



## Letter From the President

### No Finer Fans

Racing is alive and well, and – as the Del Mar race meet proves year after year – race fans remain enthusiastic about and supportive of California racing. That’s plain to see, especially at Del Mar!

Race fans are a varied group; a reflection of California’s diverse and vibrant cultures. Among them are surfers and soccer moms, tradesmen and executives, doctors and lawyers, clergy and parishioners, the retired, and the not-yet retired. It’s a real life game of “Where’s Waldo.” Everyone is included. Everyone is welcomed! The devoted, the curious, the “let’s just have a good time” folks, general horse enthusiasts, girl watchers, boy watchers, serious handicappers, casual players, they’re all here to have a great time!

Not surprisingly, Thoroughbred owners are fans too; perhaps the most enthusiastic fans of all, and we’re all here just to have a good time as well!

What few casual fans realize is that the majority of California horse owners were introduced to ownership through our experiences as fans. Owners are just as diverse a group, who enjoy racing for the same varied reasons as do fans. When appreciation of racing evolves from curiosity to serious interest, race fans often embrace a more serious commitment to these good times by becoming an owner, but they do so while continuing to coexist as both fan and horse owner.

The interests of race fans and Thoroughbred owners are parallel. We enjoy racing for the same reasons; are as protective of its traditions, virtues, and integrity; as desirous of its leaders to adopt new technologies that enhance racing and which make it more accessible, particularly when the everyday pressures of life make it difficult to enjoy an afternoon at the track; and, are as appreciative of full field, value-oriented wagering opportunities as are serious handicappers. Thoroughbred owners and fans have fought long and hard to obtain assurances from track and ADW partners that our race signals will be made available to as many players as possible, on as many platforms as there are, at a fair rate for all. Owners, with the help of race fans, will continue to do so until these objectives are achieved, for the benefit of all!

Like any *true* race fan, Thoroughbred owners also want to see the health and well being of the horse – and rider – protected. To that end, TOC has: vigorously advocated for the adoption of safer racing surfaces; limitations on so-called “therapeutic” medications and anabolic steroids; the imposition of tougher drug/medication penalties; and, are crafting proposals to revise riding crop regulations. Each of these efforts is intended to improve California racing, and reflects a cognizance of the times in which we live and racing competes, as a mainstream entertainment option.

Why do we care so much about such issues? Because, like I said, owners are fans too! In fact, owners are some of the most frequent visitors, biggest bettors, and most serious of handicappers one can find at the track. Owners “*get it*,” we do! We understand that side of the business too; we’re part of the betting culture as well, and have your interests in mind!

It is for that reason that fans are as welcome as owners to contact TOC with their questions and concerns, especially those who wish to voice a differing view. Chances are, if you are a true fan of racing, you too will eventually become an owner, and will begin to look at racing from a different vantage point, one more broad and committed than even you thought possible!

There is no finer a racing fan than a California racing fan, nor any finer a racehorse owner than a California Thoroughbred owner. We are in fact, one and the same!



Drew J. Couto