

Nightmare start for jumps season

- by: *Adrian Dunn and Nathan Mawby*
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Jotilla had to be euthanised after falling at the second-last jump in the first race at Sandown.
Picture: Michael Dodge *Source: Herald Sun*

JUMPS racing sparked fresh outrage when a horse was put down in the first race of the new season at Sandown yesterday.

Jotilla clipped the second-last fence in the steeple and smashed his shoulder on hitting the turf.

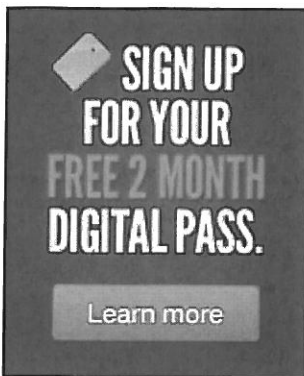
Jockey Rowan Waymouth was not injured.

A fatality in the first event of the new 70-race season is a public relations nightmare for the sport.

The RSPCA has run a sustained campaign to ban jumps racing despite the State Government guaranteeing its future.

RSPCA president Dr Hugh Wirth last night urged Premier Ted Baillieu to cancel the season.

"As far as the RSPCA is concerned, the Premier should tonight call off the 2012 jumps season," he said. "They (government) are the only ones with the power to stop this nonsense."



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Risky ride

Should jumps racing be banned?

- Yes
 No

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Protester Elio Celotto, campaign manager of the Coalition for the Protection of Racehorses, witnessed yesterday's tragedy.

He was asked by security and Melbourne Racing Club chief Al Robertson to leave the racecourse after trying to take photos of the stricken horse.

Mr Celotto left of his own volition but a female protester was ushered from the racecourse by security guards.

Jockey Waymouth said he could not believe Jotilla's fate.

"He just clipped the top of the jump," he said. "I thought 'He'll get up, he'll be right'. I thought he just corked himself, I just can't believe the outcome."

Racing Victoria CEO Rob Hines said the death had been referred to the Jumps Review Panel and there would be an autopsy.

Racing Victoria chief vet Dr Brian Stewart said it appeared the nine-year-old fractured a shoulder.

Racing Minister Denis Napthine, a keen supporter of jumps racing, was instrumental in boosting prizemoney this season.

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