

## CARTER CARNEGIE

This summer, Carter Carnegie, former Senior Vice President of Breeders' Cup, was appointed to the position of International Executive for Great British Racing International, the newly launched marketing and promotional body for British racing. Carnegie has worked in numerous areas of commercial sports development, including positions affiliated with the NBA and the NFL. Emma Berry sat down with Carnegie to get the scoop on his new role, as well as his outlook on British and International racing.



**Carter Carnegie**  
*Racing Post*

**EB: You started your new role with Great British Racing International in mid-August. How are you settling in and what have been your initial steps in facing this new challenge?**

CC: Over the past few weeks I've been focused on meeting with the leadership of the main British racing and breeding organizations to understand how GBRI can best assist them to achieve their international goals. The scope of our mission is very broad and there are considerable opportunities, so I want to make sure that we deploy our resources in areas that can be most beneficial to our constituents.

**EB: What first attracted you to the role of International Executive with Great British Racing International?**

CC: Britain is a center of excellence for horse racing, so the idea of leading a new organization which aims to capitalize on this expertise and knowledge globally was an immediate draw. Horse racing is truly international, yet many racing jurisdictions tend to focus more on their own issues and development of the game.

The globalization of the sport is an important future growth area for both fans and participants, and the idea of working on ways to ensure that Britain is in the best place to attract a growing share of Thoroughbred investment was appealing.

**EB: As an American, can you put into words the appeal of horse racing in Great Britain from the perspective of an overseas fan and participant?**

CC: Although I have spent most of my professional horse racing industry career in the U.S., I was raised in Europe, where I first experienced the sport and fell in love with it. Thoroughbred racing as we know it originated on Newmarket Heath in the 1600s, so to engage in its history and be part of its continued progress is a real privilege. One of sport's greatest strengths is its heritage, for both fans and participants, and Great Britain represents this aspect more than any other country. I believe the ability to witness or participate in the sport in the UK is the wish of any fan or owner at least once in their lifetime. No different than an avid golfer wanting to play a round at St. Andrews or attend The Open.

**EB: There's been talk of the lack of funding for marketing in British racing when set against some of the country's major European counterparts. If such a problem exists, are you confident this can be overcome in your quest for major new investors in the sport?**

CC: Racing for Change, recently renamed Great British Racing, has done a fantastic job domestically to grow awareness and interest in the sport whilst modernizing it for future generations. This has been achieved on relatively modest budgets, but the growth in interest, attendances and revenues is the envy of their European counterparts. Prize money remains an issue, but it is being tackled and, on the plus side, the quality of the competition, the significance of the sport nationally and its avid fan base make racing in Britain a highly pleasurable experience.

Racing is called the 'Sport of Kings,' and rightly so with Her Majesty The Queen a regular participant. The strong fan base, superb facilities and prestige of the game in the UK are compelling incentives for investors who wish to own, breed, train and race in Britain. Although the purse structure may not be as attractive as some racing jurisdictions, the quality of the sport means that UK-trained horses prove highly attractive in the secondary market, commanding strong prices internationally from both private purchasers and at the dispersal sales.

**EB: As a former Senior Vice President of Breeders' Cup Ltd, in what way do you feel British racing can broaden the appeal of its major 'showcase' events, not just to potential racegoers, but to big-name sponsors?**

CC: The UK's most famous international race meeting, Royal Ascot, is sponsor-free, and its success and global profile has no equal. However, I feel that there exists many other great opportunities for commercial involvement. Britain has, in two short years, established QIPCO British Champions' Day as one of the world's most important race meetings, and the UK has no shortage of 'showcase' events in both flat and jumps racing. I hope to work with the various stakeholders of these properties to see if we can unlock more value for potential commercial partners, as I believe they offer terrific marketing platforms for the right brands.

**EB: Do you feel British racing has become too reliant on 'in-house' sponsorship, such as from major breeding operations and bookmakers?**

CC: Like any other sport, sponsors tend to gravitate to opportunities that fit in their overall marketing plan and strategy. No different than golf club equipment companies wishing to associate with a professional event, bookmakers and major breeding operations see value in associating with racing, as it is relevant to their business. These endemic relationships exist in all levels of sports sponsorships, and are vitally important to all properties that look at these lines of revenues as essential to their business.

We just need to find ways to attract other companies who may not yet realize the value of an association with racing and how it could impact their business with the right marketing program in place.

**EB: The British yearling sales season started strongly at Doncaster with an essentially domestic client base. As we head into the Tattersalls October Sale, do you think we will see increased overseas investment in British and Irish Thoroughbreds?**

CC: The yearling sales have been incredibly resilient in the last few years thanks to strong overseas participation at all levels of the market. Tattersalls Book 1 is again an outstanding catalogue, and the sire power in Britain and Ireland is very hard for international buyers to ignore. The feedback that we are getting is very positive, and we look forward to welcoming buyers from around the world.

**EB: How closely will you be working with the sales houses in order to retain the interest of current investors in British racing and attract new owners and breeders?**

CC: I have had an opportunity to work with the sales houses in my previous role at the Breeders' Cup, which has helped in my transition to this new role.

The sales companies already cover a huge amount of ground in promoting their sales, and we will all be working together to promote our products, racing and breeding in Britain to as wide an international audience as possible. Working on developing new programs and incentives will be one of the ways I think we can attract new owners and breeders.

**EB: How much do the tighter rules on medication use in European racing make a difference to promoting the sport to new owners and sponsors?**

CC: Drug scandals are a worrying issue for all sports, with fans, sponsors and participants wanting reassurance that they're competing or witnessing the highest elements of a sport competing on a level playing field.

Thankfully, horse racing in the UK has been aware of these challenges for many years, and has been very effective at policing them. Such rules and the immediate action taken when an infraction occurs can only give confidence to the new owner that they are participating in a sport that takes its integrity very seriously.

**EB: Can you envisage QIPCO British Champions' Day attracting a greater number of horses from outside Europe in years to come?**

CC: The level of competition in Europe is demanding so it takes a special horse to come over and compete, but more are doing so in the knowledge that a winner here is of considerable value at stud. With the recent announcement of Irish Champions' Day starting next year, I think that foreign owners will now find even stronger reasons to travel their best horses and run in Europe's major season-ending events, including QIPCO British Champions' Day, and as a fan of racing I look forward to seeing international owners take on such challenges.

**EB: You also have experience of working with the NBA and NFL in the U.S. Are there lessons that the horse racing industry as a whole could learn from other sports?**

CC: It is clear that when a sport either nationally or internationally has the ability to centralize its commercial and television rights while having a strong governing body to shape not only the rules of the sport but also its business agenda, great things can be achieved. However, it does require a certain level of trust from the various stakeholders and a genuine commitment to want to work more together than against each other.

Too often in racing we think of our competitor as the organization that is conducting the same business as us, and we tend to lose sight that our greatest competitor is not other racing and breeding products, but all the other forms of sport and entertainment available.