



# Churchill Downs, Trakus in talks over horse-tracking system

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By **Matt Hegarty**

Churchill Downs is close to an agreement that would allow the track to install an electronic real-time horse-tracking system in time for the opening of the spring meet on April 30 and the Kentucky Derby on May 7, officials of Churchill and the data company Trakus confirmed this week.

John Asher, vice president of racing communications at Churchill, said that the track is “optimistic that something can be put in place” over the next several weeks, but he said “no formal agreement has been signed.”

“We’re talking with them, and the talks are positive,” Asher said. “We’re interested in what they can do and what they can provide to our racing fans.” Other officials who have been to Churchill Downs recently have said that equipment for the system is already in the process of being installed at the track.

Trakus uses an array of antennas placed around a track and wireless transmitters inserted into horses’ saddlecloths to provide a real-time graphical display of the position of horses in races. The system, already in place at three North American racetracks – Keeneland in Lexington, Del Mar in Southern California, and Woodbine outside of Toronto – has been praised by many racing fans for providing an accurate representation of the running order that is not available through traditional camera angles and the reliance on chartcallers to manually produce in-race running orders on graphical displays.

Barry Weisbord, a member of Trakus’s board and the company’s business development adviser, would only confirm that the company is in talks with Churchill, citing Churchill’s sensitivity toward announcing business deals.

If the deal goes through, it would be the third to be announced by Trakus this year. Two weeks ago, the company said it had signed deals for the installation of the system for Santa Anita’s fall meet and for Gulfstream’s next meet, which is scheduled to begin in December.

For Churchill, the system could enhance the graphical display of its simulcast product and provide other display options for its in-house monitors. In addition, Trakus’s clients frequently format the data provided

by the system into handicapping products that denote, for example, a horse's ground covered and instances in which a horse rapidly accelerates or decelerates.

Churchill owns a racing-data company, Bloodstock Research Information Services, that produces past-performance products for handicappers. Churchill also owns the largest account-wagering operation in the United States, twinspires.com, and it frequently ties access to data products to its customer-marketing efforts.

Because of the system's ability to accurately track large fields of horses, Trakus also could aid in the production of the Derby chart, which has proved difficult for chartcallers to produce because of its 20-horse field. In 2009, Equibase released a corrected chart for the Derby after horses had been transposed as a "result of a clerical error." In 2001, Equibase revised the chart for the Derby twice after several horses were listed in the wrong positions by chartcallers.

*For additional information please see:*

<http://www.drj.com/news/churchill-downs-trakus-talks-over-horse-tracking-system>