

Stewards' Report

Stewards Report: Christopher Watson

Date: 6 August 2025

Panel: N. Torpey, W. Barr & L. Bahr

QRIC Stewards Conclude Inquiry into Elevated TCO₂ Levels in Justrollingaround – Albion Park – 4 July 2025

The Queensland Racing Integrity Commission (QRIC) Stewards have concluded an inquiry into analytical reports received from both the QRIC Racing Science Centre (RSC) and Racing Analytical Services Limited (RASL). These reports indicated that the Total Carbon Dioxide (TCO₂) concentration in a pre-race blood sample taken from the horse *Justrollingaround*, trained by Mr Christopher Watson, exceeded the threshold permitted under Australian Harness Racing (AHR) Rule 188A(2)(a). The sample was collected prior to the horse's participation in Race 2 at Albion Park on 4 July 2025.

Charge Issued

On 9 July 2025, Mr Watson was formally charged under AHR Rule 190(1), which states:

Rule 190(1): A horse shall be presented for a race free of prohibited substances.

The charge alleged that Mr Watson, as the responsible trainer, did present *Justrollingaround* to race at Albion Park on 4 July 2025 when a blood sample taken from Justrollingaround, upon analysis, was found to contain a prohibited substance, namely the Total Carbon Dioxide level above the permitted threshold.

Response and Plea

Mr Watson submitted a written plea of guilty to the charge and provided additional written submissions for the Stewards' consideration.

Stewards' Findings and Considerations

After a thorough review of the evidence and Mr Watson's submissions, the Stewards determined that the charge under Rule 190(1) was substantiated. In determining an appropriate penalty, the Stewards considered the following factors:

- Mr Watson's longstanding involvement in the harness racing industry, which was acknowledged as a mitigating factor.
- The strict liability nature of Rule 190(1), which places full responsibility on the trainer to ensure a horse is free of prohibited substances when presented to race.
- Mr Watson's personal circumstances.
- Established precedents for similar breaches within the industry.
- The importance of imposing a penalty that serves both as a specific deterrent to the individual and a general deterrent to the wider racing community.

Penalty Imposed

As a result, the Stewards imposed a six-month disqualification on Mr Christopher Watson. Additionally, Acting under the provisions of AHR Rule 195, *Justrollingaround* was disqualified from Race 2 at Albion Park on 4 July 2025, with all associated placings and earnings to be amended accordingly.

Right to Appeal

Mr Watson was formally advised of his right to appeal the decision to the Racing Appeals Panel, should he wish to contest the outcome.

Ends