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**From Bridge Jumpers
to Bettin' the Chalk**

MODERATOR:

Keith Chamblin, Senior Vice President, Marketing & Industry Communications, NTRA

SPEAKERS:

Peter Rotondo, Vice President Media & Entertainment, Breeders' Cup Limited

Andrew Yex, Supervising Producer, Horseplayers

Ms. Wendy Davis: We also will be going from this panel session and do a very quick turn before we do lunch. Don't run out after this one. At this point, I'd like to introduce our next panel session, *From Bridge Jumpers to Bettin' the Chalk*. I think this is gonna be an awfully fun panel session because we're gonna get some sneak previews of some things that are going to be on the air.

To act as the moderator for this panel, we have Keith Chamblin. Keith is Senior Vice President, Marketing & Industry Communications for the NTRA. I have to have just another side note here, that we're always really pleased when we have alumni of the Race Track Program come back and be speakers here. Come from being a student in the audience, to being one of the experts up at the front. We have Peter Rotondo, who is an alumni of the Race Track Industry Program. We're especially proud of that. With that, Keith, I'm gonna turn this over to you.

Mr. Keith Chamblin: Thank you very much. Delighted to be here this morning to give you a sneak peek of a show that is due to begin airing in January, called *Horseplayers*. It's a reality show, and there's quite a few of them underway in our sport right now. I think during Del Mar this year, there might have been a point where there were about five different reality shows shooting at Del Mar at various times during the most recent week, including me.

We've got a special fondness for horse players because it's following a group of handicappers on their quest to compete in the National Handicapping Championship

in Las Vegas. Of course, that's an event that the NTRA puts on that we're very proud of. It also is focusing on handicapping. We think this is something unique, relatively untried. We think it's an avenue to bring more people into our sport. Of course, we're delighted to be partnering with horse players and the Esquire Network in trying to promote this reality show going forward.

We're gonna give you a little sneak peek this morning. I'm gonna get out of your way here in just a few minutes, and turn it over to one of the senior producers of *Horseplayers*, and to Peter to take us through it. We're very excited about it. We think it's gonna portray horse racing in a new and unique way. Of course, I think everybody's familiar with the Esquire brand.

You can see that Esquire is a partnership between Hurst Corp. and NBC Universal. There's the 80-year old magazine. It has a circulation of 750,000 people. Esquire Network debuted in September in 75 million homes. Esquire Network has 1.6 million followers on Twitter; 915,000 friends on Facebook. Of course, they have a pretty popular website, too. It'd be very, very difficult for our industry to duplicate some of the assets that Esquire, the Hearst Corp. and NBC Universal are bringing to the table and putting behind this new show called, *Horseplayers*.

Esquire's target audience, the affluent and successful male. We think this is really tailor suited for handicapping and promotion of horse racing in general. Just to give you a few facts about the NHC, National Handicapping Championship, and the tour. Our tour is 95 percent male. They're highly educated. Fifty percent have a college degree; 22 percent have a masters, a doctorate or professional degree. The average income of a tour player is \$117,000.00; 25 percent make over \$150,000.00; 12 percent make over \$250,000.00 a year. We think our demographic matches up very well with Esquire's target audience.

Horseplayers will debut on January 7th. That's right around the corner, Andrew. I would hope you guys are ready. Production and promotional budget is estimated at nearly \$3 million. It's being paid entirely by NBC and Hearst. Think about that. Here's a sport where we've spent a lot of money over the years trying to produce quality television to promote our game. NBC and Hearst have stepped up with a commitment of almost \$3 million.

They've had seven cameras following eight cast members on a nine month journey, as they try to qualify for the NHC. All the filming's in high def. They've been to the three Triple Crown events. They've gone to handicapping tournaments. As you can see there, the list of tracks. Really, some of the marquis venues throughout the United States of America. Really gonna promote and illustrate our best race tracks, and really some beautiful and picturesque locations throughout the country.

Esquire boilerplate is right there. It's being produced by Go Go Lucky. Go Go Lucky is also the entity that produced *Jockeys* a couple of years ago for the Animal Planet Network. They're very familiar with our sport. They're passionate about our sport. They want to portray horse racing in a very positive way. We're excited to be working with Go Go Lucky.

You saw the list of tracks that they are attending. I should also add that this is a reality show. In addition to attending those handicapping tournaments and in addition to going to each of the Triple Crown races, you're gonna see in the 10 episodes of *Horseplayers*, things like golf at Saratoga, deep sea fishing in Miami, a voodoo exorcism in New Orleans, a visit to a distillery in Central Kentucky. The crew and cast spent some time with Zenyatta at Lane's End Farm. They've rubbed elbows with celebrities and others, political personalities, really all along the way.

We think it's gonna be unique and very exciting and very different and should be a lot of fun. As Wendy said earlier, we've got Peter Rotondo. He's a cast member. He's also a Vice President of Media & Entertainment at the Breeders' Cup. We're delighted to have joining us today, Andrew Yex, a supervising producer for *Horseplayers*. Now, I'm gonna be quiet. I'm gonna turn it over to Andrew. Andrew, take us through some of the scenes in *Horseplayers*. Then we'll talk a little bit after that.

Mr. Andrew Yex: Thanks. About 15 years ago, I took a trip to Australia. I happened to be there during the Melbourne Cup. I don't know anything about horse racing, which these guys can certainly attest to. I was struck while I was there in Australia by the breadth of knowledge that the people there had about this sport. Having nothing to do with handicapping, having nothing to do with the ritual of the sport. What they knew was the sport itself. Every restaurant that I went to, every pub that I remember, they talked about the horses like they were their friends.

At first, I thought it was quaint at first; but after being there for a while, I started to really become fascinated with how deep it was ingrained in their culture and how much the sport. It seemed to me, it was like the U.S. fifty years ago. That stuck with me for quite a while. I had never been to a track in my life. It wasn't until I was about 30 that I went to my first track. It had nothing to do with going to the track. I happened to be doing a bad reality dating show and we did a segment at Santa Anita.

This sport absolutely blew me away. The mountains in the background, the track, the animals, the owners. Again, having nothing to do with the handicapping, nothing to do with a lot of the ritual. Just the sport itself, I thought, was amazing. I immediately went back to my computer and I wrote all these different shows. I thought, "Oh, we gotta bring this back to the public, and it's gotta be amazing." Then somewhere, somebody did a horse game show that did really badly, from what I remember. My agent said, "Put it away for five years."

It's always been in the back of my mind. It's something that I really, really wanted to do. Well, Go Go Lucky, who did *Jockeys* — and I wasn't involved with that — called me up 48 hours before shooting the first episode of the show. Somebody had done a pilot and it had gone through Esquire and come back to Go Go Lucky. They said, "Okay. We're gonna go off. Do you know anything about horse racing?" I said, "I don't know anything." They said, "Perfect because nobody else does either and we'll try to use that as a way to inform the audience."

As Peter can attest, my questions on day one ranged from, "What's a clocker?" to the end of the day, "Oh my God, why are they giving them Lasik surgery?" I didn't understand.

[Laughter]

Those poor horses. We did our best to — we approached it starting from ground zero. We were basing the series on the NHC, amazing drama that takes us episode to episode. Are the player's gonna make it; they're not gonna make it? At the end, there's a million dollar prize. For TV, that's fantastic. It'll keep people watching.

What we really wanted to do, even more so than showcase the NHC, was to reintroduce this sport to the public starting from ground zero. It wound up being a far larger task than we could even imagine. We would ask in interviews that would run for hours saying, "Okay. What's a speed horse? What is pace? What does this mean; what does that mean?" We tried to, through our characters, bring the information to the audience in such a way that everyone could understand it.

Everyone could play at home. Everyone would start to feel like they were part of this sport.

I'm gonna show you — I f you bring up clip one. I'm gonna show you a little bit of what we tried to do. I'm actually gonna show two clips of the show. These are unfinished clips, they're rough. I'm gonna give you two examples: One was, we tried to load as much information as we can through graphics and illustration and everything else. After that's done, I'll show you another clip, where we don't show any racing. There's no information. We just relied on our characters and their love for the sport to try to bring that love to the audience. Start with clip one?

[Clip One]

In that six or seven minute clip, you'll see we tried to define everything. We tried to define a tournament, what pace is, what they're betting, how they're betting, why they're betting and all this. That was about eight minutes, and that's about a quarter of a show. If we're gonna try and maintain an audience over the course of an hour, we need to strike a balance. We need to have a little bit more character.

We need to keep people involved. Quite honestly, we're not sure where that line is. We're constantly trying to play with it. We take it very, very, very seriously.

The odds of getting a show on the air are astronomical. It's incredibly different to get a show on the air. There's a bunch in development. They're at the one in San Diego; but, you gotta go back years to *Jockeys*, you gotta go back years for another show. We're cognizant of the responsibility that we have. We're immensely grateful to Keith, to Peter, to all of the tracks for opening up their doors. We're trying our best. We need to serve every audience, and try and get as many people to watch as we can.

The next clip I'm gonna show. It's a really, really short clip. Then certainly, Peter can speak more from an industry perspective of what we're trying to accomplish. This next little clip, I brought cuz, to an extent, purposefully, you'll see it's about two, two and a half minutes long. We show maybe three seconds, four seconds of racing. The entire clip is a home tournament. We wanted to try and show the fun of online tournaments and what the potential is there. We tried to do it cleverly through character. If you could bring up clip two, this'll be the next one.

[Clip Two]

[Applause]

Mr. Peter Rotondo: Well, yeah. That's my family

[Laughter]

That's dad and his best friend, Lee. That's Team Rotondo. I'll just give you a little background on how this all went down. About two years ago, I qualified for the NHC. Bryan Pettigrew, with the NTRA, brought a production company over to come shoot a sizzle reel. They thought horse racing and horse players were interesting, and they wanted to capture the moment. They mic'd a couple of us up and they followed us for the weekend. Then a long story short, Michael Beychok — right over there — was part of the cast. He won a million dollars, and they caught that all on tape.

That sizzle reel was pitched around to the networks. Within a month, the Esquire Network bought it; which, again, is so rare that it could happen so quickly. It went from there to what it is today; which, as Keith mentioned, you have a network owned by NBC putting up \$2 million to \$3 million of their own money to promote horse racing and horse players. Because, honestly, the horse players and the horse owners, they're an interesting group, right? I mean, they fund the sport at the end of the day. I think you'll see more and more promotion of both the players and the owners in time to come.

I got involved from the beginning. Obviously, I wanted — it's a great moment that I get to hang out with my dad. There's cameras following us to the track. He'd been taking me to the track since I was four years old. Now, we're going all over the country, so it's been a great thrill. The idea is we want to, again, show that there's — look at those guys over there. Christian Helmers, who's the best handicapper in the country; he's part of the cast. Matt Bernier, he's over there, the young gun. There's young guys involved, successful betting the horses. The old stereotype of the old man, although we have our boy, John Conte, with the magnifying glass involved.

The bottom line, those days are over with all this data involved in racing now. There's just so much more to it than has been exposed. These guys over at Esquire, they get it. They really do and it's nice. You sit in a meeting and they're

telling you what I've been telling everyone in my meetings for the past 10 years trying to promote the game and the Breeders' Cup. We're looking forward to it. January 7th will be the premier, 8:00 p.m., I believe, on Esquire. We'll go 10 episodes in a row. Hopefully, we'll see what happens.

Mr. Keith Chamblin: Peter mentioned that we've got some other cast members here. They're gonna be part of a panel this afternoon. Christian Helmers, Matt Bernier and Michael Beychok, who took down a million dollars at the 2012 NHD. Please stand up for a minute. These guys have been real troopers, traveling all over the country.

[Applause]

I would try to tell you that it's been a lot of work; but, I mean, you saw the list of venues that they've been visiting. I should have added that — Andrew, you even threw in I think a trip to Ascot at one time when Christian went over there during the summer.

Andrew, what do you think the key is to — I mean, once you get on television and you crack through and you're one of the small percentage of reality shows that actually is going to air. What's the critical component going forward that'll determine, obviously, viewership? Are people gonna tune it, watch it? How's it gonna be successful in your mind?

Mr. Andrew Yex: I think there's a lot to teach the audience, but I think the key is these guys. I think they're fantastic characters. They take us through it. This wasn't your typical reality show where it may be less than real. We couldn't make up most of the stuff that happened. They were troopers. They're great characters, this is a great cast. We got very, very, very lucky.

Mr. Keith Chamblin: We skew very strongly male. Did you try to bring some females into the cast, or what was your thinking there?

Mr. Andrew Yex: Well, I think so. I mean, we tried to — as often as possible, we worked with Molly. What's Molly's last name?

Mr. Keith Chamblin: Molly Magill.

Mr. Andrew Yex: Molly Magill, Lucy Jones down in Kentucky. We tried to bring as many characters in there that were relatable to everyone. Try not to have the characters speaking — this isn't really a male/female thing — but we tried not to have the characters speaking too much over anyone's head. We tried to make the track seem like what it can be, which is an event, an event to go to.

Audience Member: How much film have you shot over the last nine months for 10 one-hour episodes?

Mr. Keith Chamblin: I don't know. We tried to add this up. What did we come up with seven thousand hours? I don't know.

Mr. Andrew Yex: We shot seven cameras for 20 days perpetually. I couldn't even begin to add it up. We've got a staff of 20 people right now sitting in LA doing nothing but trying to get the footage into a computer.

Mr. Keith Chamblin: Peter, tell us about what's it been like to not only be part of a reality show and the cast and all the commitments that go into that, but also, you're trying to work. You're also trying to qualify for the NHC and compete in these, get to Las Vegas. Who's made it, who hasn't, and who's gonna be there in January so far?

Peter Rotondo: I don't know if we want to give that away. It's been a challenge. I mean, there are some of these from a personal point of view is, I'm always trying to balance, right? We're here to promote the game. I could get very emotional very quickly, especially with those guys prodding me along the way. It's been so much fun, as you can imagine.

Everything we're seeing, the footage is beautiful. I mean, Keeneland, it looks like the most beautiful I've ever seen. Then Santa Anita, with the mountains. It's just like every single place and every single race track has been so accommodating. They've opened up the doors. I couldn't image it would be as easy as it's been working on it from day one. It's just been spectacular.

As far as the personal level, again, working — getting ready for the Breeders' Cup and trying to shoot a reality show. Some of it was a challenge, especially with it being Breeders' Cup weekend. They were shooting me working, running around like a maniac. It all worked out. A couple of us are still trying to qualify, and that's the drama. I guess, if we qualified right off the bat, there wouldn't have been much to talk about. I think it's been working the storyline and the narrative has gone along almost perfectly. Now, a couple of us are in the home stretch and we gotta get in there, get to Vegas.

Mr. Keith Chamblin: We've got at least one more clip for Andrew to show everyone. If anybody has any questions, make your way to one of these microphones. We'll try to get Andrew to answer them while we've got him here.

Audience Member: Andrew, where do you find Esquire Network? From the industry standpoint here, how do we promote this so that people will find this show?

Mr. Andrew Yex: Is your question, where do you find it?

Audience Member: Where do you find Esquire Network? Then how's it promoted?

Mr. Keith Chamblin: Let me repeat that just into the microphone, so they'll get it. Where do you find Esquire Network? We said it's on 75 million homes. What was it and what is it now? Also, what can the industry do to help promote this series?

Peter Rotondo: Well, it was formerly the Style Network. NBC Universal has Bravo. They have E!, and they had Style.

Mr. Keith Chamblin: G4.

Peter Rotondo: G4, which is for gamers, right? I think what they originally — Esquire was gonna take over the G4 Network. Then NBC Universal had, I guess, an internal meeting of sorts and said, "We have a lot of program that's the same on Bravo, E! and Style. Do we really need three channels for that?" Esquire took over the Style Network. If you're on your cable system, wherever Style Network was, that's where Esquire is. It launched in late-September.

I think, as far as a racing point of view, the best thing we could do is push it amongst ourselves. I mean, I think once the racing crowd sees it, I mean, they're gonna get behind it. We just gotta make people aware. As we've learned through the years, the last two weeks leading up to anything on television — a premier or when we promote the Breeders' Cup—that's where the big push comes. You'll be starting to see a lot more promotion of it in the next couple of weeks.

Mr. Keith Chamblin: Andrew, what else do you have for us?

Mr. Andrew Yex: Do you want to see a little more of the —

Mr. Keith Chamblin: Sure.

Mr. Andrew Yex: The last clip I'm gonna show. Esquire has not started — from what I understand, has not started the full press campaign yet. We've delivered all of the material. They're getting ready to do their big promotional launch. I was just gonna show you the last two minutes is, what we call, our seasonal super-tease. This will be the first bit of promotion that starts coming out from the network.

[Clip]

[Applause]

Mr. Keith Chamblin: Anybody have any more questions for Andrew or Peter?

All right. Well, Andrew, we appreciate you giving us a sneak peek of the show. We look forward to doing anything we can to help promote it come January 7th.

Peter, thanks for joining us. We've got another panel this afternoon with all of the cast members that'll be part of it. Talking about NHC tournaments at race tracks

and online tournaments, and how they really represent an area of growth for our industry.

We hope you join us this afternoon. You can hear from the cast members and some of the tournament directors for online and on track tournaments that'll be part of that panel. Thanks for joining us.

[Applause]



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