

The Grand National is a horse racing event held in Aintree, England each year. The race has garnered opponents who have claimed the race to be “one of the longest and most hazardous in the world.” Since the year 2000, a total of sixty-two horses have died at this very track from broken necks or backs after failing to jump a barrier. This includes three horses from this year’s race. Those staggering numbers have not gone unnoticed by animal rights groups in the area. This year over authorities arrested one hundred activists ahead of the race after managing to breach the perimeter of the track and delay the start by 15 minutes. This article is short<sup>1</sup>, highlighting only a couple sources on each side. The anti-racing stakeholders consist of PETA UK, the League Against Cruel Sports, and Animal Aid while both the owner of the track and the executive officer of the British Horseracing Authority make the pro-racing points. My primary source is from The Guardian, a well-respected publication. While the author may have accurately presented both sides, they shied away from showing any defense for the teams or event organizers, thus showing a bias against racing.

It is not that the author outright voiced their opinion on what they think of horse racing, rather they consciously chose to prefer more anti-racing views. Evidence of this is that the first statement from a pro-racing stakeholder appears in about the last 20 percent of the article. Allocating the rest to anti-racing stakeholders and viewpoints. Unfortunately, the author remains anonymous, making it impossible to gather any potential evidence of bias from their other works. When comparing this article to one authored by someone with clear anti-racing views, it is clear they are for similar audiences and for similar purposes. For instance, an article with clear bias from VeganFoodAndLiving.com covering this issue uses the same stat about sixty-two deaths since the year 2000 and the same quote from PETA UK regarding the race as a “national disgrace” as in The Guardian article<sup>2</sup>.

Another piece of evidence toward the author's biases is which quotes represent either side of the argument. The pro-racing quotes used here are incredibly brief and hollow by design. An example is the quote, "Our thoughts are with everyone connected to the horses who suffered fatal injuries this week." The choice to include a clearly run-of-the-mill response is to show the pro-racing's impartiality to the animal rights abuses. Contrast this with language like "brutal horrors," "disgrace," "utter shame," and "carnage" found in quotes by the anti-racing stakeholders. This is evidence of a contextual imbalance between both sides which could lead to the reader feeling that the pro-racing side is weaker to argue for. Though these words did not come from the author's mouth, they specifically chose to include such language for a greater appeal to emotion.

The author does not state any real counterarguments. While there may be valid perspectives and reasoning supporting the continuation of racing and the current safety measures in place, these viewpoints are not present in the article. The governing body of horse racing in Great Britain outline their horse welfare strategy in a document over one hundred pages long which include guidelines on safer fence posts and EcoTrack as an alternative to wood chips, among others<sup>3</sup>. Simple examples would be them choosing not to mention the \$11,000 raised for various charities or the \$3,000,000 of taxes generated this year alone<sup>4</sup>. These omissions can further contribute to a perception of limited representation of opposing views, thus showing their bias.

Sometimes it is not what someone says that shows their biases, but rather what they do not say or show. The author/editor/media outlet gives prominence to the emotionally charged words and phrases from activists, while not granting the same level of attention or analysis to opposing viewpoints. By not including sufficient counterarguments or alternative perspectives,

the article creates an imbalance in the presentation of viewpoints, which can influence the reader's perception of the issue. These techniques I found the author using led me to believe that the author holds a bias against horse racing.

## References

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4. Anderson J. 2023 Apr 13. GRAND OFFER Charities set to win big with over 40 MPs backing BGC's Grand National Charity Bet campaign. The Sun; [accessed 2023 Jun 18]. <https://www.thesun.co.uk/sport/22029719/grand-national-charity-bet-aintree/>