

MS BROOKE MCPHERSON & MR TOM GILLIGAN - INQUIRY CONDUCTED SEPTEMBER 21, 2023

Harness Racing New South Wales (HRNSW) Stewards conducted an Inquiry yesterday into the conduct of licensed Trainer/Driver Ms Brooke McPherson and licensed Driver Mr Tom Gilligan in relation to the registered standardbred LOOKINFORAREASON, a horse trained by Ms McPherson that was engaged in race 5, the HARNESS TRADING RING AUSTRALIA PACE (1740 metres) at Wagga on Friday 4 August 2023. LOOKINFORAREASON was subsequently withdrawn from the race by order of the Stewards.

An investigation was commenced on 4 August 2023 after HRNSW Stewards observed Ms McPherson to administer the contents of a syringe into the mouth of LOOKINFORAREASON whilst the horse was located in the horse float during transportation to the racecourse.

Ms McPherson and Mr Gilligan were present at the Inquiry via Zoom and presented evidence in relation to the horse LOOKINFORAREASON and their husbandry practices.

Results of analysis for the blood and urine samples obtained from LOOKINFORAREASON were presented and confirmed that there were no prohibited substances detected. In addition, the results of analysis for items used in the administration were also presented and although these confirmed that there were no prohibited substances detected, the presence of alkalinising agents was reported.

HRNSW Stewards issued a charge against Ms McPherson pursuant to Australian Harness Racing Rule 196C(1)(a) & (2)(a) which states:

AHRR 196C. (1) A person must not administer an alkalinising agent in any manner to a horse which is engaged to run in a race:

- (a) at any time on the day of the scheduled race and prior to the start of the race;
- (b) at any time within one (1) clear day of the commencement of the race.
- (2) Any person who:-
 - (a) administers an alkalinising agent;
 - (b) attempts to administer an alkalinising agent;
 - (c) causes an alkalinising agent to be administered; and/or
 - (d) is a party to the administration of, or an attempt to administer, an alkalinising agent

contrary to sub-rule (1) is guilty of an offence.

Ms McPherson pleaded guilty and was disqualified for a period of 6 months to commence from 8 August 2023, the date upon which she was stood down pursuant to AHRR 183.

In considering penalty Stewards were mindful of the following:

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- The serious nature of this offence;
- Ms McPherson's guilty plea;
- Ms McPherson's 1st offence of this nature;
- No prohibited substances detected;
- Ms McPherson's licence history, remorse and other personal subjective facts.

Ms McPherson was advised of her right to appeal this decision.

HRNSW Stewards also issued a charge against Mr Gilligan pursuant to Australian Harness Racing Rule 196C(1)(a) & (2)(d) as above.

Mr Gilligan pleaded guilty and was suspended for a period of 3 months to commence immediately.

In considering penalty Stewards were mindful of the following:

- The serious nature of this offence;
- Mr Gilligan's guilty plea;
- Mr Gilligan's 1st offence of this nature;
- No prohibited substances detected;
- Mr Gilligan's licence history, remorse and other personal subjective facts.
- The confession made by Mr Gilligan in relation to his involvement and the fact that the subject charge resulted from that confession.

Mr Gilligan was advised of his right to appeal this decision.

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