

Stewards' Investigation Report

Date of Finalisation: Monday, 12 April 2021
Hearing Venue: QRIC Head Office
Date: 30/03/2021
Track: Townsville Greyhound Racing Club
Officiating Stewards: Mr. Alex Kitching (Chief Steward)
Mr. Andrew Spence (Deputy Chief Steward)

REPORT

At the Townsville Greyhound Racing Club on Tuesday 30th March 2021, Race 8 was declared a race and the All Clear was given, prior to an official review of the patrol footage. Following a review of the footage, it was established that a rake had been left leaning against boxes 1 and 2 for the start of the event. Below is an extract from the official race day Stewards report.

Stewards Report from 30.3.2021

Following the completion of the event and the declaration of the All Clear, the Steward in charge was alerted to an incident that occurred at the start of the event, namely a rake being left leaning against the starting boxes. Stewards made initial inquiries into the incident and a report will be detailed to the Chief Stipendiary Steward for investigation.

Update from 1.04.2021

The Queensland Racing Integrity Commission (QRIC) Chief and Deputy Chief Stewards have held preliminary interviews with the Townsville Greyhound Racing Club Officials, Trainers, Handlers and the QRIC Stewards panel officiating on Tuesday, 30 March 2021 at the Townsville Greyhound Racing Club.

Following the preliminary interviews, it has been established that there was a clear breakdown in communication from the Club Officials and Stewarding panel. Following the completion of the event and identification of the first four placings, the Chair Steward was not made aware of a plastic rake that had been left against the lids of the starting boxes. As a result, the All Clear was incorrectly declared prior to any review being conducted of the incident, from the available patrol footage.

As the Stewards panel officiating at the race meeting declared the event a race and the All Clear, no further alteration can be made. Subsequently, Race 8 – The Easter Sprint Trophy (H2), stands and the greyhounds successful in obtaining a place in the Easter Sprint Trophy Final continue in the series.

Stewards are continuing to investigate the processes currently in place and a Stewards Investigation Report will be provided to the QRIC Commissioner once complete.

Interviews were conducted with several persons (both officials and participants) regarding the incident and the processes followed resulting in the event being declared a race prior to an official review.

It was established that there were four (4) critical errors by both Club and QRIC officials.

- (1) Track Curator – failed to remove the rake after performing race preparation duties following Race 7.
- (2) Official Starter – failed to ensure the starting boxes were clear for racing prior to directing handlers to box the greyhounds for Race 8.

- (3) QRIC Steward positioned at starting boxes – failed to notify the Steward in charge of the rake prior to signalling for the All Clear.
- (4) The patrol footage was not reviewed by the QRIC Stewards' panel prior to the event being declared All Clear.

In response to the four (4) critical errors being assessed, the following processes have been implemented state-wide to ensure another incident does not occur.

- (1) The Race Starter is only permitted to direct handlers to box greyhounds after receiving the starting signal from the Steward in charge once the following checks have been completed:
 - a. The starting box controls are on the correct settings,
 - b. The starting boxes are clear with no obstructions,
 - c. The track is clear of anything foreign, and
 - d. The catching pen gate keepers are present at the correct gates.
- (2) All radio communication between officials is to be acknowledged by the receiver.
- (3) Post-race identification of the first four placings is clearly communicated by the identification steward and any incidents reported to the Steward in charge.
- (4) The patrol footage of each race is to be reviewed prior to the All Clear being given.

All processes will continue to be monitored and assessed regularly QRIC Stewards.

The four critical failures were attributed to human and process error. The following sequence is the order of occurrence and action taken. It is not in any-way related to the level of fault:

Track Curator – Adam Longhurst: Mr Longhurst admitted fault in leaving the rake against the starting boxes for the start of race 8. Stewards have recommended to the Townsville Greyhound Racing Club that Mr Longhurst undertake a refresher course on the Standard Operating Procedures of the Track Curator's role.

Starter – Jaymz Smith: Mr Smith failed to ensure the starting boxes were clear for racing prior to directing handlers to box the greyhounds for Race 8. Mr Smith advised Stewards that he had resigned from the Townsville Greyhound Racing Club. Nevertheless, Stewards have recommended to the Townsville Greyhound Racing Club that if Mr Smith were to apply for similar duties in future that he undergoes training on the club Standard Operating Procedures prior to being approved.

Casual Cadet Steward – Craig Bew: Mr Bew failed to notify the Steward in charge of the rake prior to signalling for the All Clear. Mr Bew is subject to further training and development and internal disciplinary procedures in accordance with his Employment Agreements.

Racing Queensland have been recommended to consider the current infrastructure at regional venues (Bundaberg/Rockhampton/Townsville). Specifically, the available patrol footage and introducing back and front straight cameras to improve on the current footage available.