



**NEWCASTLE
RACING & EVENTS**



MEDIA RELEASE

17 MAY 2016

**A NEW ERA FOR NEWCASTLE RACECOURSE WITH SUCCESSFUL FIRST TAPETA
ALL-WEATHER RACEDAY**

Today Newcastle Racecourse marked the start of a new era for Gosforth Park with a successful first raceday on the new tapeta all-weather racing surface.

In total ARC has invested nearly £12 million into Gosforth Park over the last year. As well as the construction of a tapeta all-weather track, with the first ever floodlit straight mile, there has been a number of other improvements to the equine facilities at the racecourse. These include resurfacing the pre-parade, parade ring and winner's enclosure; refurbishment of the saddling boxes; complete modernisation of the vets' facilities and stable yard with a new entrance to the horsebox park to improve access to the stables for horses and horseboxes; and a floodlit horse walk with new fibresand area for horses to relax and recover after racing.

Today's 188BET First All-Weather Raceday was the first of 37 all-weather fixtures scheduled to take place during 2016. The £65,000 worth of prize money on offer drew strong entries from leading yards across the country and an afternoon of competitive racing.

Professional Jockeys Association ("PJA") Executive Director (Racing), Dale Gibson, said: "We have had positive feedback from all jockeys who are delighted with the consistency of the track. It will take a few races for them to understand the pace and fine tune their tactical awareness of races on this new surface. They are looking forward to the upcoming fixtures for the remainder of the year."

ARC's Racing and Property Director, Stephen Higgins, said: "While the planning has taken years the construction of the new tapeta all-weather track, along with improvements to the equine facilities at the racecourse, has been delivered in a little over eight months. I would like to put in record our thanks to Newcastle City Council, the BHA, the Stobart Group, Tapeta Footings, Musco Sports Lighting and the other contractors and companies who have

helped us achieve a successful outcome to this ambitious project. We will continue to work closely with Joan Wakefield and her team at Tapeta Footings to ensure the track beds in and is well maintained. Along with our investment in prize money we hope Newcastle Racecourse will be an integral part of racing in the north and make a valuable contribution to the sport in the years ahead.”

Executive Director of Newcastle Racecourse, David Williamson, said: “We are delighted to have had a crowd of 3,000 for our first ever all-weather raceday. With more fixtures this year we look forward to welcoming everyone to the racecourse as we move into a new era for Gosforth Park. We are particularly looking forward to the J.T Dove Derby Day on 4 June, historic Betfred Northumberland Plate day on 25 June and the popular Collingwood Insurance Beeswing Ladies Day on 23 July which always draws a big crowd.”

Stobart Group Chief Executive, Andrew Tinkler, said: “As a significant sponsor in British Racing, most notably of the Professional Jockeys Association’s Career Ending Insurance Scheme and the Flat and Jump Jockeys’ Championships, Stobart Group is delighted to have worked with ARC on this exciting project. Our team worked incredibly hard to ensure the finished track was delivered on time and it’s gratifying to hear the positive reviews from the jockeys and trainers.”

Co-owner and Managing Director of Tapeta Footings, Joan Wakefield, said: “We were delighted when ARC chose tapeta for Newcastle following the positive feedback received about Wolverhampton since the installation of tapeta in 2014. British Racing now has the only two tapeta racing surfaces in Europe giving horses and jockeys a fair and safe surface to race on. I believe the open galloping nature of the track at Newcastle means it will prove to be one of the best all weather racecourses in the world. We will continue to work with the team at Newcastle, as we have done at Wolverhampton, to make sure the track is maintained in excellent condition in the months and years ahead.”

In the months ahead the ARC Executive will undertake a wider review of the entire estate at Gosforth Park in order to develop a future plan for potential further investment, which amongst other things will include improved facilities for racegoers.

In 2016 Newcastle Racecourse will host 37 all-weather fixtures. In addition to the new tapeta all-weather track ARC is making a significant investment in prize money. This includes the £150,000 Northumberland Plate and a new reserve race, the Northumberland Vase, run on the same day for £75,000. A number of other races will also have increased prize funds

including the £20,000 Seaton Delaval Trophy and £30,000 Gosforth Park Cup, both run during the Northumberland Plate Festival, the £25,000 Beeswing Handicap on Ladies' Day in July which is more than doubling in value, and the £25,000 Blaydon Race two-year-old Nursery in August.

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For further information please contact:

Susannah Gill

Director of External Affairs

Arena Racing Company

Office: 020 7802 5120

Mobile: 07751 870 929

Email: sgill@arenaracingcompany.co.uk

or

Sam Cone

PR & Communications Manager

Arena Racing Company

Office: 020 7802 5120

Mobile: 07920 404 296

Email: scone@arenaracingcompany.co.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS:

Please find attached with this press release:

- An image of horses racing on the track this afternoon; and
- A fact sheet with key statistics about the development.

About ARC:

Arena Racing Company ("ARC") is the largest racecourse operator in the UK. In 2016 ARC racecourses will host over 500 fixtures with total prize money of over £28 million. Each year 1.2 million people attend racing at one of ARC's racecourses.

ARC is made up of the following sixteen racecourses: Bath, Brighton, Chepstow, Doncaster, Ffos Las, Fontwell Park, Great Yarmouth, Hereford, Lingfield Park, Newcastle, Royal Windsor, Sedgefield, Southwell, Uttoxeter, Wolverhampton and Worcester.

ARC runs four of the six all-weather racecourses in the UK offering three different types of surface for horses to run on: Polytrack at Lingfield Park, fibresand at Southwell Racecourse and tapeta at Newcastle and Wolverhampton Racecourses – the only tapeta racing surfaces in Europe.

In 2013 ARC pioneered the All-Weather Championships which see horses compete throughout the winter for the chance of qualifying for a £1.1 million Finals Day on Good Friday at Lingfield Park. This initiative is helping raise the profile and prestige of all-weather racing in Great Britain.

ARC hosts racing at all levels of the sport from Class 7 through to Group 1s. Doncaster Racecourse is home to the world's oldest Classic, the St Leger, run each year in September as part of the four-day St Leger Festival. Feature jumps races include the Grade 1 Fighting Fifth Hurdle at Newcastle Racecourse, the Welsh National at Chepstow Racecourse and Midlands National at Uttoxeter Racecourse.

As well as racing, ARC also operates a hotel at Wolverhampton Racecourse, a hotel, spa resort and golf course at Lingfield Park and The Border Minstrel public house at Newcastle Racecourse in the grounds of Gosforth Park.

ARC is the majority shareholder in the horseracing TV channel At The Races which is broadcast on the Sky platform to c.14 million homes, and a JV partner with Racing UK in GBI Racing which sells UK and Irish Racing to betting shop operators around the world.

ARC plays a pivotal role in British Racing. It is a shareholder in British Champions Series and Racecourse Data Company; a signatory to a British Horseracing Authority's and Horsemen's Group Prize Money Agreement; and on the boards of the Racecourse Association ("RCA"), Racing Enterprises Limited ("REL") and Great British Racing ("GBR").

ARC employs over 500 permanent staff and engages with 3,500 casual staff for racing and events across its racecourses. Further information about ARC can be found at www.arenaracingcompany.co.uk.

About 188BET:

188BET is a leading online bookmaker, licensed and regulated by the UK Gambling Commission and the Isle of Man Gambling Supervision Commission. 188BET offers betting in multiple languages on a wide variety of products including Sports, E-Sports, Horse Racing, Financials, Progressive Slots, Casino, Poker and many more.

For more information about 188BET please go to www.188BET.com