



**Emerald Downs  
Presiding Steward  
2021 End of Meet Report  
November 12, 2021**

**Emerald Downs Racing LLC**

With the second year of Covid-19 restrictions it is difficult to compare from year to year for the last three years. Emerald Downs ran 67 days in 2019, applied for 63 in 2020 but only ran 38 days because of the Covid-19 Virus and ran 49 days this year.

Emerald Downs offered 50 live racing days this year running two days a week starting on Wednesdays and Thursdays May 19 & 20th for the first ten days, then adding Sundays on Father's day June 20<sup>th</sup>. Emerald Downs did not run on Sunday, July 4<sup>th</sup> due to running on their annual fireworks special event day on July 3<sup>rd</sup>. After running eight days and the Governor started to open up from the Covid-19 restrictions, Emerald Downs then requested a revision to their racing dates at the June 11<sup>th</sup> commission meeting asking to move Wednesdays racing to Saturdays. They also dropped Thursday's racing on September 9<sup>th</sup> which made closing day Sunday, September 26<sup>th</sup> instead of the original closing day of Thursday, September 23<sup>rd</sup> staying with the 50 days of racing. Emerald Downs only ran live racing on 49 days due to the loss of one live racing day Sunday, June 27th due to extreme heat, the decision to cancel was made prior to taking entries. Emerald Downs started out racing with limited crowds but added more patrons when the Governor/State opened up easing the mandates and restrictions for sporting events. Post times were 6:00pm for Wednesdays and Thursdays, Saturdays 6:30pm and Sundays at 2:30pm.

With the Covid-19 and Emerald Downs planning on only running 50 days the barn area didn't open up for training until March 5<sup>th</sup>, with only essential employees allowed in the barn area. On Thursday, April 29 the barn area opened to owners and agents. Emerald Downs gave out the Pfizer Covid-19 vaccinations to its employees and to any licensee that wanted it with the first shot given on April 15<sup>th</sup> and the second one on May 6<sup>th</sup>.

Emerald Downs had the return of a few special events this year starting with the July 3<sup>rd</sup> Fireworks, Corgi Races Sunday, July 25, Weiner Dog & Wannabe Races Sunday, August 22, Italian Day Sunday, September 5<sup>th</sup> and the Indian Relay races with Friday, September 10, 11 and 12. Friday, September 10 was open to the public free with the first set of trials being run. The remainder of the trials ran between races Saturday, September 11<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, September 12<sup>th</sup> there were three finals (Gold, Bronze and Silver).

### **The Quarter Chute Cafe**

The Quarter Chute Café opened March 5 for ten days before closing because no public patrons were allowed, just essential licensed personnel. They reopened May 26<sup>th</sup> when they were allowed to have 25% capacity. The café was also closed July 29 & 30 when a power outage caused the kitchen exhaust motor to freeze up and not work.

### **Emerald Downs / Race Office**

This year's race office figures for comparison of the last three years vary because of the different number of live race days, 2019 running a regular season to last year with only running 38 live race days and this year running 49 race days. The number of races carded this year was 417 up from 391 last year by only 26, while running 11 more racing days. The number of races per day went down from 10.3 last year to 8.51 this year. The number of starters this year was 2699 compared to 2905 horses last year, there was a difference in Emerald Downs count to the WHRC. Emerald Downs had two more starters 2701 compared to the WHRC count because of two starts that were made non-starters by the steward due to of issues at the starting gate, Emerald Downs pays a starting fee for all horse's unplaced even though they were made a non-starter. The field size per races dropped slightly this year going to 6.48 compared to 7.43 last year. The number of stall applications also dropped by 12 this year with 62 applications compared to 76 last year and the number of stalls allotted dropped by 197, from 1042 last year to 845 this year. The number of claims went from 127 last year to 193 this year.

The number of two year old races was down again by seven with 35 this year and 42 last year. The number of Washington bred races carded decreased by one from 10 races last year to 9 this year. Emerald Downs again hosted two of the Quarter Horse Challenge races this year, consisting of the John Deere Juvenile and the Bank of America. The John Deere Juvenile had two trials August 1<sup>st</sup>, with the finals of the John Deere Juvenile and the Bank of America Challenge running on August 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Emerald Downs didn't sponsor the Emerald Racing Club this year, not knowing originally if and when they would be able to have fans and members for the racing club at the track. Vince Bruun in charge of the Emerald Club said that he plans on having its return again next year.

### **Jockey Colony**

The jockey colony was adequate all season with a total of 38 licensed jockeys and 5 apprentice jockeys compared to a total of 30 last year. One licensed apprentice jockey went through the process of getting her certificate but it was not given to her because she didn't ride her probationary races. There were a total of 25 jockey rulings issued this year, 2 were issued holding the riders blameless, 2 were for an official warning, 16 rulings were issued assessing fines ranging from \$100 to \$500 for careless riding infractions. Five two-day suspensions were issued for careless riding due to a disqualification, one was a

continuation from last year because of on an appeal to the commission in which the stewards decision was upheld.

### **Mutuel Department and Sportech Totalizator System**

Sportech, the tote company serving Emerald Downs, headed by Tony Lovell, worked well with the board of stewards with very few issues. Eric Berry, director and manager of the Mutuel department and simulcasting worked well with the stewards by setting the post times for the races consistently which helps all the WHRC departments to keep the races running as scheduled.

### **Emerald Downs Video Department**

The video department is essential to the stewards when regulating live racing. The videos for the stewards did have a few issues getting the videos when needed, mostly because of department personnel turnover and new personnel still in a learning situation. The video department did work hard to ensure that we had the videos that needed to be viewed by the stewards and shown to the public.

### **Emerald Downs Security**

Emerald Downs security department for the second year had extra work because of having to monitor all licensee's coming into the offices, Quarter Chute Café and barn area. They not only had to check licenses, but also having to monitor temperatures of everyone entering the premises. There was a good working relationship between both Emerald Downs's security and the WHRC staff.

### **Physical Inspection of the Grounds**

The annual inspection of the barn area demonstrated that the association does a good job maintaining the property. The barns and stalls continue to be in really good shape however there is some damage to the perimeter fence on the north and west side. There were three different areas that the eighteen wheel trailers leasing the area had backed into the fence and bent them, in one of the areas, sixteen sections of the fence were knocked over and the support posts were broken at the bottom.

### **Licensing**

The total number of licenses issued in 2021 was 1847 compared to 2108 last year. The 361 less licenses this year from last year may be due to the barn area being open before the restriction went into effect. One area that showed the biggest decrease again for the industry were owner's licenses down by 176 with 972 issued in 2020 compared to 796 in 2021. This may be due to not having the Emerald Racing Club this year. Trainer's licenses increased by one with 93 in 2021 compared to 92 last year. Grooms licenses decreased with 212 issued this year compared to 224 in 2020. Pony riders had a decrease of 8 with 81 this year compared to 89 in 2020. Exercise riders had a decrease of 13 with 111 this year compared to 124 last year.

### **WHRC Investigators**

The WHRC investigators Darrell Farwell and Hugh Wales worked well with the board of stewards and Emerald Downs Security.

With the Covid-19 Virus for safety reasons the WHRC Investigators did not do as many random drug and alcohol test. They did a total of 19 drug and alcohol tests this year compared to 125 last year. Of the total number of tests there was 1 positive for a controlled substance and none for alcohol.

The WHRC Investigators did 25 separate investigations which involved allegations of rules of racing violations. Of those, six were for smoking in the barn area, two for tampering with a smoke alarm, four were for conduct and one for marijuana being found in a licensee's dorm, which he tested negative for. He was issued a ruling for a warning and was made to remove the controlled substance from the barn area. The rest were for various violations, and were eventually referred to the Stewards for possible action.

### **WHRC Veterinarians / Test Barn**

Dr. Ron Friedman DVM, the Equine Medical Director had an extra work load as he was the only one that worked consistently throughout the season. Dr. Collette Bergam was back several weekends to help out as a veterinarian, with two others, Dr. Robert Campbell, and Dr. Lutz Harfst.

### **WHRC Receiving Barn**

Marlene Spencer split the Clocker Identifier position this year with Joan Hutchson, Joan did the morning clocking and Marlene did the Identifying for the races. Renee Houlbjerg in her second year with the commission was moved to the receiving barn clerk position when Aarika Nelson moved to the position of Mutual Inspector

### **Photo Finish**

Photo finish operator Jody Parmenter continued to provide good work in producing the order of finish and the photo finish images in a timely manner for the stewards Jody had a few issues with the camera not loading the images in a timely manner. Jody also used the aid of Wes Petree, with Emerald Downs, with technical issues that arrived.

### **Staff**

The WHRC staff had only one new hire this year, Dawn Nelson was hired as on call and filled in at different departments as needed including in the receiving barn and in Photo Finish. Renee Houlbjerg filled in the positions of the photo finish operator for two days when Jody was on vacation, she worked in the test barn collect samples and as a vet tech drawing blood. Kathy Connell is another employee filling in at different positions as needed, she worked in the test barn, receiving barn and as the Paddock Judge.

The WHRC also moved the claims back to the paddock office area for processing which also made it easier for the owners and trainer to drop their claim.

### **Board of Stewards**

The board of stewards issued a total of 85 rulings this year compared to 75 rulings issued from last year at Emerald Downs, (of the 84 rulings 5 were amended and 1 was revised). There were 25 rulings for jockeys, 5 rulings for unauthorized scratches and three for smoking in a restricted area or tampering with a fire protection, prevention system. The largest numbers of rulings this year were for equine medication violation for a total of 21, two for a warning and 18 fines. The stewards continued to make a Stewards

Report daily to the association for its website that lists scratches, late rider changes, claims, and the reasoning behind the decision on any objection or inquiry. The Board of Stewards with the help of the video department, implemented what is called a stewards review which is a new way to let the public know that an issue during the running of the race was being looked at prior to posting the inquiry or objection sign. In critical time this lets the steward look at the incident prior to posting and inquiry or objection or not.

Overall, the 2021 race season went well with the return of patrons and the owners being able to access the grandstands and barn area to watch their horses. It seemed to be a positive season as Emerald Downs has already announced a 10% purse increase and adding \$50,000.00 to the Longacres Mile.

Hopefully the 2022 season will be back to a more normal racing season with no restrictions and the special events coming back.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kenneth Doll". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "K".

Ken Doll Sr.

Presiding Steward