

MEDIA RELEASE



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FOR RELEASE: Wednesday 18 August 2021

INTER DOMINION WILL GO ON, DESPITE PANDEMIC

Sydney may be in lockdown, but harness fans will be excited to hear Club Menangle and Harness Racing NSW will press on with plans to host the Inter Dominion in November and December this year.

With the landscape changing almost daily, Club Menangle has decided to draw its own line in the sand and host the Inters, with several contingency plans also put in place to ensure it goes ahead.

The club has urged trainers to go ahead and nominate their horses if they are considering contesting the time-honoured series, so the club can begin planning how best to accommodate them.

Club Menangle chief executive Bruce Christison knows there will be plenty of hurdles to clear if the series is to go ahead with three rounds and a Grand Final, but the club wants to ensure the trainers have something to aim for with their elite pacers and trotters.

"Our No.1 priority has been and always will be the safety of our staff, participants and patrons," said Christison.

"Providing NSW Health allows us to keep racing, we will put the necessary protocols and controls in place to enable us to run the Inter Dominion. About 15 months ago we made the decision to postpone the 2020 Inter Dominion because of the COVID pandemic," said Christison.

"If anything, things have actually become worse since then. Barring any major direction, like a public health order from the State Government, we have made the commitment to hold the Inter Dominion this year."

"We decided we can't go another year without an Inter Dominion, it's too important to get the brand back out there."

While it's inevitable crowd numbers will be severely limited, Christison said any crowd would be better than no fans at all. "That's meant a change to our marketing plans," he said.

"As much as we'd love this to be an opportunity to reach a new audience and people who have not witnessed harness racing at its finest; we now have to focus on our harness fans and catering for them as much we can."

Christison urged trainers contemplating whether to contest the Inter Dominion to go ahead and nominate.

"The nomination costs nothing and once we know who may be there, we can take steps to ensure they are there and we can set about making this the best series that we possibly can," he said.

The first round of Inter Dominion heats are scheduled for November 27 at Tabcorp Park Menangle.

At this stage, the second round is scheduled to be at Bathurst on December 1, the third round at Newcastle on December 5, and the Grand Final at Menangle on December 11.

Trainers have until September 27 to nominate.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION TELEPHONE CLUB MENANGLE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BRUCE CHRISTISON ON (02) 4645-2200.