

“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 Adrian Binder

Only recently did I start engaging and embracing this fascinating sport. It all started in college when a good many of my friends organised a day at the races which I happily entertained. That race day placed a great impression on me as I thoroughly enjoyed it, but I felt a certain distance between my enjoyment and the continuous engagement and passion many at the tracks were displaying. This distance would have definitely caused me to only engage with horse racing for certain occasions when organised by my friends, however, there was one factor that immediately erased that difference. Namely, I was offered the possibility to join Blackrock college’s racing syndicate and to share the story and excitement of my very own horse with a bunch of friends. This was not only a riveting possibility but also a financially viable one.

I see the promotion of horse racing syndicates as the best way to encourage greater participation among young adults. In my view, there is no better way to understand and share the passion of horse racing than through the shared ownership of a horse. In addition, this creates a special bond amongst the owners, not only providing a horse racing community in which newcomers like myself can grow but it also brings an unparalleled energy with it, most striking on race days. This solution would also be effective as once a certain level of engagement is attained it may achieve self-sustaining growth as well as having positive side effects such as increased investment in the horse racing community (increased spending on horses, greater demand for trainers and jockeys etc.) and not just on gambling (which I assume would increase as well).

Further, I believe that a greater social media presence would encourage greater participation. In particular, a specific social media campaign to push short explanatory videos providing especially useful information to newcomers. This basic knowledge would make the sport more accessible and the visual representations would showcase what this sport is all about and why it is so beautiful. In addition, an increased number of syndicates would provide an organic growth in the social media presence. These would provide locally based, relatable and entertaining content spurring greater interest.

These propositions if implemented could be quite powerful not only to encourage greater participation and increase engagement, but it would also strengthen the connections individuals have with the sport and the horse racing community.

I hope you may find my observations useful and I would like to wish you all the best in this project and beyond. Thank you.

Adrian Binder