

[Print](#)**Stronach says he wants to leave  
Santa Anita main track alone****by Larry Stewart**

MI Developments Inc. Chairman Frank Stronach told the Thoroughbred Owners of California in a meeting on Monday at Santa Anita Park that he plans to put in a new surface on the training track at the Arcadia, California, facility but leave the main track alone.

"That caught us by surprise," TOC chair Marsha Naify said.

Santa Anita President Ron Charles announced on January 18 that the current Pro-Ride synthetic surface on the main track would be replaced at the end of the current meeting on April 18 and said track management seriously was considering a traditional dirt surface.

What is going to happen now is anybody's guess.

One source who is close to Stronach cautioned that a lot of things can change between now and the opening of the Oak Tree meeting at Santa Anita in October. In other words, just because Stronach says today that he wants to leave the main track alone, it does not necessarily mean that will continue to be the case.

Stronach's MI Developments has taken control of Santa Anita and other properties from subsidiary Magna Entertainment Corp. Stronach first met with the TOC board on Monday morning and then spoke during a separate meeting with the California Thoroughbred Trainers track committee.

Reporters were not allowed to attend either meeting. People in attendance said what Stronach mainly wanted to get across was that he wants to see movement in the industry toward a different business model. The indication was that if he sees movement, he will be more receptive to investing in the industry.

Stronach repeated what he had told reporters in separate interviews over the weekend, including one with THOROUGHBRED TIMES—that he wants the industry to be deregulated. A strong advocate of free enterprise, Stronach wants to be able to schedule racing without government restrictions.

"He has things on his agenda that he views as a higher priority than some of us do," said Darrell Vienna, who is a member of the CTT track committee. "But we're sympathetic to his concerns and are looking forward to getting things straightened out. We just have to feel our way through all this."

*Larry Stewart is a Southern California-based Thoroughbred Times correspondent*

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