



RACING AND WAGERING WESTERN AUSTRALIA

8 October 2019

MEDIA RELEASE

Harness Stewards Inquiry – Trainer Mr Ashleigh Markham (DREDLOCK ROCKSTAR)

On Wednesday 2 October 2019, Racing and Wagering WA (RWWA) stewards commenced the inquiry into the report from the ChemCentre in Perth that cobalt at a concentration in excess of 100 micrograms per litre, being the threshold prescribed in the Harness Rules of Racing, had been detected in a urine sample taken from DREDLOCK ROCKSTAR at Gloucester Park on 2 July 2019 after it had competed in and finished 3rd in Race 5.

At the inquiry evidence was heard from:

- Ms E. Cook - Analyst (Chem Centre)
- Mrs F Bennett – RWWA Compliance Officer
- Dr J Medd – RWWA Industry Veterinarian
- Mr. A Markham – Trainer of DREDLOCK ROCKSTER

Mr Markham was subsequently found guilty to a charge under Harness Rule of Racing 190 (1),(2) with the particulars being:

Particulars

That as the trainer he presented DREDLOCK ROCKSTAR to race in Race 5 at Gloucester Park on 2 July 2019, where it raced and finished 3rd, not free of the prohibited substance cobalt, evidenced by a concentration of cobalt at a level in excess of 100 micrograms per litre in urine.

After reserving their decision to consider penalty, stewards have now determined the appropriate penalty to be a disqualification of 9 months effective as of 25 September 2019 to take into account the period of time Mr Markham had been suspended pending outcome of the inquiry.

Further acting under Harness Rule of Racing 195, DREDLOCK ROCKSTAR was disqualified from the race in question with placings to be amended accordingly with the commensurate implications to all stake money and payments to apply.

In determining the penalty, stewards took into account several factors including:

- Mr Markham personal circumstances and level of involvement.
- His record during his licensed involvement which included a previous offence under Rule 190 relating to the presentation of a horse (NOWUSEEMEROCK) above the TCO2 threshold in 2009.
- The nature of the substance and the seriousness of horses being presented for, and competing in races with a level of cobalt above the prescribed threshold of 100ug/L which in this case was reported as being 180 ug/L.
- Previous penalties imposed in relation to this substance and the need for deterrence both general and specific.
- That the panel was satisfied that the cobalt levels reported were not the result of a deliberate attempt by Mr Markham to exploit or transgress the threshold level and was in all probability the result of the use of registered supplements as located at his premises which he acknowledged using, albeit that in the described timeframes of administration it was found to be unlikely to be consistent with the reported results.

- The widely published RWWA material warning about the use of certain supplements which states, amongst other things.
 - *That a normal racing diet is more than sufficient to meet a horse's nutritional requirements for cobalt and vitamin B12.*
 - *That registered injectable cobalt supplements offer no nutritional advantages because the incorporation of cobalt into the vitamin B12 molecule occurs within the horse's gut.*
 - *To consult with their veterinarians to ensure that their oral supplementation regimen provides only the amount of cobalt necessary to meet the scientifically established nutritional requirements of the horse for cobalt.*

*“Whilst the threshold has been set at a level to allow for normal levels of cobalt supplementation through routine nutritional sources, **trainers are advised that the administration of certain registered vitamin supplements, particularly by injection, close to racing may result in a level of cobalt in a subsequent sample that exceeds this threshold. Trainers are therefore advised to avoid the use of supplements close to racing.***”

ENDS

Media Contact:

Lauren Prater

RWWA, Public Relations Manager

P: 08 9445 5168

M: 0488 904 723

E: lauren.prater@rwwa.com.au