

Investec Derby Festival 2019
General Manager, Epsom Downs Racecourse

De-brief Report for Conservators

Event Build-up

Good weather in the lead up to the event was greatly appreciated by the team building the Festival, firm ground and no need for additional metal trackway or woodchip made for a good start! The Clerk of the Course could have done with more rain in the forecast but he and the team still managed to deliver a fantastic racing surface!

Traveller Arrival

The caravan site manager arrived with approximately 12 caravans on Thursday 23rd May, a day earlier than planned. However, the site was ready and we were happy that the site could be occupied. No other issues were raised during their stay, our security having a good working relationship with the site manager at all times.

Course Damage

On the evening of Sunday 26th May, a vehicle was involved in an accident on the internal road around Tattenham Corner. It is believed that the driver was driving too fast, losing control of his vehicle and crashing through running rail/crowd barrier leading onto the course. Fortunately, no damage was sustained to either the driver or passenger, or the racecourse itself. However, extensive damage was caused to the running rail and this had to be repaired by third party contractors before the race meeting.

As a result of this incident, a request was made (and approved by Conservators) to close the gate leading up to the top car park at 5pm for the remainder of the week. Should this accident have occurred nearer racing, it would have been very difficult to resolve and would have had an impact on our ability to race.

A request to close this road in the same way for 2020 will be sought through Conservators. This will be done at the same time that permissions are requested for the other items such as temporary fencing, funfair location and road closures etc.

Event

The Festival provided two fantastic days of racing and entertainment culminating in Anapurna, Defoe and Anthony Van Dyck sealing their names in the history books. An unveiling of a Lester Piggott bronze by The Queen was only just topped by having two Queens in the Parade Ring just before the Derby – the other Queen part of a swarm of bees that took fancy to a newly varnished sign!

Event Breakdown

Once again, good dry weather has helped the teams breaking down the event. Our clean-up of the Downs has gone well and I am not aware at this stage of any issues raised by Trainers or local residents. We shall of course continue to check areas for any sign of litter or glass over the coming days and react to any requests that come into us from users of the Downs.

May I take this opportunity to thank Downskeepers and Rangers who assisted throughout the period, their help and support greatly appreciated.

Simon Durrant
June 2019