

Returning to race riding following any serious illness, injury or suspected injury

Any jockey who is unable to race ride as a result of an injury or illness must notify the BHA Medical Department as soon as it is practically possible. This is a mandatory requirement and applies to any injury, regardless of where or when it happened – schooling, car accident, playing soccer etc. It is also recommended that professional jockeys contact the PJA Medical Adviser at the same time

Jockeys who suffer an injury at a racecourse on a raceday will be seen by the RMO on duty. The RMO will record the incident on the computerised medical injury system and no further notification is normally required. **However, there are two instances when this is not the case:**

1/ An incorrect diagnosis. It is often very difficult for the RMO to make an exact diagnosis in the short time available and a provisional diagnosis is only feasible before the jockey is sent off to hospital (e.g. ‘possible fracture of the ankle’). The final diagnosis will therefore not be established until the jockey arrives at the hospital and has an X-ray taken. This information will not be available to the RMO when s/he records the incident on the central computer system and it will therefore be logged as an ‘ankle fracture’ by the BHA Medical Department. This cannot be changed until additional medical information is provided to the BHA.

If a jockey has an X-ray taken at the hospital that rules out a fracture (something that is very common), the jockey must ask the hospital A+E Department to give them a ‘Discharge Note’ (also called a Discharge Summary or GP letter) before they leave. This can be done very quickly and a copy of the Discharge Note can then be sent by fax to the BHA Medical Department on 0207-152-0136. This will speed up the clearance to return to race riding

2/ The condition deteriorates. What may seem to be a trivial injury on the racecourse may actually get worse that evening, or the following day, and the jockey will then see their own GP for further investigation and treatment. The injury will still be recorded as a ‘soft tissue injury’ by the BHA Medical Department and if the injury turns out to be significant (e.g. fractured fibula), the jockey should contact the BHA Medical Department immediately. This will enable a RED ENTRY to be made for the original racecourse incident (and, for professional jockeys, will ensure that PRIS payments start immediately).

Returning to race riding

Racing is no different to any other sport and a period of rehabilitation is normally required between being 100% injured and 100% recovered. After an initial period of rest, the jockey will be allowed to return to restricted activities (often involving physiotherapy) before being allowed to start riding out again. The time spent in each phase will vary enormously but, in principle, a jockey would be expected to be riding

out regularly for around 2 weeks without any recurrence of symptoms before being considered for clearance to race ride again.

After any serious illness or injury, clearance to return to race riding involves a simple 3 stage process:

Stage 1 (GP or Specialist clearance) - the jockey must get clearance from their own GP or specialist that they are fully recovered and that they can now consider a return to race riding.

NB. If the specialist gives a general statement that 'the jockey will be fit in 3 months time', a further assessment will be necessary at the end of 3 months before they are allowed to return to race riding. This should be discussed directly with the BHA CMA so that the process is not delayed unnecessarily.

Stage 2 (BHA CMA clearance) - reports from all the medical team involved in the case (specialists, GP, physiotherapist), with copies of any X-ray or MRI reports, must be sent to the BHA Medical Department. This information will only be released to the BHA with the signed consent of the individual jockey and (under the provisions of the Access to Health Records Act 1990) the doctor has 21 days to respond to any request of this sort. In every case, the injured jockey will be asked to sign a standard Consent Form by the BHA Medical Department and this form should be returned quickly if delays are to be avoided.

On receipt of the relevant information, the BHA CMA will review the case and make a decision regarding a return to race riding

- a) The jockey is fit – clearance is given to see a RMO on a raceday (see **Stage 3** below)
- b) The jockey is not considered to be fit yet – further information is requested or a second opinion arranged

Stage 3 (RMO Clearance) – **No jockey should book a ride until Stages 1 and 2 have been completed satisfactorily and they have received confirmation from the BHA Medical Department that they have reached the stage of 'RMO Clearance'**. The only situation when this does not apply is when a jockey suffers a simple fractured clavicle (collar bone). In this instance the jockey can miss out Stage 2 and pass straight from Stage 1 to Stage 3.

The jockey will present him/herself to a RMO on a racecourse on a raceday so that a medical examination can be carried out. This would normally take place some 90 minutes before the start of racing to give the RMO time to complete the process well before the 1st Race.

The RMO will then decide if -

- a) The jockey is fit (the jockey is cleared to ride immediately and the RED ENTRY is removed)

- b) The jockey is not fit (the RED ENTRY remains in place and the BHA CMA is notified)

All queries in this regard should be addressed to –

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