



PRESS RELEASE

Tuesday 8th September 2020

NEW 'JOCKEY MATTERS' FILM RELEASED AS PJA ANNOUNCES OFFICIAL PARTNERSHIP WITH SPORTING CHANCE

A new 'Jockey Matters' film focusing on Substance Abuse & Support has been released today featuring powerful, personal testimonies from Flat jockeys Kieran Shoemark and Ray Dawson.

Produced by JETS and the PJA, the launch of the film coincides with the announcement by the PJA of a formal partnership with Sporting Chance as the official provider of mental and emotional wellbeing support services to jockeys.

In the film, both Kieran Shoemark and Ray Dawson speak about the difficult journeys they have been on from addiction to recovery, highlighting some of the key issues faced by jockeys and encouraging others to access the significant amount of support available to jockeys.

The film also features Paul Struthers, Chief Executive of the PJA and Alex Mills, Head of Education at Sporting Chance, who explain what support is available to jockeys who may be struggling with substance abuse and the services that jockeys can use to help them in their recovery.

JETS Manager Lisa Delany said:

“Substance abuse is unfortunately an issue that does affect some jockeys so this film is an important reminder of the services that are available and we are very grateful to Kieran and Ray for talking so honestly and bravely about their experiences in this area. We hope that this film will give confidence to others who may be experiencing difficulties to reach out and use the excellent support services that are in place to get jockeys back on track.”

Expanding on the partnership with Sporting Chance, Paul Struthers said:

“We have been working successfully with Sporting Chance for some time now and have been hugely impressed by them as, more importantly, have our members that they have worked with. There is a strong link between poor mental wellbeing and substance abuse so we are delighted that we can now offer via Sporting Chance a holistic support package to jockeys who are experiencing any form of issue in relation to their mental wellbeing, whether or not that is linked to substance abuse or misuse.

“Kieran and Ray are role models in how they've turned their lives around and are both a credit to themselves and to Sporting Chance. There is no shame in experiencing any form of struggle or asking for help and we are not here to judge anyone, simply to help them reach a better place.”

Speaking in the film, Ray Dawson who used the PJA and Sporting Chance to aid his recovery said:

“The PJA were a big support and getting in contact with Sporting Chance was a massive step in my recovery. I trusted them and knew they had a lot of experience helping professional athletes so I felt I was in safe hands.”

Tony Adams, founder of Sporting Chance, said:

“We are delighted to be working with the PJA. The support they offer their members is excellent and we are pleased to be part of their package of care. Horseracing is one of the most physically and emotionally demanding sports we have worked with and jockeys are amazing athletes facing a unique set of challenges. Sporting Chance will provide a confidential, professional and safe place for jockeys to get support and find solutions for any emotional or mental health concerns they might have.”

Colin Bland, CEO of Sporting Chance, said:

“Having had a close working relationship with horseracing for some time now, I am so pleased that we have a more formal arrangement in place with the PJA, with the funding available to continue the great work that we’ve been doing together. You only have to watch the brilliant film the PJA and JETS have put out today (Jockey Matters – Substance Abuse) to see the impact our relationship is having on the sport. Our mission is that when any sportsperson has the courage to reach out for support with an emotional or mental health issue, that there must be somewhere safe for them to go. Sporting Chance can be that place.”

The Jockey Matters film is supported by the Tom Maynard Trust and, along with other films in the series, will be used as part of the wider Jockey Training & Development Programme educating jockeys on a number of different areas which may affect them during their careers. The Jockey Matters films can be viewed online at www.jets-uk.org/jockeymatters where jockeys can also find contacts for the wide range of support that is available to them.

Funding for the PJA’s mental wellbeing support, including Sporting Chance, is provided by Great British Racing as part of the Jockeys Championships, the Racing Foundation and the PJA’s own reserves.

Rod Street, Chief Executive of Great British Racing, said: “We are proud to continue to make this annual contribution to the PJA’s mental wellbeing support as part of our work on the Jockeys’ Championships. Mental health issues have never been more pressing and we hope that the services provided through this partnership allows anyone in the weighing room that may need it, to get the help and support that they need.”

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For more information on the ‘Jockey Matters’ series please contact Kate Struthers (kate@jets-uk.org).

For more information on the PJA’s mental wellbeing support, please contact Paul Struthers on 07966 590105 or via ps@thepja.co.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The ‘Jockey Matters’ films focus on various aspects of jockey development and key welfare issues with contributions from jockeys and representatives from the different organisations which provide support to today’s jockeys.
2. The ‘Jockeys Matters’ project is produced by JETS in partnership with the PJA.
3. As well as working with Sporting Chance, the PJA also provides free access to Performance Mindset Specialist Aodhagan Conlon and is in the process of expanding its mental wellbeing provision having recently undertaken an independent review. More information about services provided can be found on the Healthy Mind section of the PJA website www.thepja.co.uk

4. Inspired by his own emotional and mental health issues, Sporting Chance was founded by former Arsenal and England football captain Tony Adams, MBE in the year 2000. Today Sporting Chance is the largest provider of mental health services working exclusively with professional and elite sports participants in the country, providing treatment and education across several sports. The charity helps over a thousand athletes a year access talking therapies for all forms of mental health and emotional issues. Sporting Chance runs the only residential clinic in the world for addictive disorders working with this unique group and delivers education seminars to athletes across all the sports it supports.
5. The Tom Maynard Trust was set up to help the development of aspiring disadvantaged sportspeople who require support with different aspects of their career development, including bursaries, help with training and education, financial support for overseas placements and assistance with kit and equipment. Its work now includes support for education, development and awareness programmes across a number of professional sports and, previously, the running of an annual Tom Maynard Academy in Spain.” More information at www.tommaynardtrust.com