

Stewards' Report

Stewards Report: Harness Trainer – Ross Fletcher

Date: 30 June 2020

Panel: N. Torpey; N. Finnigan & R. McCrae

Queensland Racing Integrity Commission Stewards today conducted an inquiry into the analysts finding regarding the elevated Total Carbon Dioxide concentration (TCO₂) level found in the pre-race blood sample taken from HOT DOGMA prior to the horse competing in Race 10 at Redcliffe on 4 June 2020. HOT DOGMA was trained for this event by Mr Ross Fletcher.

Stewards issued the following charge against Ross Fletcher pursuant to Australian Harness Racing Rule (AHRR) 193(3) which reads:

“A person shall not administer or allow or cause to be administered any medication to a horse on race day prior to such horse running in the race.”

The specifics of the charge being:

Mr Ross Fletcher, as the trainer of HOT DOGMA, did administer or allow or cause to be administered medication, namely an alkalinising agent to that horse on 4 June 2020 prior to it running at Redcliffe on that day.

Mr Fletcher pleaded guilty to the charge.

In determining the matter Stewards were of the opinion that the only creditable explanation for the elevated TCO₂ levels detected in both samples, as evidenced by certificates from the Racing Science and Racing Analytical Services Ltd., was as a result of the administration of an alkalinising agent on race day.

In determining an appropriate penalty, Stewards considered the following:

- Mr Fletcher's personal situation;
- The particular circumstances of the case;
- Mr Fletcher's guilty plea;
- The TCO2 levels in the sample did not give rise to a positive finding under the Rules;
- Penalty precedents including relevant appeal decisions;
- The need for a penalty to serve as a deterrent to illustrate that drug free racing is of paramount importance to the integrity of harness racing;

Mr Fletcher was fined the sum of \$5,000.

Acting under the provisions of AHRR. 193(5) HOT DOGMA was disqualified from Race 10 at Redcliffe on 4 June 2020 and the embargo previously placed on the horse was lifted.

Mr Fletcher was advised of his rights to an Internal Review