

MR GRANT FORREST & MR DENNIS ROMERO- INQUIRY CONDUCTED

AUGUST 14, 2024

Harness Racing New South Wales (HRNSW) Stewards conducted an Inquiry today into a report received from the Australian Racing Forensic Laboratory (ARFL) that Metformin has been detected in the post-race urine sample taken from JACKIES GIFT following its win in race 1, the ULTRA AIR 2YO TROTTERS FOUNDATION HEAT 1 (1609 metres) conducted at Tabcorp Park Menangle on Tuesday 30 April 2024.

The reserve portion and control solution were confirmed by Racing Analytical Services Limited (RASL) in Victoria.

Licensed Trainer Mr Grant Forrest appeared at the Inquiry and presented evidence in relation to the horse JACKIES GIFT and his registered training establishment. Mr Dennis Romero, a previously licensed stablehand gave evidence by telephone in relation to his medical history and his involvement with the registered training establishment of Mr Forrest from August 2023 until the end of May 2024.

A number of documents were entered into evidence at the Inquiry including the Certificates of Analysis in relation to the post-race urine sample, together with medication records for Mr Romero.

The registered owner of the horse JACKIES GIFT, Mr Gregory Forrest, was also in attendance at the Inquiry.

HRNSW Regulatory Veterinarian, Dr Martin Wainscott, was also present and provided evidence to the Inquiry that the presence of metformin detected in the urine sample had most likely resulted from contamination within the stable environment.

Mr Grant Forrest pleaded guilty to two (2) charges issued against him pursuant to the Australian Harness Racing Rules as follow:

Charge 1: AHRR 190 (1), (2) & (4) for presenting IMPERIALS GEM to race not free of a prohibited substance; and

Charge 2: AHRR 226 for permitting Mr Romero to perform the duties of a stablehand without holding a stablehand's licence.

In consideration of an appropriate penalty, HRNSW Stewards were mindful of the following:

- The circumstances of this matter including evidence of Dr Wainscott in relation to contamination;
- Mr Forrest's licence history, offence record, training and driving records during a 15 year involvement in the harness racing industry;
- Mr Forrest's personal subjective facts;
- Mr Forrest's first prohibited substance matter;
- Mr Forrest's guilty pleas.

In relation to Mr Forrest, HRNSW Stewards imposed the following penalties:

Charge 1: \$2000 fine

Charge 2: \$500 fine

Mr Forrest was advised of his appeal rights.

Mr Romero pleaded guilty to two (2) charges issued against him pursuant to the Australian Harness Racing Rules as follow:

Charge 1: AHRR 239A in relation to his conduct and/or negligence that led to the detection of Metformin in the subject urine sample.

Charge 2: AHRR 204 for performing the duties of a stablehand without holding a stablehand's licence.

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**For further information on this matter contact:
HRNSW Integrity Department
(02) 9722 6655**

In consideration of an appropriate penalty, HRNSW Stewards were mindful of the following:

- The circumstances of this matter including evidence of Dr Wainscott in relation to contamination;
- Mr Romero's licence history, offence record, training and driving records during a 47 year involvement in the harness racing industry;
- Mr Romero's personal subjective facts;
- Mr Romero's first involvement in a prohibited substance matter;
- Mr Romero's guilty pleas.

In relation to Mr Romero, HRNSW Stewards imposed the following penalties:

Charge 1: \$2000 fine

Charge 2: \$500 fine

Mr Romero was advised of his appeal rights.

Having considered submissions from Mr Gregory Forrest in relation to the horse JACKIES GIFT and AHRR 195, HRNSW Stewards disqualified JACKIES GIFT from the abovementioned race.

Mr Gregory Forrest was advised of his right to appeal the decision of HRNSW Stewards to disqualify his horse.

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