

DECISION

Queensland Racing Integrity Commission Stewards

Mr Jurgen Strohschon

Delivered on: 7 August 2026

Date of hearing: 10 July 2026 and 21 July 2026

Panel: Mr Geoffrey Goold (Chairperson), Mr Paul Zimmermann, Ms Aleisha Turner

Appearances: Mr Jurgen Strohschon

Charge 1: Australian Harness Racing Rule 240(c):

A person shall not, whether alone or in an association with others, do, permit or suffer anything before, during or after a race which in the opinion of the Stewards or Controlling Body, is improper.

Particulars of Charge: Between 30 June 2026 and 3 July 2026, licensed trainer Mr Jurgen Strohschon, after becoming aware that the mare 'Looking Down' had competed in Race 6 at Albion Park on 30 June 2026 in place of the correctly nominated gelding 'Western Action', failed to notify the Stewards of that fact which, in the opinion of the Stewards, was improper.

Plea: Guilty

Penalty Submissions:

Stewards considered the submissions made by Mr Strohschon in mitigation of penalty. Mr Strohschon submitted that he had no previous disciplinary history for breaches of Australian Harness Racing Rule 240(c) and noted that he has held a licence within the harness racing industry since 2019 without previously appearing before Stewards in relation to any disciplinary matter.

Mr Strohschon submitted that, after becoming aware of the circumstances, he did not report the matter to the Stewards because he did not believe it was his responsibility to do so and considered that responsibility for reporting the matter rested with the trainer or persons charged with the care and management of the horse. He acknowledged, however, that with the benefit of hindsight he should have brought the matter to the attention of Stewards.

Stewards also had regard to Mr Strohschon's personal and financial circumstances. Mr Strohschon gave evidence that his participation in the harness racing industry forms a significant part of his livelihood and that he relies upon his involvement in racing as his primary source of income, although his wife is the family's principal income earner.

Stewards also took into account Mr Strohschon's evidence regarding the importance of harness racing to his personal wellbeing and mental health. Mr Strohschon stated that training and racing horses is a significant personal interest and source of enjoyment, and that any income derived from training activities is generally reinvested into the maintenance and training of his horses rather than providing a financial profit.

Penalty Considerations:

In determining penalty, Stewards considered the following factors:

Aggravating Factors

The participation of a horse other than the horse officially engaged in a race strikes at the fundamental integrity requirements of harness racing. The correct identification of horses is central to race integrity, wagering confidence and the proper administration of the Australian Harness Racing Rules.

Stewards considered that, after becoming aware that the mare 'Looking Down' had competed in place of the correctly nominated horse 'Western Action', Mr Strohschon failed to notify the Stewards of that fact for a period of several days. Whilst the evidence did not establish any dishonest motive, betting-related purpose, corrupt conduct or involvement in the original horse identification error, his failure to promptly disclose the matter had the potential to delay the investigation of a significant integrity issue.

Stewards further considered that members of the public, wagering operators and other industry participants are entitled to expect that matters of this nature will be promptly reported to Stewards once they become known. The failure to report such information has the potential to undermine confidence in racing and its administration.

Mitigating Factors

Stewards considered a number of matters in mitigation. Stewards accepted that Mr Strohschon attended the race meeting for the purpose of assisting Mr Hinze and was acting in a support capacity throughout the day.

Stewards accepted that Mr Strohschon had no prior knowledge of Mr Gordon's registered training establishment, no familiarity with the horses located at that training establishment, and no independent knowledge of which horse was intended to be transported to the race meeting.

Stewards accepted that Mr Strohschon collected the horse identified to him and acted upon the instructions provided to him. The evidence did not establish that Mr Strohschon deliberately selected, substituted or arranged for the incorrect horse to be presented to race.

Importantly, Stewards accepted that Mr Strohschon had no prior knowledge that 'Looking Down' was not the horse nominated to compete in Race 6. The evidence established that he only became aware of the error after the running of the race.

Stewards further accepted that there was no evidence of any betting-related motive, corrupt conduct, dishonesty or attempt to obtain an improper advantage. Nor was there any evidence that Mr Strohschon sought to orchestrate, facilitate or benefit from the horse identification error.

Stewards took into account Mr Strohschon's cooperation during the inquiry, his assistance to Stewards throughout the investigation, his disciplinary history, personal circumstances and contribution to the harness racing industry.

Stewards considered that Mr Strohschon's involvement in the underlying circumstances was materially less significant than those persons directly responsible for the horse's care and management.

Deterrence

Stewards considered the need for both specific and general deterrence.

The Australian Harness Racing Rules rely upon licensed participants acting honestly and proactively when matters come to their attention that may affect race integrity. The effective regulation of racing depends, to a significant degree, upon participants promptly disclosing significant integrity concerns to Stewards once they become aware of them.

Stewards accepted that Mr Strohschon's culpability is significantly lower than would ordinarily be the case where a participant is directly responsible for the presentation of an incorrect horse. Nevertheless, once Mr Strohschon became aware that the incorrect horse had competed in an official race, there remained an expectation that such information would be brought to the attention of Stewards without delay.

In relation to specific deterrence, Stewards accepted that the circumstances of the offending were unusual and that Mr Strohschon's involvement arose as a result of him assisting another participant rather than acting in his own interests. These factors reduce the need for specific deterrence. However, Stewards considered that licensed participants must understand that integrity concerns are not matters that may be left for others to report. Once a participant becomes aware of a matter capable of affecting race integrity, prompt disclosure to the Stewards is expected.

Stewards also regarded general deterrence as an important consideration. Licensed participants who become aware of serious integrity irregularities must understand that they are expected to immediately bring those matters to the attention of Stewards. A failure to do so may attract disciplinary consequences irrespective of whether the original incident arose through mistake, negligence or inadvertence.

Stewards therefore considered that deterrence remained a relevant consideration, although less significant than in cases involving deliberate misconduct.

Penalty Guidelines

Stewards had regard to the QRIC Harness Racing Penalty Guidelines, including the seriousness of the offending, Mr Strohschon's degree of culpability, the need for specific and general deterrence, his personal circumstances, offence record and frequency of participation within the industry.

Stewards also considered the overriding objectives of maintaining public confidence in racing and preserving the integrity of harness racing.

Precedents

Stewards have considered previous breaches of Australian Harness Racing Rule 240(c). However, Stewards consider that limited assistance can be derived from those matters given the unusual and fact-specific nature of the present offending.

The circumstances of this matter do not involve a participant responsible for the management, training or nomination of the horse. Rather, the offending concerns a licensed participant who, whilst assisting another trainer and having no prior knowledge of the horse identification error, subsequently became aware that an incorrect horse had competed and failed to notify the Stewards of that fact.

Stewards are unaware of any directly comparable authority involving materially similar circumstances. Accordingly, Stewards have approached penalty by reference to the particular facts of the matter, the purposes of disciplinary action, the QRIC Harness Racing Penalty Guidelines and the integrity principles underpinning Australian Harness Racing Rule 240(c).

Stewards note that penalties imposed for breaches of Australian Harness Racing Rule 240(c) have varied considerably depending on the conduct involved, the degree of culpability, the presence of aggravating and mitigating factors and the need for deterrence. Such penalties have ranged from reprimands and monetary fines through to periods of suspension and disqualification.

Stewards have therefore assessed penalty having regard to Mr Strohschon's limited involvement in the original circumstances, his subsequent failure to report the matter, the need to preserve public confidence in racing and his personal and disciplinary history.

Human Rights

In determining an appropriate penalty, Stewards have given proper consideration to Mr Strohschon's human rights in accordance with the *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld) and the human rights considerations contained within the QRIC Harness Racing Penalty Guidelines.

Stewards acknowledge that any suspension or disqualification may limit Mr Strohschon's ability to participate in the racing industry and earn income from that participation. Stewards further acknowledge that such a penalty may affect his right to own property, namely his racing licence, and may impact upon his privacy, reputation and livelihood.

Stewards are satisfied that maintaining public confidence in racing, enforcing compliance with the Australian Harness Racing Rules and protecting the integrity of racing are matters of substantial public importance.

Stewards are further satisfied that there is no less restrictive and reasonably available penalty that would adequately achieve the purposes of disciplinary action, namely:

- maintaining public confidence in the racing of animals in Queensland for which betting is lawful;
- ensuring the integrity of all persons involved in racing and wagering under the *Racing Integrity Act 2016* (Qld) and *Racing Act 2002* (Qld); and
- protecting the integrity and proper administration of the Australian Harness Racing Rules.

Having regard to Mr Strohschon's comparatively low level of culpability, the absence of any dishonest or corrupt motive, the mitigating circumstances identified above and the need for both specific and general deterrence, Stewards are satisfied that any limitation upon his human rights occasioned by the penalty imposed is reasonable, necessary and demonstrably justified.

Accordingly, Stewards are satisfied that the penalty imposed is proportionate to the offending and compatible with the human rights protected by the *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld).

Stewards' Findings on Penalty

The circumstances giving rise to the offending are unusual and arose from Mr Strohschon's involvement in assisting another trainer on race day.

Stewards accepted that Mr Strohschon had no prior knowledge of the horses located at the training establishment from which the horse was collected and no independent knowledge that the horse transported to Albion Park was not the horse nominated to compete. Stewards further accepted that he acted upon instructions provided to him and did not deliberately arrange, facilitate or orchestrate the presentation of the incorrect horse.

Stewards accepted that Mr Strohschon only became aware of the horse identification error after the race had been conducted. Whilst Stewards accepted that he was not responsible for the presentation error, they nevertheless considered that he should have promptly brought the matter to the attention of Stewards once he became aware of it.

The integrity of racing depends not only upon compliance with the Australian Harness Racing Rules, but also upon participants acting honestly and transparently when matters arise that may affect public confidence in the sport and the administration of racing. Participants who become aware of serious integrity concerns are expected to provide that information to Stewards without delay.

Having regard to all the circumstances, Stewards considered that Mr Strohschon's culpability was substantially reduced by his level of responsibility and authority, his lack of knowledge concerning the horses involved, and the absence of any improper motive.

In determining the appropriate penalty, Stewards balanced the seriousness of the integrity issue against the substantial mitigating circumstances present in this matter, including Mr Strohschon's limited assistance role, his cooperation during the inquiry, his personal circumstances and disciplinary history, and the absence of any deliberate misconduct.

In all the circumstances, Stewards were satisfied that the penalty imposed appropriately reflects the seriousness of the offending, Mr Strohschon's reduced degree of culpability and the need to maintain confidence in the integrity and administration of harness racing.

Penalty:

Having regard to the findings set out above, including the seriousness of the offending, Mr Strohschon's degree of culpability, the need for specific and general deterrence, the applicable QRIC Harness Racing Penalty Guidelines and the human rights considerations, Stewards determined that the following penalty be imposed:

Charge 1: Pursuant to Australian Harness Racing Rule 240(c), Mr Strohschon's licence is suspended for period of three (3) months with two (2) months wholly suspended for a period of twenty-four (24) months pursuant to Australian Harness Racing Rule 256(5)(a) pending no further breaches of Australian Harness Racing Rule 240(c) during this period as prescribed by Australian Harness Racing Rule 256(5)(c).

The suspension is effective as of 14 August 2026 and will conclude at midnight on 13 September 2026.

Mr Strohschon is advised of his rights to review this decision to the Queensland Racing Appeal Panel, with any application for review to be made within three (3) business days of the decision.