

**DONCASTER BLC**  
**TUESDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2026**

**PRESENT:**

Rachel Harwood – Doncaster Racecourse

Mark Ryan – Betting Ring Manager

Steven Price – Bookmaker

Barry Curran – Bookmaker

Chris Johnson – Bookmaker

Richard Johnson – Bookmaker

Daved Johnson – Bookmaker

Jayne Robinson – Bookmaker

**1. Trading Update 2025**

Rachel gave an update form last year. Overall attendances were up on the previous year. The St Leger Saturday was particularly well attended from 2024 with 26,000 people there. The aim is to get 30,000 there this year. The silver ring continues to decline year on year for the Leger meeting. The silver ring bookmakers in the hospitality area reported that business was down quite a bit from the previous year with people not coming out to bet with the on course bookies. There was also a big advertising board blocking racegoer's view.

There has been a growth in under 25 badges, but this could be due to the Invades initiative which Arc have a 50% share in.

Great Yorkshire Chase day is quite disappointing; Rachel stated that they do try to promote that day but without much success.

There were some days that the track got wrong with regard to facilities for racegoers and accepted an error of judgement. It is not always easy to plan for as the bigger crowds come out on the better weather days and last summer was good. There were some very long queues at the bars as people just couldn't get served. On one of the Sundays a juggler on a unicycle was entertaining a long queue for the bar near the parade ring.

The cellar for the bar on the cobbles has been deemed as not safe and therefore the facilities there are compromised by this.

Lack of any security was an issue on Christmas jumper day as there were some crowd behaviour issues which started to feel unsafe.

**2. St Leger 2026**

As this is the 250<sup>th</sup> year of the St Leger the track are heavily promoting the fixture. Tickets were on sale at the 2025 St Leger at a reduced rate. Also 250 organisations have been given 25 tickets for the Saturday for them to use as they wish.

In order to get more people in and achieve the 30,000 target the Tattersalls area will be extended down the track to the end of the stand and Rachel showed where this will extend to. Opening up the lower area will allow the capacity to grow from 9,500 to 14,000.

This prompted a discussion as to which bookmakers will be used in that area and what the bookmaker badge fee will be. A similar situation occurs at Haydock. A few options were discussed one being to leave the silver ring bookmakers as they are and for them to use the lower areas. Would this be contractually correct to let silver ring bookmakers bet in the Tattersalls area? Those racegoers who want to be in the lower area will be able to bring food and up to 4 cans of alcohol, but they will not have access to other parts of the Tatts ring. A few options

The horse walk will remain open shutting only when the horses go across.

The aim is to go big on the Saturday and there will be 2 lots of entertainment one on the far end past the 'cobblestones' area and the other on the lawn.

It was discussed that the Thursday is a particularly disappointing day. Rachel informed that they are trying to get Ladies Day in partnership with Meadowhall Shopping Centre to see if this can boost the day.

The Friday will be the Gents Day again and the Sunday will be one enclosure family day.

There will also be a fast-track ticket for those wanting seating on the lawn. This is a change from last year when people had to pay for seating.

There will be a further meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> July to look at how this will all be configured and where bookmakers will go and finalise plans.

### **3. Other Fixtures**

Bookmakers will be able to bet on the lawn when the crowd is over 10,000. Richard reported that the bookmakers on the lawn keep moving each year and 2025 was not as good for the majority of those on the lawn and favoured the 2 end pitches. This was due to the placement of the 6 and what was available with respect of bars which put a block on the middle pitches.

The summer Saturdays for 2026 have all been confirmed. The Saturdays will include a Drag Act, Chris Moyles, an 80's themed night and cowboy and country night. The Lottery Winners are on and Steve Bracknell DJ set in June and August respectively and the crowd is anticipated to be over 10,000 on those nights.

All Acts will be on the Lawn and if the crowd exceeds 10,000 then bookmakers will be placed on the lawn. This does impact on the Tatts bookmakers on those days as most people will go onto the lawn area early.

There will be discounted tickets for those attending a few Saturdays.

The family days will be the same as last year and the cost will be £25 for 2 adults and 2 children. K pop demon days are on the first family Sunday and ticket sales are 75% up on the corresponding day last year.

With regard to ticket prices Doncaster work on yielding up as 80% of tickets are sold by 4 weeks prior to the date of the fixture and ticket prices will increase nearer to the date.

Silver ring opening days was discussed and Rachel agreed to send a list to Mark Ryan of the days the silver ring will open.

There will be 2 student days, one on Grimthorpe Chase Day and another in May.

Entries for runners has increased and the entries for the Lincoln are up 25% this year.

#### **4. Think U21 Underage**

Neil Pateman BRM went to Doncaster very recently with someone from the Gambling Commission to check that the track was compliant.

Local Authority testing is not a common occurrence on race tracks.

#### **5. A.O.B**

Car Parking, this is raised at most BLC meetings as there appears to be less parking spaces for bookmakers. The car park used by bookmakers is for racecourse critical staff of which there are quite a few. A request was made that there be a ramp exit out of the overflow car park just outside the gates which would make for an easier exit as otherwise it takes a very long time to get off as that car park feeds into a number of lines of traffic.

Drop off facilities are available, on a Saturday this is 2 ½ hours before the first race.

#### **Additional Meeting.**

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> July 12 noon – to discuss the St Leger arrangements.