?

MOSIER: I think it's just a new avenue for people to have a voice, so, yes, it could be information across the board whether that is information on specific trainers, specific horses, or just they're noticing things, so, it's a new avenue.

REPORTER: What are the six labs?

MOSIER: The six labs are UC Davis, Kentucky, Industrial, Ohio, Illinois, and Pennsylvania.

REPORTER: So, did Dr. Maylin's lab apply for that status, is he interested in, are they interested in that status?

MOSIER: The law itself states that all RMTC accredited laboratories are somewhat grandfathered into first conversations with HIWU. And then we went through strong negotiations with all of the laboratories. So we had conversations with all of the nine RMTC accredited labs.

So the remaining three that are part of our program, Florida, New York, and Texas A&M, we still spoke to all them, just through contract negotiations, whether it's pricing, performance specifications, technology, just did not meet an agreement.

REPORTER: Just to make 100% sure, and maybe Jennifer knows, his lab handled last year's Belmont.

MOSIER: That's correct.

REPORTER: Why was the Maddy Lab chosen for these races when clearly it's the farthest away?

MOSIER: So it's our job to distribute based on who has the easiest way to turn around these samples. Basically what I'm saying is the volume at the lab for UC Davis, for this race, they have the ability to take those and throw them into line right away and can turn these around as quickly as possible. So, they're all performing under the same performance specifications. It's just with such a high volume of racing going on outside of Belmont, it makes sense as we have conversations with all these labs to make sure who can take on the volume and who can turn around the samples the quickest and meet those, those requirements, those turnaround times.

REPORTER: Would you say that that lab is currently the go-to lab?

MOSIER: No, not necessarily. I think all six are being used equally based on what their capabilities are and which can be turned around the fastest. They're not receiving as much volume at the moment as other labs because of other racing going on throughout the nation.

REPORTER: Are the split sample labs the six the trainer can choose from?

LAZARUS: Well, they can't choose.

MOSIER: HIWU chooses the split sample laboratory.

REPORTER: So that's a change?

MOSIER: Yeah.

REPORTER: You mentioned a specific focus on the Met Mile and the Belmont this weekend. Next weekend, when there's not a Triple Crown race, do you select other races that have special focus, like the race of the weekend that gets a different focus?

MOSIER: Yeah, I mean, we've had a lot of good discussions with TOBA on what their requirements were before the HIWU implementation, because TOBA always required additional testing, whether it's post-race selections or TCO2 requirements you know, for stakes races for graded stakes races. We've taken that into account, so of course with bigger purse monies and graded stakes races, we have to weigh the importance of those. But it doesn't mean that we're not focusing on the other races as well.

REPORTER: So what does the special focus like for, you specifically singled out the Met Mile and the Belmont. What do those horses have extra testing in? Like out-of-competition?

MOSIER: Yeah, we did some targeted out-of-competition testing on many of the horses. I wanted to make it a point that, you know, for the public to understand that for those particular two biggest races this weekend that every horse was tested out of competition leading up to this weekend, but there was significant other horses tested. So I mean, that's only, what, 17 horses in those two races? We've done over 100 out-of-competition tests leading up to all the races this weekend.

REPORTER: I apologize for stepping in late. If this was covered, I apologize for that also. Which horses do you test? Is it set, 1-2-3, the favorite? And I would ask that as a question for this particular weekend and for just a day-to-day normal race.

MOSIER: Sure. So when we took this on it was very clear that the industry standard was to test at a very minimum at least the winners of every race post-race, right? That there's an integrity to keep up for the betting public to understand that at least the winners are getting tested. We have no reason not to do that. So at a minimum, we're testing winners, and then everything else is classified as stewards specials. So we're still utilizing the stewards in the industry to have the real-time capabilities of selecting horses based on all the specifications you just said. Betting favorite, second place, that horse ran funny, all those things. We work with the stewards, tell them how many specials we would like for them to call throughout the day, and then they can allocate those specials per race.

With the graded stakes race and having worked with TOBA, we may add a few more horses on some of the bigger races.

REPORTER: So you'll specify we'd like 10 today. And they choose, the stewards will choose?

MOSIER: They can choose. HIWU can always also choose. We can radio up to the stewards and say, race three we want this horse specifically, please choose an additional special if you see any reason to.

REPORTER: And you say HIWU calls up; is there a HIWU representative at each track or just on the big days?

MOSIER: Well, the collection personnel I would consider HIWU representatives. They're all trained and certified by HIWU so that's part of the training is making sure the test barn personnel understand what the test plan is every day, which comes from HIWU through the iPad and then they have the ability to radio up to the stewards and communicate that testing plan.

REPORTER: We've seen some states where a positive is found in a post-race test. Either before the split sample or right after the split sample their trainer and their representatives take action to kind of prolong things to get more evidence in or further testing. And it doesn't get announced at all for months and months. What's to prevent that under HISA?

LAZARUS: One thing I think is really important, and it's a point that I try to make just to really frame the issue, is that under the previous state system, there was always in almost every state an incentive to prolong because the status quo is you could keep racing. The difference with us is for a banned substance, you're immediately suspended, so the status quo is you're not racing. There's an incentive to move the case along. I'll let Ben speak to the rest of it. That comes from a standard across sports in general. Like that's how the Olympic sports operate, the equine Olympic sports, that's how human sports operate and I'm sure Ben could speak to that.

So that's really important because the incentive to delay, I think was one of the really big problems with the prior system.

REPORTER: What happens in the case of controlled medication substances? So I think there's a lot of confusion as to there's a provisional suspension automatically for a banned substance, but it seems like it depends on what the controlled medication is as to then whether there's a provisional suspension given right away. So how does that process play out with the controlled?

MOSIER: There's not the opportunity to, as you described, try to delay. So there is no opportunity for the covered person to do that at all. But as I described earlier, we won't publicly announce until either after the split sample analysis comes back and confirms, or that person just denies the split sample analysis. At that point, if they want to appeal, then we go straight into appeal. The appeal process has to be done within 60 days. It has to be finalized within 60 days.

REPORTER: But if they were to appeal you would have to announce that this had occurred?

MOSIER: Yes and depending on the severity of the controlled medication, we could also do a provisional if needed.

LAZARUS: And the other important point is when that 60 days is up, the sanction is implemented even if they appeal to the federal court or the FTC. They don't get to stay the sanction.

REPORTER: In the Medina Spirit case, we had a trainer decide to announce the positive before the racing commissioned did. It seems like there's still that 15 days? Could they do that if they choose?

MOSIER: They can but we have a chance to respond. I mean, we can't stop at that point. You would make it public and respond.

REPORTER: In the case of provisional, if there is a provisional suspension for a controlled medication, in the current system, a trainer can shift the horse to someone else, usually the assistant trainer and that person is the trainer of record. Would that similar process work or is it allowable under your rules?

MOSIER: That's very specific. It depends on how long the suspension is.

MICHELLE PUJALS: It depends upon how long the consequence is. So if it's a banned substance, that's two years, then no. They have to shift it to somebody else, can't be someone related to them. But if it's a controlled medication and the consequence is 30 days or less, then yes they can do that.

REPORTER: The number of tests a day— does that include TCO2?

MOSIER: Of the 3,500 that I announced, you mean?

REPORTER: Well, I guess you said something like the stewards will have 10 choices.

MOSIER: Oh. No, that's for the post-race sampling. But we're also doing TCO2 testing across the nation. It's not daily.

REPORTER: Is it random? How is it decided?

MOSIER: We're using intelligence, if needed. We're also doing random selections if needed, but we're making sure that we're doing it consistently across every track to make sure that there's a deterrence factor, making sure that every covered person understands that it is happening, and it could happen to me.

REPORTER: Do you feel you're adequately staffed to do the training centers across the country? Are you able to properly test those horses out-of-competition?

MOSIER: Sure. Yeah. I mean, we're the ones directing the out-of-competition testing so we'll be able to plan ahead, get the certified staff to be there, as long as they're on covered horses.

REPORTER: So as long as they're covered horses you have access to any place where the horses are stabled?

MOSIER: We can test covered horses anywhere yes.

LAZARUS: The way that it works, just to give you a bit more detail, is that the covered person is notified and they have six hours. They can either say come to us, or we're going to bring the horse to you, but they've got to do it within six hours. So then, they say okay, we don't want you to come here, but we're going to bring the horse to you and will be there in an hour, that's allowed. As long as they produce the horse within six hours.

REPORTER: When you go through this, is the regulating body, let's say the CHRB, are they notified? Not notified? What do they know, if anything?

MOSIER: Regarding results?

REPORTER: Just regarding the whole process, when you do an out-of-competition, when you get positives, if they get results.

MOSIER: So using the CHRB as an example, we have a very strong partnership and what we call a voluntary implementation agreement with the CHRB. So all of the CHRB staff that had been conducting testing throughout the state of California are still doing so and they're still employees or contractors through the CHRB.

We just come in, and we direct the testing. So all the testing now has to be directed by us. We trained and certified all of their staff. We work in close daily partnership with their lead veterinarians and their test barn staff. But at the end of the day, they still remain CHRB employees.

And so yes, the CHRB knows everything that's going on because we have to work with them, schedule with them to make sure there's availability on coordination of out-of-competition testing, or post-race or whatever that testing is.

Through the voluntary agreements, as I've described, we have strong confidentiality agreement through that. And as long as that state falls under voluntary agreement, they are considered an interested party. So they will receive a notice at the same time that the covered person would

receive the notice of a positive finding, which is actually the same time that HISA finds out about positive testing.

REPORTER: Ok so it's sort of like the track vet is also kind of a CHRB employee that really is employed by the track, it's sort of that nexus of organizations?

MOSIER: I wouldn't say that. We're still doing a lot of the same things that have been done with out-of-competition or post-race or TCO2. At the end of the day, what's changed is the way they collect the samples. Now through iPads and paperless systems, and the selections of the horses are coming from us, but they also have the ability to provide us real life intelligence. And so if the veterinarian gets told on the back stretch, you know, we need to target this horse really quickly for an out-of-competition test, that can filter up through us and we've made sure that channels of communication are open. And, you know, of course we're going to approve that test and we need to set up the system to do so, but it's more of a partnership.

REPORTER: In the case of the out-of-competition testing for the Met Mile and the Belmont. Do you have the results back before they're allowed to enter? Or is there a scenario where you'll have the results from — the entry was Tuesday and you'll get the results back between now and post race time? Would you make that public? If a horse scratches out of either race, is there a way to find out if that horse failed the out-of-competition testing or is that confidential?

MOSIER: Well, if the horse did fail an out-of-competition test — and reminder that out-of-competition testing is only for banned substances, so we're not testing for controlled medications — we would implement provisional suspension prior to the race, if we got that result back. The plan is to have all results back prior to the race, but that doesn't mean we can't still collect out-of-competition samples, even today, or whenever leading up to the race. So it's kind of both — horses have been sampled far enough out to make sure we are getting some results back leading up to the weekend.

REPORTER: And so it could be before the race but not necessarily before the entry?

MOSIER: It's not a test for the entry into the race, per se. I think that's how the industry has done it, is making sure they're collecting out-of-competition specifically to have results back before the race. While that's important, it's not something we have to do.

REPORTER: Do you think as a national organization, whistleblowers are more inclined to share their stories then they might with a local organization where for whatever reason, you know if they're in New York all year they might say oh if I bring this up I'm going make the circuit look bad and maybe things will come back on me, and Lisa you're nodding your head.

LAZARUS: Yeah, I'm a really strong believer in that as a general premise. I think the local nature of the patchwork of regulations presented challenges, right. And I think that having a national governing body and certainly HIWU that's really removed from the sport, you know, not involved day to day, not sort of a racing usual— that really provides like the professionalism and the objectivity. And I do think that is going to encourage people to come forward. I mean it's a trust issue, right.

MOSIER: I think that's exactly right. It's a trust issue. And we have to make sure our actions — we follow through with those actions. We respond to these individuals trying to give us information as long as it's good, valid information. And that's just going to build trust within the industry that we're actually acting on this information.

REPORTER: Just a general question: why would these labs be better equipped to find banned substances than the labs that have been utilized in this sport before?

MOSIER: Well we are using six of the nine laboratories.

REPORTER: The bottom line is you're trying to catch cheaters. You've said right you're not trying to catch bute, you're trying to catch cheaters.

LAZARUS: Yeah, I'll give you my opinion from this sort of sixty feet up and then Ben can give you his. Couple of things. One is, in order to be a part of obviously the HIWU program, they had to meet certain specifications. And don't forget, you know, what the labs were testing for was still driven by how much money was being paid for the test, what was being agreed to test for. I feel very confident in HIWU that basically the spectrum of substances that is being tested for is complete. And that we have that and also, Dr. Scollay has done a very good job of making sure that the labs are harmonized, that they are testing at the same levels. And obviously, I think one of the things that we looked at because HISA was also involved in the lab processes, is you know, making sure that the right equipment was there, the professionalism and all of that. So I do think that this subgroup gives us a better chance overall. You might have more to say on that.

When I was at the International Equestrian Federation we always only had five labs — and that was the whole world. And I'm a big believer that the smaller the number of labs and the tighter that group, the better information crosses and the more synergies you get, you know, so when there's 20 labs so people and trainers can pick the B lab that is less likely to find that substance it just gets a little bit messy. And I think making it tighter makes the program stronger.

REPORTER: Yeah I've had concerns expressed to me in the past that people who do collections are often employed in the morning by a trainer. Have you heard that? And is it something you're tolerating at this point?

MOSIER: Yeah, we have conflict of interest policies. It is a reality that we've uncovered in the last year. Just like everybody knows about lack of veterinarians, large animal vets anyways, same goes for those that have experience collecting a urine sample from a 1,500 pound animal. I mean, it's not something you just throw somebody into the barn to do overnight. So we're happy to be utilizing a lot of those individuals that had that experience, but they do have to fill out conflict of interest documentation with us and disclose that to us.

We do allow them if they may work for a trainer in the morning, a specific trainer. If a horse from that trainer comes into the test barn, that person is removed from the test barn during that testing process. So that's kind of how we're handling that, which seems to be the industry standard, but we're still monitoring.

REPORTER: And are they notified of out-of-competition orders very far ahead of time to where they could warn the trainer that this is coming?

MOSIER: Not the specific horses or the trainers. We will schedule, we'll have to schedule based on availability and times. But they won't get the information on who we're testing until the day of the test, sometimes even minutes leading up to it.

REPORTER: You may have said this, I may have just missed it, but I know they're doing out-of-competition testing on all of the Belmont and Met Mile horses, are they doing post-race testing on all of them as well? Or are they only picking certain ones post race?

MOSIER: We won't post-race the entire field, it just comes down to safety issues in the test barn, having that many horses in the test barn, so we'll be targeting selections.

REPORTER: The New York State Gaming Commission used to have a rule in place where any races that were above a million dollars that treatment sheets would be posted to kind of — they were questionable treatment sheets to begin with — but is that process still in effect or is HISA looking to do something like that to give at least a little bit more information to the public?

LAZARUS: So under the law HISA is not allowed to disclose, beyond to the connections and the regulatory veterinarians, the private veterinary records of horses. However, we have informed the New York Gaming Commission they can continue with that practice since they do have the authority to do so it does not conflict with HISA at all. They can certainly do that, but we can't make them available.

REPORTER: Is there any update on when the report on what was going on with Laurel might be made public? Because I know you guys were investigating.

LAZARUS: Yeah, we are and I would expect that in the next month or so, yeah.

REPORTER: I don't know if you have any say in this at all but, as far as Churchill being allowed to run again in their next meet in September. What role if any does HISA play in that and what has to be proven to allow them to race again?

LAZARUS: A significant role, I would say. I mean, a couple things. One is, you know, we're still going through our investigative process which takes into account the veterinary review and report, the necropsies that will be very carefully reviewed, as well as track surface issues. You know, we'll go back to our experts and kind of dig deeper. And we'll be liaising very closely with Churchill Downs to make sure that everyone's satisfied that there's nothing that would prevent any risk by resuming racing. I have to sincerely say they've been incredibly cooperative and motivated to make sure that they can, they can sort of provide that certification. So I don't anticipate it being an issue and I anticipate we'll work closely to kind of reach that point of satisfaction.

REPORTER: So to follow up on that when you recommended to Churchill that they stop racing, or move racing or whatever, was there also a recommendation to continue or not to continue training? And if so, what was the thinking behind that?

LAZARUS: So we didn't weigh into the training issue, we were really looking at racing. And my understanding from Churchill is that — well first of all, if there was a problem with the surface, obviously we would have all said training was not going to happen either. But given that none of our experts were able to identify any real concern with the surface, and the fact that from a logistical standpoint, it was really impossible to relocate so many horses, and obviously from a sort of health and safety standpoint, horses need to be able to train and to move. That was a decision I think that weighed all of the risks and benefits. But that was a Churchill decision.

MINGER: Thank you very much for coming.

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