

Measures Announced After Horse Injuries at Clinton E. Phipps Racetrack

Several horses injured during races prompt safety measures, anti-doping advocacy, and collaboration with stakeholders to protect jockeys and horses at Clinton E. Phipps Racetrack

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ST. THOMAS — Concerns have been raised following incidents involving horse injuries during the December 22, 2024, races at the Clinton E. Phipps Racetrack, as noted in a statement from the St. Thomas/St. John Horse Racing Commission (STT/STJ HRC) and acknowledged by the Department of Sports, Parks, and Recreation (DSPR)?.

The December 22 event, part of the renewed horse racing calendar, saw several horses sustain injuries, with some collapsing on the track during races. Emergency personnel, including ambulance teams, quickly responded to provide assistance to both the horses and their jockeys.

The STT/STJ Horse Racing Commission expressed its deepest sympathies to all affected and pledged to thoroughly investigate the incidents while implementing preventative measures to enhance safety in the future.

DSPR, in a statement issued on Wednesday, confirmed receipt of a formal letter from the STT/STJ HRC on January 12, addressing the incidents and providing an outline of steps being taken to address safety concerns?.

Following consultations with trainers, jockeys, veterinarians, and track personnel, the STT/STJ HRC identified several factors that may have contributed to the incidents. These included pre-existing injuries in horses, their age and health, medication use, and the condition of the racing surface?.

?To address these issues, the Commission announced the following measures:

Racing Surface Evaluation: Experts will thoroughly assess and improve the racing surface. No races will be held at Clinton E. Phipps Racetrack until the evaluation is complete?.

Veterinary Inspections: On race day, horses will undergo comprehensive veterinary examinations. Any horse deemed unfit will be disqualified from competing?.

Safety Procedure Enhancements: Collaborations with safety officers from other U.S. tracks will help refine safety protocols?.

Additionally, the STT/STJ HRC advocated for reinstating anti-doping regulations to enhance oversight and regulate medication usage. The Commission noted that over 85% of the racetrack's testing barn construction is complete, which will support this initiative?.

DSPR reaffirmed its dedication to ensuring safe and competitive racing while maintaining transparency with the public. It commended the STT/STJ HRC's thorough approach to addressing the incidents and pledged to share relevant updates with the media.?

The STT/STJ HRC noted its collaboration with stakeholders, including horse owners, trainers, and jockeys, to foster a sustainable and fair racing environment. Chairman Hugo Hodge, Jr., and Vice-Chairman Dr. Laura Palminteri stressed that the safety and well-being of both human and equine participants remain the top priority?.