

Stewards' Report

Stewards Report: Christopher Tapiolas

Date: 22 September 2020

Panel: P Chadwick, D Aurisch and P Zimmermann

Queensland Racing Integrity Commission (QRIC) Stewards today concluded an inquiry into the procurement of preparations that had not been registered, labelled, prescribed, dispensed or obtained in accordance with applicable Commonwealth and State legislation.

The Stewards charged stablehand Christopher Tapiolas pursuant to Australian Rule of Racing 256(2)(a)(iii) after hearing evidence from Mr Tapiolas at the commencement of the inquiry on 31 January 2020.

Australian Rule of Racing 256(2)(a)(iii) provides:

A person must not:

(a) procure;

any of the following:

(iii) a substance or preparation that is not permitted to be in a person's possession or on a person's premises in accordance with AR 252(1).

Australian Rule of Racing 256(3)(b) provides:

"procure" includes the purchase and/or receipt of a substance or preparation.

Australian Rule of Racing 252(1) provides:

A person must not have in his or her possession or on his or her premises any medication, substance or preparation which has not been registered, labelled, prescribed, dispensed or obtained in accordance with applicable Commonwealth and State legislation.

The specifics of the charge being that Christopher Tapiolas, as a stablehand licensed by the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission, did procure a preparation that was not permitted to be in his possession or on his premises in accordance with AR 252(1) from an unregistered and unlicensed person on two (2) occasions, with the cost of the procured products totalling \$220.00.

Mr Tapiolas did not enter a plea to the charge but provided written submissions in respect of the charge and any penalty that may be subsequently imposed.

After considering all of the evidence, the Stewards were comfortably satisfied that sufficient evidence existed to substantiate the charge and Mr Tapiolas was formally found guilty of the charge.

In determining penalty in relation to the charge, the Stewards considered the following:

1. the nature, circumstances and seriousness of the offending conduct, including Mr Tapiolas' admission that he procured what he believed to be drenches from an unlicensed and unregistered person and that he now understand that his conduct amounted to an offence under the Australian Rules of Racing but he was unaware of any wrongdoing at the time;
2. Mr Tapiolas' personal circumstances, noting that he is employed by his father, a licensed trainer, who currently has approximately five (5) horses in training;
3. Mr Tapiolas' disciplinary history over a period of approximately ten (10) years;
4. Mr Tapiolas' cooperation throughout the inquiry, together with his frank and forthright evidence;
5. the extent of Mr Tapiolas' remorse for the offending conduct;
6. the penalty precedents for the offence; and
7. the need for the penalty to act as both a specific deterrent to Mr Tapiolas to reduce the risk of further offending and a general deterrent to the wider racing industry for the integrity of the racing industry to remain paramount.

The Stewards, having considered the above factors, determined the appropriate penalty was a monetary penalty in the amount of \$1,000.00.

Mr Tapiolas was advised of his rights to apply for an internal review of the decision pursuant to Chapter 6 of the *Racing Integrity Act 2016* (Qld).
