

EMHF

European & Mediterranean
Horseracing Federation



FELLOWSHIP OBSERVER COMPETITION WINNING ENTRY

“What should racing administrators in the European and Mediterranean region do to encourage greater participation in horseracing among young adults and, in particular, among students?”

By Ciara Dineen

I think the racing community has become smaller in recent years through no fault of its own but now it is time to change that. In my opinion horseracing is perceived as elite and expensive by young adults and students, so I would like to outline how getting involved doesn't have to be any of these.

I, myself, am a student studying equine business at Maynooth University and a member of the equestrian club. I have been immersed in racing from a young age, with a father who was a jockey and a then a small trainer and now I work in a local yard. I believe other young adults and students should get to experience the same thrill that young people like me experience.

Student race days around Ireland have proven to be a notable success with the majority of them selling out. At these events in the future I would like to give students a greater insight to the sport: student raceday tickets should include a free stable tour. The students then get an opportunity to see some of the preparation, rather than just a day at the races. I think it would also be beneficial if they went to stable yards that have runners on the specific student raceday they will be attending. This would give them the chance to follow that horse to the track and give them a sense of involvement. For people who are involved in racing I think we enjoy the process and seeing our horses run.

A horse can cost a significant amount of money most students don't have, between the first day expense of buying the actual horse and then the weekly or monthly training fee. I believe we should encourage students to get involved in syndicates. Syndicates decrease the cost considerably, especially the more people that get involved. Syndicates add to the enjoyment for people: for example, if a group of friends get involved in a syndicate they can thoroughly enjoy the experience, from small days watching their horse work or school, to the big days on the track. Syndicates could encourage an interest among the students and young adults that don't have a huge financial backing. I would be interested in setting up a syndicate in several colleges throughout Ireland with the aim of getting the students involved in racing. We could easily link up with trainers local to the college to arrange training and days to visit. We could have a day out visiting Goffs or Tattersalls to buy a horse for the syndicate or get an agent to do so. The syndicate would be simple to set up and join within the college. It would be easy to work out a membership fee after having a meeting and getting the interest. I strongly believe that a syndicate would encourage young adults and students to get involved in horse racing and hope to develop this idea further in the future.