

## **BHA Looks Ahead To IFHA Debate**

Paul Bittar, chief executive of the British Horseracing Authority (BHA), has outlined his hopes with the sessions at the [International Federation of Horseracing Authorities](#) (IFHA).

In May this year, the BHA wrote to the IFHA and sought its support for promoting international harmonization amongst all racing nations regarding anabolic steroids. The existence of inconsistencies among racing authorities had been highlighted following finding by BHA of prohibited substances in horses trained by Mahmood Al Zarooni who was later banned for eight years.

The BHA chief executive expressed support for introducing a minimum standard across racing nations and the commitment of British Racing to exceeding that minimum standard wherever possible. Bittar said the BHA strongly believes that there is a need to establish a minimum international standard relating to the use of anabolic steroids in horseracing and we welcome the opportunity for this to be discussed in detail amongst major racing nations. He added with horseracing subject to increasing levels of international competition, it is in the interests of the sport globally to develop a position which provides a level playing field for all participants. Bittar added that announcements regarding changes by the authorities in Dubai and, more recently, Australia, and New Zealand are welcome and have added momentum to the debate.

Bittar added the events of this year, together with the inconsistencies that exist across racing nations, have made it apparent that the control and regulation of the use of [anabolic steroids in racing](#) is a complex issue. The BHA chief executive added that our initial objective is to support the IFHA in producing a minimum standard all racing authorities could sign up to. He went on to remark however, subsequent to the conference the BHA intends to continue work on establishing a revised position that is relevant for British Racing and comprised of effective and enforceable measures. Bittar also remarked it is anticipated that this position will exceed the minimum standard in several areas and any amendments to our Rules will provide for the implementation and enforcement of the minimum standard. He also said we anticipate this process, including all necessary consultation, will be completed early in 2014.

Bittar recently remarked that BHA will investigate whether it will be able to follow the lead set by the Australian Racing Board and introduce a blanket ban on the [use of anabolic steroids in horses](#), both in and out of competition. Peter McGauran, the chief executive of Australian Racing Board, had remarked that the ban on anabolic steroids goes far beyond any other racing jurisdiction outside Europe and was decided by the ARB after lengthy consideration of veterinary

and scientific advice and consultation with trainers' and owners' associations. He added the ARB has adopted a zero tolerance policy to the use of anabolic steroids in competition, training and spelling [pre-training] and will institute heavy penalties for breaches of the ban. In response, Bittar said he was hopeful that the Zarooni scandal could bring about some movement towards harmonization but he wasn't expecting Australia to go that far, that quickly.