



PLANS FOR QIPCO BRITISH CHAMPIONS DAY UNVEILED ***30,000 sell-out is first year target; Queen Elizabeth II Stakes to be run on straight mile; comprehensive plan to optimise ground conditions; sectional timing returns to Britain***

With entries for the five Group Races on QIPCO British Champions Day, with a value totalling £3 million, set to close on 2 August, plans for the brand new day at Ascot on Saturday 15 October have been announced.

SELL-OUT CROWD OF 30,000 IS FIRST YEAR TARGET

The aim for the inaugural QIPCO British Champions Day is a sell-out crowd of 30,000, Ascot's capacity for an autumn raceday without the provision of substantial temporary facilities.

"We see a sell-out crowd of 30,000, which is around double the number of people that enjoyed the Champion Stakes at Newmarket in 2010, as a very appropriate first year target for what will be by far the richest raceday ever staged in this country," said Rod Street, Chief Executive of British Champions Series.

"Most of our hospitality facilities, including the entire Ascot pavilion which can accommodate over 1,000 people for lunch, have already been sold which is fantastic news and we expect ticket sales to start moving swiftly once our database marketing campaign starts later this month.

"Our message is that if you want to be part of this exciting new event and see some of the stars of the season chasing the £3m in prize money on QIPCO British Champions Day, then book your tickets in advance because there must be a strong chance that we'll sell out before the day."

Tickets are priced at £45 for Premier admission and £26 for Grandstand admission, with a 10% advance booking discount available and greater reductions for group bookings of 10 or more people. Under 18's will be admitted free. To book tickets, visit www.britishchampionsseries.com / www.ascot.co.uk or call Ascot on 0870 727 1234.

QUEEN ELIZABETH II STAKES TO BE RUN ON THE STRAIGHT MILE

To balance the card with three races on the round course and three on the straight course, so also helping to optimise use of the ground, the £1m Queen Elizabeth II Stakes sponsored by QIPCO, by far the richest mile race ever run in Europe, will be run on the Straight Mile. In its previous calendar slot at the end of September, the race was run on the round course's "Old Mile".

"We consulted extensively on this with trainers and jockeys and whilst a few were keen to see the race stay on the Old Mile, the overwhelming majority favoured switching to the Straight Mile because it is likely to provide better going in mid October," explained British Champions Series Chief Executive, Rod Street.

"Having three races on the round course and three on the straight track enables Ascot to optimise the use of the ground and it also provides a good balance to the card."

ALL FIVE GROUP RACES HAVE GROUP 1 CONDITIONS AND PRIZE MONEY

Although only two of the QIPCO British Champions Day races are officially Group 1 races, all five have Group 1 conditions in that there are no weight penalties to be carried in the two Group 2 races and one Group 3 contest, while all have a Group 1 level of prize money.

Entries for the Group races close on 2 August.

£1,300,000 QIPCO Champion Stakes (British Champions Middle Distance) (Group 1)

1 mile 2 furlongs, round course

£1,000,000 Queen Elizabeth II Stakes sponsored by QIPCO (British Champions Mile) (Group 1)

1 mile, straight course

£250,000 QIPCO British Champions Fillies & Mares Stakes (Group 2, no penalties)

1 mile 4 furlongs, round course

£250,000 QIPCO British Champions Sprint Stakes (Group 2, no penalties)

6 furlongs, straight course

£200,000 QIPCO British Champions Long Distance Cup (Group 3, no penalties)

2 miles, round course

Handicap (details to be announced shortly)

7 furlongs, straight course

"Our message to owners and trainers with Group 1 middle distance fillies and mares, stayers and sprinters is that these are Group 1 races in all but name," said Rod Street.

"They have Group 1 prize money and conditions, which we hope will attract top class fields, enabling us to achieve Group 1 ratings and have them elevated to Group 1 status as soon as possible."

GROUND MANAGEMENT PLAN WILL OPTIMISE THE GOING ON THE DAY

In the past, Ascot has not been required to prioritise track conditions in October as, once the Betfair King George Weekend had taken place, everything was geared towards the September Festival. Now everything relating to track management from Monday 25 July onwards will be focussed on producing the best possible ground on Saturday 15 October:

- On the Round Course, at least three metres of ground will be saved from the 1m 2f start to the home straight to use solely for QIPCO British Champions Day. 1m 4f races scheduled for the four racedays between 25 July and 15 October will be limited to 16 runners and no 1m 2f races will be run during this period.
- On the Straight Course, field sizes will be limited to a maximum of 16 runners for all races, enabling a five metre strip of fresh ground to be saved on both sides of the track for QIPCO British Champions Day.
- Watering will only be done if absolutely necessary and Ascot does not intend to water the round course at all following the raceday on 3 September, although they may need to reconsider this if an extremely dry period prevails. If watering does take place, booms rather than pop-ups will be used whenever possible in order to limit watering on ground being saved for 15 October.
- Once the ground has been put back after the Betfair King George Weekend and assuming conditions are suitable, the inside of the round course will be verti-drained. This will reduce compaction and aid drainage and root growth.

“We will be doing everything we can to ensure the best possible racing surface on both the round and straight courses for QIPCO British Champions Day,” said Ascot’s Clerk of the Course, Chris Stickels.

“In the event of a wet October, this plan of action will ensure that we will be in a much better position track-wise than we would ever have been for an October raceday in the past. In previous years, our ground management centred around the September Festival.”

QIPCO CHAMPION STAKES LIMITED TO 14 RUNNERS

The normal limit for races at Ascot over 1m 2f is 16, but this has been reduced to 14 for the £1.3m QIPCO Champion Stakes, the most valuable horserace ever staged in Britain. In the last 20 years at Newmarket, the race has attracted an average field size of 10.85 runners.

“We want to minimise the potential impact of the draw and, after consultation with trainers, have decided that 14 is the right maximum to opt for,” explained Rod Street.

SECTIONAL TIMING RETURNS TO BRITAIN

QIPCO British Champions Day will see the return of sectional timing to British racing, with Turftrax providing and operating the system. If the response from the race-going public and TV viewers is positive, it is hoped to roll it out across the whole series in 2012.

Rod Street said: "Most other sports offer some form of performance-related electronic data to their viewers and we feel the sectional timing will provide greater context to the races.

"Our sponsor, QIPCO, is very supportive of sectional timing and, whilst they can't control the sport's overall strategy on this, it is tremendous news that their sponsorship of the series has at least allowed us to get sectional timing back on the agenda and add value to the broadcast experience."

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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www.britishchampionsseries.com

Notes to Editors

About the QIPCO British Champions Series:

The QIPCO British Champions Series is designed to throw the spotlight on Britain's best Flat races and will climax on 15 October 2011 with the richest fixture in British racing history, the brand new QIPCO British Champions Day at Ascot.

The Series features 35 Flat races staged at ten of the UK's leading racecourses: Ascot, Doncaster, Epsom Downs, Goodwood, Haydock Park, Newbury, Newmarket's July Course, Newmarket's Rowley Mile, Sandown Park and York.

It encompasses the top races at British racing's key festivals, including the QIPCO Guineas Festival at Newmarket, the Investec Derby Festival at Epsom, Royal Ascot, the Newmarket July Festival, Glorious Goodwood, the Welcome to Yorkshire Ebor Festival at York and the Ladbrokes St Leger Festival at Doncaster.

The QIPCO British Champions Series comprises five easy-to-follow champion categories - Sprint, Mile, Middle Distance, Long Distance and Fillies & Mares.

The seven highest-rated races feature in each category, including a same-day finale in each on QIPCO British Champions Day.

Long-term, the QIPCO British Champions Series aims to attract a wider audience for the UK's second most attended sport.

About QIPCO Holding:

QIPCO Holding is one of the leading private investment companies in Qatar. Established in 1999, QIPCO Holding has a diverse range of interests, including real estate, construction, oil and gas, finance and health services. Its portfolio of interests includes Qatar Bloodstock, which owns the stallion Makfi, the winner of the 2010 2000 Guineas.

Qatar Investment & Projects Development Holding Company (QIPCO Holding) is owned by six brothers who are members of the Royal Family of Qatar. The Chief Executive is Sheikh Hamad bin Abdullah Al Thani, who together with his brothers are nephews of the Emir of the State of Qatar.

Over time, the group has diversified itself to form individual subsidiaries, each operating independently and specialising in their fields of expertise. For more information visit: www.qipco.com.qa