

# At The Races and TurfTrax team up to stage sectional timing experiment at Southwell

SECTIONAL timing returns to a British racecourse for the first time in more than two years this afternoon when At The Races teams up with TurfTrax to stage a live trial at Southwell, writes *Graham Green*.

Viewers will see the time of the leading horse flash up on screen after every furlong of each race, and afterwards detailed data relating to all the runners is being made available for punters to study online.

The technology, which utilises a small transmitter in the horse's saddlecloth and fixed receivers at various points on the course, was successfully tested off-air at the Nottinghamshire venue's

meeting on October 5.

ATR executive producer Rob Dakin said yesterday: "It's going to be a one-off trial to start with, because it's obviously quite an expensive process and we'd have to look at a way of funding it long-term, but the reason we're putting it out there is to try to get some feedback and see how helpful and useful it is to punters and people who study form."

Sectional timing has long been regarded as an integral part of race-reading in a number of countries, including the United States, with supporters arguing precise knowledge of pace allows closer analysis of each horse's performance.

However, the TurfTrax service has had a mixed history in Britain where, despite compliments about the quality of the information and its reliability, it has failed to gain a foothold, partly through lack of interest, cost, and belief it is less useful than in other countries.

The service has not been available since July 2008, when the company underwent a radical restructuring.

Today's trial is another boost for TurfTrax, which recently reached agreement with the Victoria Racing Club for its BHA-approved GoingStick to be used at the Emirates Melbourne Cup Carnival which starts this month.

Dakin added: "The time for

the leading horse after each furlong will pop up on-screen and that will stay there until the next furlong comes up, and so on through the race.

"In addition to that, also available will be sectional times for every runner, which will be displayed on artheraces.com.

"The data will be relevant only to a very small percentage of people to start with, because sectional times aren't widely used in the UK, but the plan is that if we make them more widely available, demand would increase.

"It is something we see as giving extra value for the viewers, and we're not looking on this as a way of making extra money."

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