

Wednesday 6th March 2024

PRESS RELEASE

PJA STATEMENT ON SALIVA & SWEAT TEST PILOT

Yesterday evening, jockey Kieran O'Neill disclosed that he had returned two non-negative saliva swabs and a negative instant urine sample before racing at Southwell. He was stood down from his rides but will free to ride this evening having provided a negative saliva test this afternoon at Kempton Park.

In response to this and the [BHA's statement](#) issued earlier today, Paul Struthers, PJA Chief Executive, said:

“We have been discussing with the BHA a pilot of trialling a new saliva and sweat testing kit since January, following the two previous trials of different testing kits. However, no dates for the pilot had been agreed and we were told what the protocol would be in the event of a non-negative test, which is very different to agreeing it.

“Issues that arose during the previous two pilot schemes meant that the PJA and its members had legitimate concerns about the testing kits and the process. At our last meeting with the BHA on Friday 23rd February, we stressed these concerns and explained how important communications would be in advance of any pilot. What was agreed at that meeting was that the BHA would draft some initial communications materials which would be shared with the PJA for further comment. This never happened and we were therefore unaware until last night that the pilot had even commenced.

“Following events of last night, this morning we wrote to the BHA requesting an immediate suspension of the pilot scheme. The BHA has subsequently confirmed that no further testing with the swab & saliva kits will take place until the situation with Kieran O'Neill has been resolved and understood. This is a sensible decision in the best interests of fair regulation, a decision we obviously support and welcome. The rest of the testing regime will continue as normal.”

ENDS