

Ascot racegoers given a dressing down from the sticker brigade

Alexi Mostrous

Ascot is to give refunds worth £28,000 to angry racegoers who were marked with orange stickers for failing a stringent dress code brought in at the weekend.

Charles Barnett, the racecourse chief executive, apologised for “lack of judgment”, and added: “No customer should be expected to pay for such an experience.”

About 100 visitors to Ascot’s Premier Enclosure on Saturday were deemed to have contravened the new dress code, which required male ticket-holders to wear a jacket and tie.

The bright sticker, right, was intended as a warning, but their use provoked anger from racegoers. “I was wearing a blazer, shirt and a smart pair of jeans,” Ronan Groome, a journalism student, told *The Times*. “We were heading to the press room and an old guy standing on the stairs put these orange stickers on us. I was more surprised than anything else. It was no way to treat customers.”

Another racegoer described the process as “being Tangoed by the orange sticker brigade”.

Mr Barnett said that about 1,000 visitors to the Premier Enclosure would be refunded for their £28 tickets. “We will not allow our reputation as a welcoming sports venue to be tarnished by an isolated lack of judgment on our part.”

A stricter dress code was introduced because members had given the management “consistent messages” that they wanted a higher standard, an Ascot spokesman said. But he added that the next meeting would be dealt with more sensitively. “No one is going to be turned away.”

The move provoked protests on Twitter. Cathryn Fry, a racing writer, wrote: “It’s disgraceful. I was planning a trip to Ascot in June, but not now!” Jeremiah Catskill, a racing tipster, said he was

Suitable attire

Wimbledon For the Royal Box, gentlemen are asked to wear suits, jackets and ties. Ladies are requested not to wear hats so as not to obscure play for those behind

Lords MCC members are expected to maintain an acceptable standard of dress in the friends’ enclosure, which also means no bare torsos, feet or midriffs. Those wearing “dilapidated or offensive garments of any kind” will not be admitted. Cycling shorts, beach wear, flip-flops, ripped jeans, tracksuits and military camouflage are listed as such. Gentlemen can wear shorts, so long as they are tailored. You can get away without a jacket, but shirts must be neat and with collars. Sleeveless shirts are not permitted

Formula 1 In the paddock, smart casual is recommended. Flip-flops are considered inadvisable for safety reasons



“gobsmacked at the attitude displayed by a premier racecourse”.

It was announced last week that women will have to wear hats, rather than skimpy fascinators, in the Royal Enclosure at Royal Ascot in June. Racecourse chiefs complained that guests were arriving dressed “as if they were going to the beach”.

For other race days, the new code states: “In Premier Admission, gentlemen should wear a jacket and tie, smart trousers or smart jeans, no trainers. There will be an announcement on the day allowing jackets to be removed should it be hot. Ladies should dress for a smart occasion: hats are encouraged.”

Liz Hurley and a friend dress the part

