

NEWS



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Five-Day Week Spurs Positives for Del Mar

“The key to most everything we did this summer was the change to the five-day race week. It was overwhelmingly popular and absolutely successful.” – Joe Harper, president and general manager, Del Mar Thoroughbred Club

Del Mar’s 70th racing season came to a close Wednesday and – despite generally hard economic times nationally and a tough go in the racing industry in particular – the seaside track just north of San Diego had some good news to report.

On-track daily average attendance and handle for the seven-week session ran ahead of last year’s numbers with all signs pointing to the track’s shortened five-day race week as the triggering element for much of the enhancement.

When the final turnstile had been spun, Del Mar could boast of an average daily attendance of 17,181, an increase of 7.4% over last year’s daily tally of 16,002. The 2009 final average daily attendance stands as the track’s best gate count since pre-ITW days in California – all the way back to 1987’s daily average of 19,685 to be exact.

In addition, figures out of the mutuels’ office show that on-track handle checked in with an average number of \$2,292,284 per day, a rise of 5.8% over the 2008 daily average of \$2,167,028.

Well prior to the start of the 2009 session, Del Mar petitioned for – and was granted by the California Horse Racing Board – a reduction in its number of racing days from a long-standard 43 days presented six-days-per-week, to 37 racing cards run over five days each week between Wednesday and Sunday. The track’s reasoning in this regard was based on an ongoing shortage of racing stock, the economy both nationally and in California, as well as a direct-result plan to alter a racing industry that had diluted itself and its product to unprecedented low levels.

It was a classic attempt to make less be more — and it appears to have worked exceedingly well.

“When we went all out for our dates change,” noted Del Mar’s long-time leader Harper, “we were reacting to economic circumstances and trying to put some energy back into this wonderful sport of ours. For too long now the idea has been that you can never have enough, a philosophy that, given the reality of the times, no longer holds true.

“The key to most everything we did this summer was the change to the five-day week. It was overwhelmingly popular and absolutely successful. From our racing fans, to our horsemen,

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to our employees, it has been win, win, win. We offered a better show this summer in so many ways and the across-the-board response to it has been gratifying.”

The track also showed growth through its Advanced Deposit Wagering (ADW) platforms, with several new providers on board for the first time, including its own DelMarBets.com, a unique arrangement that has Del Mar sharing profits with its horsemen in the form of added purse money. In-state average daily ADW handle was up over 13%, while average daily out-of-state was even better at a growth of over 22%.

In regard to purses, final numbers were still to being calculated, but it appears likely that the track will show an increase in average daily purses of nearly 6%, a fact directly linked to its shift to five-day racing. Last year Del Mar’s purses were \$554,403 per day.

Further on the positive front, Del Mar could brag of turning its Opening Day extravaganza this year into an all-time through-the-gate record when a party-hearty crew of 44,907 kicked off the season on July 22 in rousing fashion. Additionally, its new “Free & Easy Wednesday” promotion, which offered free admissions and seats along with half-priced food and beverage, met with an enthusiastic response from racing fans who signed on readily for the track’s Diamond Club cards to access the discounts. More than 20,000 signed up for the program on Wednesdays and the daily average attendance those afternoons jumped from 10,790 to 12,732, a boost of 18%.

“In the face of challenging economic headwinds, we were very pleased with the growth in average daily on-track and ADW wagering,” said DMTC’s senior vice president and chief financial officer Mike Ernst. “These growth areas helped offset wagering declines in off-track simulcast handle, which is down sharply throughout the country.”

The track’s overall daily average handle – when all sources are considered – came in at \$13,040,512, which is an increase of 0.3% from last year’s final daily average of \$13,005,906. Del Mar’s preference in its new five-day racing arrangement is to measure all numbers on a daily average basis, with the belief that this standard is a more consistent measure of actual performance. But even in the case of last year’s six racing Monday’s being eliminated from the equation and a 37-day-vs.-37-day table being drawn up, the track only showed a 1% decrease in daily average handle on-track from \$2,316,577 in 2008 to \$2,292,284 in 2009. Under the 37-vs. 37 scenario its attendance was down a tad also at 0.4% from a 2008 total of 638,470 to 635,679.

Total handle for the 37 days came in at \$482,498,960, as opposed to \$559,253,943 for 43 days the previous year. That was a decline of 13.7%, understandable given the six fewer Monday racing cards.

ATTENDANCE – 37 DAYS – 2009

On-Track

Total attendance (37 days)	635,679
Daily average	17,181
Total attendance, 2008 (43 days)	688,097
Daily average, 2008	16,002

On-Track Average Comparison vs. 2008 – **Increase of 7.4%**

Off-Track

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Total attendance (37 days)	327,488
Daily average	8,851
Total attendance, 2008 (43 days)	371,000
Daily average, 2008	8,628

Off-Track Average Comparison vs. 2008 – **Increase of 2.6%**

PARI-MUTUEL HANDLE – 37 DAYS – 2009

On-Track (includes wagering on Northern California races)

Total pari-mutuel handle (37 days)	\$84,814,523
Daily average	\$2,292,284
Total pari-mutuel handle, 2008 (43 days)	\$93,182,206
Daily average	\$2,167,028

On-Track Average Comparison vs. 2008 – **Increase of 5.8%**

Off-Track in California (includes Northern California and Advance Deposit Wagering)

Total handle (37 days) (So. Calif. ADW \$48,626,337).....	\$179,133,662
Daily average (So. Calif. ADW \$1,314,225, plus 13.1%)	\$4,841,450
Total handle, 2008 (43 days) (So. Calif. ADW \$49,976,297)...	\$198,712,403
Daily average (So. Calif. ADW \$1,162,239)	\$4,621,219

Off-Track Average Comparison vs. 2008 – **Increase of 4.8%**

Out-of-State Commingled (Includes ADW)

Total pari-mutuel handle(37 days) (ADW \$27,090,845).....	\$204,363,877
Daily average (ADW \$732,185, plus 22.2%)	\$5,523,348
Total pari-mutuel handle, 2008(43 days) (ADW \$25,767,584)...	\$250,033,597
Daily average (ADW \$599,246).....	\$5,814,735

Out-of-State Commingled Average Comparison vs. 2008 – **Decrease of 5.0%**

Uncommingled 2009 (estimated)

Total handle (37 days).....	\$14,186,898
Daily average	\$383,430
Total handle, 2008 (43 days).....	\$17,325,737
Daily average.	\$402,924

Uncommingled (estimated) Average Comparison vs. 2008 – **Decrease of 4.8%**

Grand Total – All Sources

Total pari-mutuel handle (37 days)	\$482,498,960
Daily average	\$13,040,512
Total pari-mutuel handle, 2008 (43 days)	\$559,253,943
Daily average, 2008	\$13,005,906

All Sources Average Comparison vs. 2008 – **Increase of 0.3%**

HANDLE AND ATTENDANCE HIGHLIGHTS

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Handle Highlights 2009

Highest single-day handle..... \$20,247,243, Sunday, 9-6
Highest single-day handle on-track\$4,111,250, Sunday, 9-6
Highest single-day handle off-track.....\$7,117,967, Sunday, 9-6
Highest single-day handle out-of-state \$9,018,025, Sunday, 9-6
Highest single-day ADW handle..... \$3,431,009, Sunday, 9-6

Attendance Highlights 2009

Highest single day (combined) 56,599 Sunday, 9-6
Highest weekday (combined)51,705, Wednesday, 7-22
Highest single-day on-track 44,907 Wednesday7-22
Highest single-day off-track..... 14,050, Sunday, 9-6

TIME RECORDS – POLYTRACK

5 ½ FurlongsSidney’s Candy (2) 118 Aug. 22, 2009 1:02.71
1 1/8 Miles Yodelen Dan (6) 122 Aug. 16, 2009 1:50.75

HIGHEST PAYOFFS

\$2 Win \$100.20 Emba U.T.K. Race 6 Aug. 21
\$2 Daily Double \$1,351.40 (4-6) Races 9-10 Sept. 6
\$1 Exacta..... \$410.80 (9-10) Race 6 Aug. 21
\$2 Quinella..... \$393.80 (2-10) Race 7 Aug. 16
\$2 Pick Six \$729,292.20 (6 of 6) 1 Ticket, Sept. 2
\$1 Pick Four.....\$42,822.70 (8-1-1-9) Race 9, July 29
\$1 Pick Three \$14,053.30 (8-1-1) Race 8, July 29
\$1 Trifecta \$3,670.70 (6-12-11) Race 9, Aug. 5
\$1 Superfecta\$50,769.20 (1-2-6-9) Race 6, Aug. 15
\$1 Super High Five \$63,097.20 (10-13-8-1-2) Race 10, Aug. 16
\$1 Place Pick All \$28,318.90 (10 of 10), Race 10, Aug. 9

PURSE DISTRIBUTION

Purse Distribution (37 days)\$21,665,095
Daily Average.....\$585,543
(Includes nomination, starting and entry fees and owners’ and breeders’ awards)

CLAIMS

There were 158 claims for \$3,669,000

Winning Favorites Report

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Del Mar Thoroughbred Club End-of-Season Release

(Current Through Wednesday, September 9, 2009 Inclusive)

Winning favorites – 103 out of 344 – 29.94%

Winning favorites on Polytrack – 79 out of 258 – 30.62%

Winning favorites on turf – 24 out of 86 – 27.91%

Winning odds-on favorites – 27 out of 48 – 56.25%

In-the-Money favorites – 210 out of 344 – 61.05%

In-the-Money odds-on favorites – 39 out of 48 – 81.25%

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Sadler Repeats As Trainer Champ; Rosario Run-Away Rider Winner

It was nothing less than a cakewalk for defending trainer titlist John Sadler, who took command on opening day with three wins and never trailed, and up-and-coming riding star Joel Rosario as they easily won the training and riding titles for the 2009 season.

Sadler saddled 31 winners, equaling his 2008 total, and Rosario, who was in a tight battle with Tyler Baze much of the meet, rode to the winner's circle 55 times

Jockey Standings

(Through Wednesday, September 9, 2009 Inclusive)

Jockey	Mts	1st	2nd	3rd	Win%	Money Won
Joel Rosario	266	55	42	40	21%	\$2,792,382
Tyler Baze	187	32	25	19	17%	\$1,855,424
Garrett Gomez	170	31	27	25	18%	\$1,961,656
Joseph Talamo	240	30	34	28	13%	\$1,521,711
Victor Espinoza	190	27	30	22	14%	\$1,733,378
Christian Santiago Reyes	204	24	32	27	12%	\$933,886
Alex Solis	134	21	19	22	16%	\$1,514,011
Alonso Quinonez	146	17	19	17	12%	\$632,442
Mike Smith	103	15	14	12	15%	\$1,547,961
Michael Baze	141	12	22	15	9%	\$930,290

Trainer Standings

(Current Through Wednesday, September 9, 2009 Inclusive)

Trainer	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Win%	Money Won
John W. Sadler	126	31	14	19	25%	\$1,210,387
Bob Baffert	86	16	12	11	19%	\$2,009,713
Doug F. O'Neill	133	14	14	15	11%	\$822,977
Mike R. Mitchell	83	14	11	15	17%	\$534,044
Jeff Mullins	57	13	5	5	23%	\$489,800
Jerry Hollendorfer	60	12	8	8	20%	\$860,838
Peter Miller	58	10	8	6	17%	\$332,032
Barry Abrams	78	9	13	11	12%	\$712,941
Richard E. Mandella	41	9	4	6	22%	\$538,769
Robert B. Hess, Jr.	44	8	7	6	18%	\$273,740

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Zetcher Wins Owner Money Title; Jay Em Ess Stable Tops Overall Owner

Owner Arnold Zetcher captured the earnings title among owners with \$693,640, buoyed by the \$600,000 winner's share in the \$1-million Pacific Classic, won by his Richard's Kid. Designated as top winning owner based on best overall record, including seconds, is Jay Em Ess Stable with five wins, three seconds and two thirds.

Here are the meet's complete standings:

Owner Standings						
(July 22 Through September 09)						
Owner	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Win%	\$%
Jay Em Ess Stable	17	5	3	2	29	59
Ike & Dawn Thrash	17	5	2	1	29	47
Southern Equine Stable LLC	14	5	2	0	36	50
George Krikorian	18	5	0	1	28	33
La Canada Stables LLC	46	4	7	6	9	37
Barber & Barber	27	4	4	4	15	44
E. W. & Judy Johnston	14	4	1	1	29	43
Mr. & Mrs. Larry D. Williams	12	4	1	1	33	50
Hollendorfer or Todaro	23	4	0	5	17	39
Desert Sun Stables	9	4	0	0	44	44

Leading Owners by Money Won (July 22 Through September 09)

Arnold Zetcher LLC	\$693,640
Zayat Stables LLC	\$457,988
Southern Equine Stable LLC	\$375,000
Jay Em Ess Stable	\$338,700
Pegram or Watson or Weitman.....	\$304,460
L-Bo Racing or Pyle	\$264,600
Hollendorfer or Team Green or Todaro	\$253,536
J. Paul Reddam.....	\$231,220
Ike & Dawn Thrash.....	\$221,697
Charles E. Fipke.....	\$219,000

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Zensational Wraps Up Three Division Titles

It was a three-division sweep for the super speedy Zensational in the annual media poll to crown the season's champions conducted by Del Mar Thoroughbred Club. Zensational, trained by new Hall of Famer Bob Baffert, was a unanimous choice as top sprinter of the meet and runaway choice as Horse of the Meet and top 3-year-old.

Zensational captured the Bing Crosby and Pat O'Brien sprint stakes, both Grade I events. Those dominating victories made the 3-year-old son of Unbridled's Song a runaway winner in all three categories.

The Z-factor triumphed on another front, also, as the undefeated Zenyatta repeated as top older filly or mare. Her 2009 reprise of her 2008 victory in the Grade I Clement L. Hirsch Stakes was the key to her unanimous choice.

Top older horse honors went to the upset winner of the Pacific Classic, Richard's Kid, owned by Arnold Zetche and trained by Baffert. It was Richard's Kid's third start of the meet. He was beaten a nose in his previous start at the seashore, the Cougar II Handicap.

In one of the closest votes in the media poll, Spring House, the repeat winner of the Grade II Del Mar Handicap, ruled as the winner in the top grass horse category. Close to Spring House were Global Hunter, who won the Grade I Eddie Read Stakes, and Magical Fantasy, winner of the Grade I John C. Mabee Stakes.

In another tight vote, Internallyflawless, winner of the Grade I Del Mar Oaks, edged out Carlsbad, winner of the Grade III Rancho Bernardo Handicap, for top 3-year-old filly honors.

Rating unanimous support, also, were the winners of Del Mar's major races for 2-year-olds, the filly Mi Sueno, who won the Sorrento Stakes prior to the Grade I Darley Debutante and Lookin At Lucky, winner of both the Best Pal Stakes and the Grade I Del Mar Futurity.

Horse of the Meet	Zensational
Top older horse	Richard's Kid
Top older filly or mare	Zenyatta
Top sprinter	Zensational
Top grass horse	Spring House
Top 3-year-old filly	Internallyflawless
Top 3-year-old	Zensational
Top 2-year-old filly	Mi Sueno
Top 2-year-old	Lookin At Lucky