

Stewards' Report

Stewards Report: Bianca Hooper – Trainer (Harness)

Date: 28 March 2022

Panel: N. Torpey, R. McCrae, W. Barr & K. Daly

Queensland Racing Integrity Commission (QRIC) Stewards today conducted an inquiry into the reports from the QRIC Racing Science Centre (RSC) and the Australian Racing Forensic Laboratory (ARFL) regarding the finding of caffeine in the following samples:

- Write Time – Post race urine – Race 7 at Redcliffe on 8 December 2021
- Write Time – Pre race blood – Race 4 at Redcliffe on 6 January 2022
- Regretable – Post race urine – Race 6 at Redcliffe on 6 January 2022

Both horses were trained at that time by Ms Bianca Hooper.

Ms Hooper was issued with three (3) charges under the Australian Harness Rules of Racing:

Charge 1:

AHRR 190(1) which reads:

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

The specifics of charge 1 being that:

Bianca Hooper, as the trainer of the Write Time, did present the horse to race at Redcliffe on 8 December 2021 when a post-race urine sample taken from Write Time, upon analysis, was found to contain a prohibited substance, namely Caffeine

Charge 2:

AHRR 190 (1) which reads:

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

The specifics of charge 2 being that:

Bianca Hooper, as the trainer of the Write Time, did present the horse to race at Redcliffe on 6 January 2022 when a pre-race sample taken from Write Time, upon analysis, was found to contain a prohibited substance, namely Caffeine

Charge 3:

AHRR 190 (1) which reads:

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

The specifics of charge 3 being that:

Bianca Hooper, as the trainer of the Regretable, did present the horse to race at Redcliffe on 6 January 2022 when a post-race urine sample taken from Regretable, upon analysis, was found to contain a prohibited substance, namely Caffeine

Ms Hooper pleaded not guilty to all charges.

Stewards after careful consideration of the evidence from Ms Hooper and Dr Martin Lenz, Q.R.I.C., Director of Veterinary Services & Animal Welfare found Ms Hooper guilty of all three (3) charges.

In finding Ms Hooper guilty of the charges Stewards were mindful of the strict liability AHRR 190 places on a trainer to ensure the horse is presented to race free of prohibited substances. Stewards were also of the opinion that the evidence led by Ms Hooper did not question the validity of the certificates of both accredited laboratories evidencing the presence of Caffeine.

In determining penalty, Stewards were mindful of Ms Hooper's previously good disciplinary history, personnel circumstances, and previous penalty precedents. Furthermore, Stewards were mindful of the deterrent effect any penalty should have in such circumstances to ensure that racing is conducted free of prohibited substances to uphold the integrity of the industry and welfare of the animals.

Stewards were also mindful that there were three (3) rule breaches of the same rule and, as such, determined a penalty that was considered appropriate having regard to all of the circumstances of the matter and disqualified Bianca Hooper for a period of 3 months effective immediately plus a fine of \$3,000.

Ms Hooper was advised of her right to an internal review.

Under AHRR 195 Write Time was disqualified from Race 7 at Redcliffe on 8 December 2021 and Race 4 at Redcliffe on 6 January 2022 whilst Regretable was disqualified from Race 6 on 6 January 2022 and the placings amended accordingly.