

## MR PAUL TONKIN- INQUIRY CONDUCTED

NOVEMBER 28, 2024

**Harness Racing New South Wales (HRNSW) Stewards conducted an Inquiry yesterday into a report received from the Australian Racing Forensic Laboratory (ARFL) that Tapentadol was detected in the urine sample taken from LITTLE ARTY MISS following its win in race 3, the SUCCESS STUD PACE (1740 metres) conducted at Wagga on Friday 1 March 2024.**

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

Trainer Mr Paul Tonkin appeared at the Inquiry and presented evidence in relation to his registered training establishment and the horse LITTLE ARTY MISS.

A number of documents were entered into evidence at the Inquiry including the Certificates of Analysis in relation to the post-race sample.

HRNSW Regulatory Veterinarian, Dr Martin Wainscott, was also present and provided evidence to the Inquiry that the presence of Tapentadol in the subject sample most likely resulted from a source of contamination within the stable environment.

Based on the available evidence, Stewards were satisfied to the requisite standard that the contamination was attributable to Mr Tonkin's stable practises.

Mr Tonkin pleaded guilty to a charge issued by HRNSW Stewards pursuant to Australian Harness Racing Rule (AHRR) 190 (1), (2) & (4) as follows:

AHRR 190. (1) A horse shall be presented for a race free of prohibited substances.

(2) If a horse is presented for a race otherwise than in accordance with sub rule (1) the trainer of the horse is guilty of an offence.

(3) If a person is left in charge of a horse and the horse is presented for a race otherwise than in accordance with sub rule (1), the trainer of the horse and the person left in charge is each guilty of an offence.

(4) An offence under sub rule (2) or sub rule (3) is committed regardless of the circumstances in which the prohibited substance came to be present in or on the horse.

In relation to penalty, HRNSW Stewards imposed an 18 month disqualification period to commence immediately.

In considering penalty Stewards were mindful of the following;

- The circumstances of this matter that resulted in a prohibited substance being detected;
- Class 1 Prohibited Substance;
- Mr Tonkin's licence history, offence record and involvement in the harness racing industry;
- Mr Tonkin's personal and financial subjective facts;
- Mr Tonkin's 1st prohibited substance offence;
- Mr Tonkin's guilty plea.

Acting under the provisions of AHRR 195, LITTLE ARTY MISS was disqualified from the abovementioned race. Mr Tonkin was advised of his right to appeal these decisions.

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