

BHA GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

BHAGI 10.1
Dtd 29 March 2025

To: Managing Executives
From: Chief Executive
Subject: STARTING ARRANGEMENTS, FARRIERS AND ADVANCE
FLAG OPERATORS (AFOs)

Transport for Starter

1. A suitable vehicle must be provided to transport the Starter to the Start. In addition, a driver may also be required (as agreed in advance with the Racecourse Department) where logistical/personnel issues may prevent the Starter from arriving at the Start on time.

Positioning of Starts

2. The Managing Executive must ensure that those persons who are required to set up each Start are aware of their duties. To this end, the Stalls Team Leader in the case of Flat races, and the racecourse employee in charge of setting up a 'Flip' Start for Steeple Chases, Hurdle and National Hunt Flat races, is to report to the Clerk of the Course at least one hour prior to the advertised time of the first race to be briefed on the location of all Starts, the positioning of the Starting Stalls, and routes to reach them, taking particular note of any changes to the normal routine.

3. For positioning of Starting Stalls, see BHAGI 3.8 and informing the media of such, see BHAGI 3.2.

Stalls Numbering

4. Every flat racecourse is classified as either a left-handed course or a right-handed course (Annex A).

5. Stall one on a left-handed course should be (looking from behind) the first stall used on the left of the Starting Stalls.

6. Stall one on a right-handed course should be (looking from behind) the first stall used on the right of the Starting Stalls.

Starting Stalls

7. The following requirements must be provided to facilitate the use of Starting Stalls:

- a) hard standing for unloading and space for vehicle parking within the perimeter of the racecourse;
- b) a known hard route from Start to Start;
- c) firm level areas and removable rails with a 4m (13 feet) gap at each Start, to allow the Stalls to be moved on to and off the track (where practical this facility should be on both sides of the track);

- d) a properly maintained mobile rostrum for the Starter. The rostrum should be a minimum of 4 feet 6 inches in height.

Starting Stalls Tests and Stalls Assessments for Debutants

8. If a trainer wishes to present a horse for a Starting Stalls Test or a Stalls Assessment or Debutants Assessment, necessary arrangements for a Stalls Test are to be made unless this requirement is waived by the Racecourse Department. Stalls Tests at a racecourse require the attendance of a Racecourse Medical Officer, a Racecourse Veterinary Surgeon and an ambulance.

Steeplechase & Hurdle Races – Starting Gates

9. One or more of the following approved Starting Gates for starting Steeplechase and Hurdle races is to be deployed and maintained in good order:

- a) the 'Flip' Starting Gate, except on tracks more than 35 yards wide, unless an Inspector of Courses, in consultation with the Team Principal (Starting Department), has approved its use over a greater width;
- b) any other design of Starting Gates, such as the 'Barrier Gate', which has been approved by the BHA. Details of the specifications, drawings, assembly instructions, operation, repair and supply of spares for these Gates are to be obtained from the manufacturers. The Managing Executive is responsible for the maintenance of these Gates and for ensuring that it is carried out in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and that maintenance records are kept.

10. The siting, erection, operation and maintenance of the 'Flip' Start are to be carried out in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, which are to be made available on the racecourse for reference. When this equipment is used, a protective net is to be erected on the returning side where it is necessary to protect the public or prevent rebounds.

11. A Starter's rostrum, not less than 4 feet high, in good order and correctly positioned, is to be provided at the Starts of all Steeple Chase, Hurdle and National Hunt Flat races. However any new rostrum should be a minimum of 4 feet 6 inches high.

Back-up Procedures

12. Flat: In exceptional circumstances, as directed by the Stewards and when there is sufficient time to do so, a 'Flip' Start may be set up by racecourse employees no more than 40 yards in front of the Stalls. In the event of there being insufficient time to set up a 'Flip' Start, a flag shall be used to start the race.

Jump: In the event of a failure in the starting equipment, a Flag Start should be used.

13. A portable system for amplifying Starter's instructions may be provided at Jump fixtures where a permanent system is not in place

Collecting Rings at the Start (Jump Races)

14. Where possible, a collecting ring is to be provided on the infield at each Jump Start. The collecting ring is to:

- be of a size that will accommodate the maximum field size from that Start on a race day and,
- its access point is to be at least 10-12 yards wide.

All arrangements involving the siting and dimensions of such collecting rings and their access points must be agreed beforehand with the Inspector of Courses.

Note: Running rail at the access point must be re-erected as per the manufacturer's guidelines in all cases where the runners will pass the access point during the race.

Tape Behind the Start

15. For Flat meetings, the racecourse must ensure that suitable equipment (see paragraphs 13 and 14) is provided and always available to enable a fixed tape behind the Start to be used. Additionally, the racecourse is responsible for the movement and manning of this equipment. However, in exceptional circumstances, where a racecourse experiences difficulties in meeting the requirement to move the equipment, an approach may be made to the Starter and/or Integrity Service Providers for an agreed variation on this responsibility to occur. In all cases, the Starter will check the equipment provided by the racecourse, and confirm the transport arrangements for it on arrival at the racecourse. The tape is to be positioned at the Start as directed by the Starter.

16. The standard equipment for Flat turf courses will consist of a minimum of four posts 4 feet high with rounded edges which are 3 inches in diameter together with five sections of 5m long tape (joined by velcro) which is at least 2 inches in width. The posts will have slits at the top to enable the tape to be slotted, together with a sharp spike for fixing into the ground. The posts need to be spaced so that there is a gap of 5 yards between each one. Where necessary, additional posts and sections of tape will be required to ensure that the full width of the course is covered.

17. At All Weather Track courses, the 2 inch wide tape should be joined at 5 yard intervals by poppers, and placed in the slit of the post at a height of 4 feet. The posts should be spaced so that there is a gap of 5 yards between each one. They should be supported by a sand weighted hollow plastic stabilising base (approximately 2 feet x 2 feet x 4 inches deep).

Farriers

18. A farrier is to be in attendance at all meetings and readily available (at the direction of the racecourse) to deal with emergencies, such as spread plates. Any removal of plate at the Start is to be carried out by the farrier or Racecourse Veterinary Surgeon. Farriers are to be made aware of their duties (see Annex L to BHAGI 12.2) and provided with a suitable radio, along with a copy of paragraphs 15 and 16 of the Equipment Code.

19. If any Pattern Race (Flat or Jump) or Listed Race is to be run at the meeting, the farrier must attend the Start, to re-shoe horses if they are so instructed by the Starter. Wherever possible, a farrier should also attend the Start of any terrestrially televised race. No horse may be re-shod for these, or any other races, except by a qualified farrier, who will act on the instruction of the Starter.

Note: Apprentice farriers may only act on racecourses under the direct supervision of an Approved Training Farrier (ATF), as defined by the Farriers Registration Council Guidelines on supervision. These Guidelines define direct supervision as “the ATF is standing over the apprentice or at least in the same room, forge or stable and observing the apprentice”.

False Starts

20. The Managing Executive must provide an Advance Flag Operator (AFO) or an approved auto-recall device at every race meeting.

Advance Flag Operators (AFO)

21. Any AFO must be mentally and physically capable of carrying out the role, and be trained and accredited by BHA. The Managing Executive must provide the AFO with a two tone Stop Race flag(s) (see BHAGI 3.7, Annex A), a Fox40 whistle, a white overcoat, and a radio for ROCS messages (see BHAGI 4.6 Annex A). On a limited number of occasions additional AFO(s) will be required at certain fixtures at selected racecourses (as agreed in advance with the Racecourse Department).

22. The AFO must raise their flag when signalled to do so by the Starter. Unless the Starter signals a False Start, the AFO is to drop their flag and move off the track once the horses are running, keeping their flag by their side.

23. If the Starter waves their flag to signal a False Start, the AFO should wave their flag well above the head and blow their whistle. If there is any danger of being knocked down by the oncoming field, they should move quickly to the side of the course and out of danger, but continue waving the flag aloft and blowing their whistle until the field has pulled up.

24. In Flat races, the AFO(s) is/are to ensure that the ‘Keep Straight’ Marker Poles are correctly positioned at the start of those races where they are in use.

Auto-recall devices

25. Any auto-recall device must be of a type approved by the BHA. The device must be properly maintained according to the manufacturer’s instructions.

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Circulation
Stewards
Assistant Stewards
Judges
Starters
Clerks of the Scales
Inspectors of Courses
Racecourse Association

List of Left-Handed and Right-Handed Flat Courses

Integrity Service Providers
Annex A

BHA GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Annex A to BHAGI 10.1
Dtd 29 March 2025

List of Left-Handed and Right-Handed Flat Courses

Left-handed courses	Right-handed courses
Ayr	Ascot
Bath	Beverley
Brighton	Carlisle
Catterick Bridge	Goodwood
Chelmsford	Hamilton Park
Chepstow	Kempton Park
Chester	Leicester
Doncaster	Musselburgh
Epsom Downs	Newmarket (Rowley Mile Course)
Ffos Las	Newmarket (July Course)
Great Yarmouth	Ripon
Haydock Park	Salisbury
Lingfield Park	Sandown Park
Newbury	Windsor
Newcastle	
Nottingham	
Pontefract	
Redcar	
Southwell	
Thirsk	
Wolverhampton	
York	

BHA GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

BHAGI 10.2
Dtd 6 October 2014

To: Managing Executives
From: Chief Executive
Subject: RACES STARTING ON TIME

Procedures

1. A timetable for each day's racing is to be compiled, setting out when certain proceedings should occur before race time (the appropriate form ST1 is attached at Annex A). When compiling the timetable of events, consideration must be given to managing all relevant factors needed to ensure races start on time. This timetable, once completed, must be prominently displayed in the Jockeys' Changing Rooms, Weighing Room and Racecourse Stables area. A copy must also be given to the Clerk of the Scales. The columns on the form particularly relevant to Jockeys/Trainers are to be highlighted, as appropriate, when placed in these areas and relevant racecourse personnel should proactively refer participants to the timetable as necessary. In view of these requirements, Managing Executives are to ensure that realistic advertised times for races are scheduled in order that the objective of starting races on time is met.

2. Countdown warnings (via internal PA systems wherever possible) are to be sounded in all the Changing Rooms to ensure that Riders leave the Weighing Room punctually. The timing of these warnings and of the signal to mount in the Parade Ring, is also to take account of the distance to travel down to the Start, as well as the number of runners involved. The warnings can be complemented by a flashing light/buzzer system to maximise Jockey awareness.

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Timetable Plan for Start Times

Circulation

Stewards
Assistant Stewards
Clerks of the Scales
Starters
Racecourse Association
Annex A

ST1: TIMETABLE PLAN FOR START TIMES

MEETING: _____

DATE: _____

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Race Number	No. of runners	Race distance	Time horses to arrive in Parade Ring	Time Jockeys to leave Weighing Room	Time signal to mount to be given	Time last horse to leave Parade Ring	Time Horses to arrive at Start	Start Time
Race 1								
Race 2								
Race 3								
Race 4								
Race 5								
Race 6								
Race 7								
Race 8								