

Stewards' Report

Stewards' Report – Harness Trainer – Mr Richard March

Date – 24 June 2020

Panel – D. Farquharson, N. Torpey & N. Finnigan

Queensland Racing Integrity Commission Stewards today concluded their inquiries into the analysts finding regarding the presence of substances Morphine, Codeine, Hydromorphone, Oripavine and Oxymorphone in a post race sample which was taken from Artful Maid when it was presented for racing at Marburg 27 October 2019.

On 22 May 2020, trainer Mr Richard March was charged pursuant to Australian Harness Racing Rule (AHRR) 190(1) which reads:

“A horse shall be presented for a race free of prohibited substances.”

The Stewards issued the following charge being that as the trainer of Artful Maid, Richard March did present the horse to race at Marburg on 27 October 2020 where a urine sample taken from that horse, upon analysis, was found to contain prohibited substances, namely Morphine, Codeine, Hydromorphone, Oripavine and Oxymorphone.

On 11 June 2020, Mr March pleaded guilty to the charge and made further submissions for the Stewards consideration.

After taking into account all the available evidence, and submissions provided, on 23 June 2020, Stewards confirmed the guilty plea and fined Richard March the sum of \$2000 fully suspended for a period of 12 months.

Whilst Australian Harness Racing Rule (AHRR) 190(1) carries with it an absolute liability upon a trainer to present, their horses to race free of prohibited substances the blameworthiness on the part of the trainer is to be considered.

In determining to record a conviction and issue a suspended \$2000 fine, Stewards considered the following evidence and reports:

- A report from Senior Agronomist Elders Rural Mr Greg Edwards identifying the Argemone Ochroleuca and Argemone Mexicana species which are part of the wild poppy species grow in the Western Downs, Darling Downs and Burnett regions.
- Mr March's husbandry regime and measures taken to address the issues identified from a previous breach of similar circumstances
- Mr March's record under this rule over a 52 year period;

Further acting under the provisions of AHRR 195 Artful Maid was disqualified from Race 6 at Marburg on 27 October 2019 and the placings amended accordingly.