

# Stewards' Report

## Stewards Report: Rodney Cussons – HERO'S CHOICE

**Date: 22 October 2022**

**Panel: P Gillard, P. Lane**

Queensland Racing Integrity Commission (QRIC) Stewards today inquired into a report from the analyst that the prohibited substance Flunixin was detected in a post-race blood sample collected from the thoroughbred gelding Hero's Choice at the Prairie Jockey Club 13 August 2022.

As a result of the analyst's findings, Stewards charged trainer Mr Rodney Cussons with a breach of Australian Rule of Racing 240(2), which provides:

*Subject to subrule (3), if a horse is brought to a racecourse for the purpose of participating in a race and a prohibited substance on Prohibited List A and/or Prohibited List B is detected in a sample taken from the horse prior to or following its running in any race, the trainer and any other person who was in charge of the horse at any relevant time breaches these Australian Rules.*

The specifics of the charge being that Mr Rodney Cussons, as the licensed trainer of Hero's Choice, brought that gelding to the Prairie Jockey Club on 13 August 2022 for the purpose of competing in a race, being the QTIS Maiden Plate over 1000 metres, and a post-race blood sample collected from Hero's Choice revealed that the prohibited substance Flunixin was present in the subject sample.

Mr Cussons entered a plea of guilty to the charge. Mr Cussons made submissions on penalty and, in determining penalty in relation to the charge, the Stewards considered the following:

1. The nature, circumstances and seriousness of the offence;
2. Mr Cussons' personal circumstances, including the number of horses currently under his care and control and training history;
3. Mr Cussons' disciplinary history;
4. Mr Cussons' plea of guilty;
5. The penalty precedents for an offence pursuant to Australian Rule of Racing 240(2) particular to the substance Flunixin;

6. The strict liability imposed upon trainers to present horses to race free from any prohibited substance in accordance with the Australian Rules of Racing; and

7. The need for the penalty to act as both a specific deterrent to Mr Cussons to reduce the risk of further offending and as 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 for the offence was a fine of \$2000.

Further, in accordance with Australian Rule of Racing 240(1), Hero's Choice was disqualified from winning the above-mentioned race and the placing's were amended as follows:

**Prairie Jockey Club 13 August – QTIS Maiden Plate 1000 metres**

1st – Whobethatnow

2nd – Rapid Style

3rd – The Appointed Time

4th – Bossuka

Mr Cussons 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).