

## **GLORIOUS GOODWOOD – SPRC STATEMENT**

The SPRC is aware of four separate observations relating to our work that were made during the course of the Glorious Goodwood Festival. We are keen to address them all. They are:

- 1) A claim Land Force, the winner of the Richmond Stakes (Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> August), was returned at an unfairly and inaccurately short SP
- 2) A claim that Boy in the Bar, which ran in the Qatar Stewards Stakes (Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> August), was returned at an unfairly and inaccurately short SP
- 3) A claim that the Tattersalls Rule 4 deduction applied following the withdrawal of Walton Street from the Summer Handicap (Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> August) was unfairly high,
- 4) A claim that the Tattersalls Rule 4 deduction applied following the withdrawal of Fire Brigade from the Golden Mile Handicap (Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> August) was unfairly high, and

To address these points in turn:

- 1) It has been claimed that the starting price for Land Force was inaccurately and unfairly reported. A broadcaster reporting on ITV said:

*“On the off, there was plenty of 3/1 in the ring, you could back it at 11/4 no problem at all, I could only see one board going 5/2.....the SP is a disgrace at 5/2”*

The current system for returning the official SP electronically connects a sample of racecourse bookmakers to a live price monitoring system, where each change to each sampled bookmaker’s price updates the system automatically. The system is designed to report the prevailing price available for each horse in the betting ring.

The system records all price changes, which are sent to various media and betting outlets in the build up to each race. When the race begins, the on-course SP validator immediately closes the market and the system generates the final SP based on the prices being displayed on bookmakers’ boards when the race began.

Importantly, the SP for every horse is determined as the race begins so it cannot be said to be influenced by the result.

Unless there was a catastrophic error, it should not have been possible for the situation that was described on television to have occurred.

The SPRC has reviewed the records from the afternoon in question and is satisfied that the on-course betting show of Land Force moved on a number of occasions. According to the records held within the SP validation system, odds of 3/1 were freely available from 14:55:41 until 14:57:46, when the majority price shortened to 11/4. Finally, the most prevalent price became 5/2 at 15:00:10 and it remained that way for 47 seconds until the race went off at 15:00:57.

<b>2nd August 2018 - Goodwood 15:00</b>	
<b>No. 4 Land Force - SP: 5/2</b>	
<b>Price</b>	<b>Timestamp</b>
11/4	14:44:59
3/1	14:51:24
11/4	14:55:14
3/1	14:55:41
11/4	14:57:46
5/2	15:00:10
<b>Race Off:</b>	<b>15:00:57</b>

The SPRC has viewed a snapshot of the SP Validator’s system at the time the market was closed. This timestamped image shows the names of sampled leading on-course bookmakers and the prices they were displaying on each horse when the race began. On that image, no bookmaker was offering 3/1 and indeed two had shortened Land Force’s price further to 9/4.

1	Charming Kid	20	25	20	18	22	16	25	20	25	22	16	20	22	20	20	20	
2	Clad Reflection	66	66	66	50	66	66	66	66	80	80	50	66	66	50	66	33	50
3	Kingfish	6	6	7	6	7	6	11/2	7	15/2	15/2	11/2	6	13/2	6	11/2	6	11/2
4	Land Force	5/2	5/2	5/2	5/2	5/2	5/2	5/2	5/2	9/4	5/2	9/4	5/2	5/2	5/2	11/4	5/2	
5	Mark's Diamond	9/2	9/2	9/2	9/2	9/2	5	9/2	9/2	9/2	9/2	9/2	9/2	9/2	9/2	9/2	9/2	9/2
6	Neverland Rock	5	6	5	4	5	9/2	9/2	5	11/2	11/2	5	5	4	5	5	9/2	9/2
7	Sabin	13/2	6	13/2	6	6	13/2	13/2	13/2	13/2	6	6	13/2	13/2	13/2	6	13/2	6

The SPRC further understands that the busiest betting exchange recorded a final price of 2.77/1. So called exchange ‘SPs’ do not allow for the each way-betting element that it built into the vast majority of official Starting Prices, and are therefore almost always ‘longer’ than the SP. It seems highly unlikely that a horse with an exchange ‘SP’ of 2.77/1 would have been readily available in the ring at 3/1 at the off, as was reported on ITV.

We welcome the interest in matters such as this and the underlying desire to protect the fairness of SP betting for off-course punters. It is possible perhaps that the broadcaster had last observed the prices on offer only two minutes before the ‘off’ when a very different range of prices was available, but based on the evidence available the SPRC is satisfied that 5/2 was the correctly recorded starting price for Land Force in the 2018 Richmond Stakes.

- 2) An on-course bookmaker posted the following message on Twitter:

*“The BENT SPs continue to roll in from Goodwood. 7/1 Boy in the Bar when 8/1 freely offered in the ring, GAMBLING COMMISSION PLEASE WAKE UP”.*

We must stress that it is the SPRC and not the Gambling Commission which is responsible for monitoring whether an accurate SP has been returned. We can also confirm that Boy in the Bar returned at a starting price of 8/1.

- 3) &
- 4) Two complaints were made during ITV's coverage of Glorious Goodwood that the recorded live show price of horses at the point of withdrawal differed from those readily available in the betting ring. In the case of Walton Street, the broadcaster in question reported that he "*did not see any board offering 3/1*". In the case of Fire Brigade, the complainant wrote in The Sun "*most boards were offering 16/1, one was 25/1. Possibly one at 14/1.*"

The remit of the SPRC is to monitor the integrity of the Starting Price. Strictly speaking, issues relating to Tattersalls Rule 4 deductions announced on-course would not fall within that remit, but as the equipment and personnel that provides the SP is also used to create and disseminate pre-race betting shows, the SPRC inevitably has an interest in this.

The SPRC has reviewed the basis on which the official Tattersalls Rule 4 (c) deduction was announced. Using similar methods to those detailed above, the evidence shows no doubt that at the time Walton Street was withdrawn from the Stewards Stakes, the prevalent price in the betting ring on qualifying, sampled, bookmakers' boards was 3/1. There were boards showing 7/2 and 10/3 within the sample, but there was also a board showing 11/4.

In the case of Fire Brigade's race, the Golden Mile, the SPRC notes that the live shows and SPs were drawn from a smaller sample of bookmakers and acknowledges that smaller samples of bookmakers in handicaps with 16 runners or more (21 were declared and 17 ran) can sometimes result in a wider spread of prices from sampled bookmakers.

Tattersalls Rule 3 sets out the place terms that should be used to settle bets on races with different field sizes. The SPRC refers to these as the 'customary place terms'. The SPRC recognises that the vast majority of off-course bookmakers use Tattersalls Rule 3 as the default basis for settling bets on British horse racing. As such, when the SP (and pre-race live betting shows) is being calculated, the SP validator will always prioritise bookmakers who are betting to the customary each way terms which conform to those set out in Tattersalls Rule 3.

Logically, it would be more likely that bookmakers who chose to bet 'win only' or whose each way terms were less generous would be likely to offer odds which were fractionally more generous. This may be the reason why sometimes a price may appear to be more generous in overview across the betting ring than it is returned as a Starting Price. We must stress that we consider it fair and sensible that bookmakers betting on an each way basis to customary settlement fractions will be prioritised when determining the SPs at which off-course bets – which use the same fractions and number of places – will be settled.

We recognise that the greater the variety in race types and field sizes, the greater variety of approaches to betting will be on offer in the betting ring. Large-field handicaps will see many on-course bookmakers choose to operate with the less generous, non-customary each way terms of 1/5, 1234, while some uncompetitive stakes races and smaller field handicaps will see more boards trading on a 'win only' basis. This may be the reason why more queries and concerns about SPs are likely to arise during meetings such as Glorious Goodwood, than at a meeting such as the Shergar Cup at Ascot on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> August, say, where all races ran as handicaps with a uniform 10 runners and no SP 'controversies' were reported.

With specific reference to point 3), we are also aware that prior to the official announcement of Walton Street's withdrawal, it had been observed on ITV Racing that Walton Street had gone to post seemingly without wearing his declared cheekpieces. The commentator advised viewers that if this was the case the horse would need to be withdrawn from the race, but it appears that the official withdrawal of the horse was not confirmed until several minutes later.

The role of the SP Validator in the declaration of an appropriate Rule 4 deduction is to confirm the price of the withdrawn horse at the time the horse is officially withdrawn.

The SPRC are aware that on some occasions in the past, allegations have been made that a particular horse's price was intentionally shortened with a view to permitting a larger Rule 4 deduction on bets placed prior to the withdrawal.

The SPRC has no position on these allegations, although we note that in the case of Walton Street the horse had been a popular and well-supported favourite in the build up to the race and in early betting moves before the horse's equipment error came to light.

Some will be aware that the Gambling Commission recently completed an investigation into allegations that an off-course bookmaker intentionally shortened the price of an anticipated non-runner for the purpose speculated above. The Gambling Commission is the correct agency to investigate allegations of this nature. The SPRC is not responsible for scrutinising the decisions of individual bookmakers to shorten or lengthen the price of any horse.