

NEW SOUTH WALES HARNESS RACING APPEAL PANEL

APPEAL PANEL MEMBERS

**Hon W Haylen KC
J Murphy
B Judd**

DETERMINATION

30 July 2026

APPELLANT WILL RIXON

RESPONDENT HRNSW

AUSTRALIAN HARNESS RACING RULES

163(1)(a)(iii)

DECISION

The Appeal Panel makes the following orders:

- 1. The Appeal is dismissed;**
- 2. The penalty of 7 days suspension is adopted;**
- 3. The suspension shall commence from midnight on 28 July 2026; and, the Appeal Deposit is forfeited.**

HARNESS RACING NEW SOUTH WALES APPEAL PANEL

APPEAL BY DRIVER MR WILL RIXON

1. Driver Mr Will Rixon has filed an appeal against the decision of Harness Racing Stewards that he be suspended for a period of seven days, a decision made on 30 June 2026. Importantly, Stewards noted that they had the power to defer any commencement of the starting point of his suspension for a period of nine days to allow him to take upcoming drives. Mr Rixon had informed Stewards that he was very involved in the Inter Dominion series in Brisbane that was to be held in the following three weeks. The Stewards allowed a period until midnight on the of 9 July for Mr Rixon to compete in that series.
2. On 30 June, the Stewards charged Mr Rixon with a breach of Australian Harness Racing Rule (AHRR) 163(1)(a)(iii), that a driver shall not cause or contribute to any interference. The particulars of the charge were that Mr Rixon, as driver of Im Rockin It in race 5 at Menangle on 30 June 2026, at a point approaching the 900 metres allowed Im Rockin It to shift in when not sufficiently clear of Captain Bart, resulting in that runner being placed in restricted room, being checked by Ms Daskalovski and causing that runner to go off stride. Further to that, as a result of those runners galloping, Mr Coney's drive, Baltusrol, and Cash and Bling, driven by Ms Delosa, were also hampered.
3. On the hearing of the Appeal, for the first time, Mr Rixon argued that the video of the race presented by the Stewards did not show that Im Rockin It caused or contributed any interference in the race. His submissions were not assisted by any replay of this part of the race. However, replays presented by HRNSW did establish the findings of the Stewards during their consideration of the race and are accepted by this Panel. The Panel also accepts the submission that Mr Rixon was the only one who could stop the interference. Further, Stewards reviewed Mr Rixon's offence record details that showed that he had been reprimanded under Rule 163(1)(a)(iii) on 26 occasions since his last suspension incurred on 29 October 2023. Seven of those reprimands were imposed in the 5 months immediately leading up to this offence. It is also to be noted that Mr Rixon chose to appear for himself in the appeal. Unfortunately, he did not provide written submissions to be available to the Stewards and the Appeal Panel.
4. Mr Rixon's final submission raised the alleged difficulties of being suspended for 7 days. The Stewards noted that a seven-day period of suspension was the shortest period of suspension imposed by Stewards and that any lesser penalty, such as a reprimand, would not provide the necessary specific deterrence in this circumstance. That submission is accepted by the Panel.

5. The Panel notes that the decision of the Stewards to suspend the starting point of the penalty for 9 days did not allow Mr Rixon to compete in the entire Inter Dominion Series. Indeed it created the opposite scenario, resulting in Mr Rixon being able to drive in the first set of heats on 4 July but not the second set of heats held on 11th July or the Final on 18 July.
6. Having regard to the findings of the Panel, the following orders are made: (1) the Appeal is dismissed; (2) the penalty of 7 days suspension is adopted;(3) the suspension shall commence from midnight on 28 July 2026; and, the Appeal Deposit is forfeited.

Hon Wayne Haylen KC -Principal Member

Mr J. Murphy- Panel Member

Mr B. Judd – Panel Member

30 July 2026