

MR DARREN HANCOCK - HRNSW STEWARDS INQUIRY

31 AUGUST 2022

On Monday 29 August 2022, Harness Racing New South Wales (HRNSW) Stewards commenced an Inquiry into a report received from the Australian Racing Forensic Laboratory (ARFL) that Metformin had been detected in the post-race urine sample taken from MASTER GOUDA following its win in Race 5, the BUBBA GUMP PEST CONTROL PACE (1609 metres) conducted at Menangle on Tuesday 22 March 2022.

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

Mr Darren Hancock appeared at the Inquiry and presented evidence in relation to his registered training establishment. In addition, licensed Trainer Dennis Upton who works as a volunteer stablehand for Mr Hancock was present and provided evidence to the Inquiry.

A number of documents were entered into evidence at the Inquiry including the Certificates of Analysis in relation to the post-race sample and a number of exhibits obtained by HRNSW Stewards, including the analytical results for shavings obtained from the registered training establishment of Mr Hancock, which was found to contain Metformin.

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

Mr Darren Hancock pleaded guilty to a charge issued by HRNSW Stewards pursuant to Australian Harness Racing Rules 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.*

(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.*

Mr Darren Hancock was fined \$1,500.

In considering penalty Stewards were mindful of the following;

- The circumstances of this matter including evidence of Dr Wainscott in relation to contamination;
- Class 3 Prohibited Substance;
- Mr Hancock's licence history, offence record, training record during a 30 year involvement in the harness racing industry;
- Mr Hancock's personal subjective facts;
- No prior prohibited substance offences;
- Mr Hancock's guilty plea.

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Acting under the provisions of Australian Harness Racing Rule 195, MASTER GOUDA was disqualified from the abovementioned race.

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

In addition, HRNSW Stewards issued a charge against Mr Dennis Upton pursuant to Australian Harness Racing Rule 239A as follows:

AHRR 239A. *A person whose conduct or negligence has led or could lead to a breach of the Rules is guilty of an offence*

Mr Upton was fined \$1500.

In considering penalty Stewards were mindful of the following;

- The circumstances of this matter including evidence of Dr Wainscott in relation to contamination;
- Class 3 Prohibited Substance;
- Mr Upton's licence history, offence record, training record during a 43 year involvement in the harness racing industry;
- Mr Upton's personal subjective facts;
- No prior prohibited substance offences;
- Mr Upton's guilty plea.

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

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