

Stewards' Report

Stewards Report: Michael John Stephens

Date: 18 July 2022

Panel: Chris Allison and Peter Chadwick

Queensland Racing Integrity Commission (QRIC) Stewards inquired into an incident which occurred in the tie-up stalls at Callaghan Park Racecourse Rockhampton on the 13th of June 2022. Evidence of the incident was obtained by witness statements and a statement from Jockey Mr Michael John Stephens and a video of part of the incident which occurred.

After considering all the evidence, Mr Michael John Stephens was issued with two charges under the provisions of AR228(b), which reads: "A person must not engage in misconduct, improper conduct or unseemly behaviour."

Charge One

The specifics of the first charge being that "On the 13th of June 2022 at Rockhampton you Mr Michael John Stephens a licensed jockey with Queensland Racing Integrity Commission, in the tie-up stalls at Callaghan Park, did conduct himself in an improper manner when assaulting Mr Ricky Vale with a weapon namely a bridle when striking at Mr Vale."

Charge Two

The specifics of the second charge "On the 13th of June 2022 at Rockhampton Mr Michael John Stephens a licensed jockey with the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission in the tie up stalls at Callaghan Park did conduct himself in an improper manner whilst swinging a bridle in the vicinity of horses causing those horses to

become fractious resulting in a horse escaping and another to break its halter.

Mr Stephens pled guilty to both charges.

Mr Stephens forwarded penalty submissions on his behalf which Stewards took into consideration when assessing an appropriate penalty.

When considering penalty, the Stewards also took into account the following relevant points:

1. The seriousness of the charges and the effect on the image of racing.
2. The unnecessary risk of animal welfare to horses in the vicinity of the incident.
3. The requirement to ensure all industry participants attend their respective workplace without the fear, threat, or presence of violence.
4. The need for penalties to serve as a general deterrent to illustrate to the entire racing industry that this type of activity will not be condoned.
5. Previous penalty precedents for breaches of this Rule.
6. Mr Stephen's previous disciplinary record.
7. Mr Stephen's remorse for his actions.
8. Mr Stephen's personal circumstances.
9. Mr Stephen's guilty pleas.

Charge One

Stewards imposed a nine-month disqualification.

Charge Two

Stewards imposed a four-month disqualification.

Acting under AR283(4) Stewards ordered the disqualifications to be served concurrently with the period of nine months disqualification to commence on the 18th of July 2022 and to conclude at midnight on the 17th of April 2023.

Mr Stephens was advised of his rights to an internal review.