Popular Betting Site, InterBet.com, Ditches Horse Racing Following Grand National Death

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The graphic footage of several wounded horses racing at Aintree this year has reignited the fierce debate over whether the Grand National should be scrapped altogether.

InterBet.com, a new betting site changing the face of sports gambling, has today made a big statement, announcing that they will not be listing horse racing betting facilities on its popular betting platform. Although priding itself on its all-encompassing sports book, this move further highlights the changing attitudes towards horse racing.

The Grand National 2019

This year's race claimed the life of the Willie Mullins-trained Up For Review. The ten-year-old fell at the first fence in Saturday's showpiece race and it was immediately clear that the horse was in great distress. Up For Review's death came just one day after the racecourse claimed the lives of both Forest Des Aigles and Crucial Role, taking the death toll at horse racing meetings in the UK and Ireland up to 58 for the year.

Horse Racing Up For Review

Following the death of Up For Review, Aintree Racecourse and the British Horse Racing Authority (BHA), have confirmed there will be further scrutiny into horse welfare.

Jockey Club Racecourses North West regional director, Dickon White, explained, "As a sport of animal lovers, we wanted every horse to come home - and sadly that's not been the case with Up For Review. However, while you cannot remove all risk from our sport, we will analyse what happened and leave no stone unturned in doing so."

An RSPCA spokesperson added that it was "deeply saddened and concerned to see the deaths of three horses at Aintree this year."

There is no doubting that horse welfare has improved over the last decade, especially at the famous Grand National meeting. Up For Review's death was the feature race's first since 2012 which is mainly due to the course modifications made in 2011. Several fences were reduced in size almost a decade ago but this year's fatality has caused a renewed and widespread backlash against the self-proclaimed 'world's greatest steeplechase.'

Horse racing and animal cruelty

The nation has long been divided on the subject of horse racing. Where many take the stance that sport is sport and the horses are well looked after, many animal rights activists stick with the opinion that watching and betting on horses is a cruel and archaic pastime.

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Whilst having a flutter on the horses is something that we as the British public have been doing for centuries, the last decade has seen many hone in on the subject of horse racing and animal safety, criticising big meets for their promotion of long races that feature high fences.

Social media has certainly aided the calls for a ban on national hunt racing with footage of both casualties and fatalities shared openly across platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The graphic footage of Up For Review's first-fence fall has rocked the horse racing world.

InterBet.com

Leon Hughes, Founder and Managing Director of InterBet.com, justifies the brand's decision to not take bets on horse racing.

"While the betting industry is centred on creating fun, adrenaline-pinching betting products and services, as businesses we have a moral obligation to set examples and pass comment on issues such as animal cruelty.

Having been a racehorse owner myself, I know that horses are cared for by their respective owners. However, the number of deaths associated with the sport and the social backlash experienced, I have decided to take action and not make horse racing betting part of our sports book at this time" says Hughes.

Putting the fun back in betting

In the past few years the gambling industry has come in for a lot of scrutiny from several quarters. From issues of match fixing, a rise in problem gambling attributed to the use of fixed odds betting terminals to animal welfare concerns within horse racing, it seems the one thing missing from this great pastime is what made it so popular in the first place; fun.

There are few better feelings than 'beating the bookies', but fun has to stay at the forefront of every bet placed. Gambling should not be seen as a way of making money and should certainly not cause death or injury to its participants.

InterBet are keen to promote responsible gambling and that doesn't stop with preventing addiction but with raising awareness regarding animal welfare, that is why the decision to withdraw from the horse racing scene has been made.

InterBet see football betting as a great alternative to horse racing, an opinion that has seen the popular bookmaker agree various sponsorship deals with professional football clubs across the UK. Their ongoing partnerships with Exeter City, Oldham Athletic and St Mirren have proved successful.

However, it is their sponsorship of League Two's Newport County that has provided the most excitement. Sharing Newport County's journey to the fifth round of the FA Cup undoubtedly helped promote the InterBet brand but a succession of giant-killings also proved rather lucrative to its customers.

With the British horse racing scene coming under increasing pressure over ongoing animal welfare concerns, football in the UK has no such issues. As well as the fun and excitement that football betting offers, a football club can also become a focal point of a local community. It is with this in mind that InterBet will continue to endorse the sport as one with which it’s proud to be associated.

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