

MR MITCH HUTCHINGS – INQUIRY CONDUCTED

SEPTEMBER 27, 2018

HARNESS Racing New South Wales (HRNSW) Stewards concluded an inquiry in relation to the betting activities of licensed driver Mr Mitch Hutchings on Monday August 20, 2018.

Mr Hutchings appeared at the inquiry, represented by Mr Robert Bucksath, and was charged pursuant to Australian Harness Racing Rule 173(1) and (6) in relation to 21 betting transactions he placed on races in which he had participated.

AHRR 173. states: “(1) A driver shall not bet in a race in which the driver participates.

(2) A driver engaged to drive at a meeting shall not enter the betting area of the racecourse during the period commencing 60 minutes before the time fixed for the first race and finishing at the completion of the driver’s engagements at the meeting.

(3) For the purposes of this rule, betting area means those areas of a racecourse where betting with an approved wagering operator is conducted.

(4) A driver or the trainer of a horse shall not authorise, enable, permit or allow another person to place a bet on a betting account of the driver or the trainer.

(5) A driver or trainer shall not place or have an interest in a bet on any betting account other than an account registered in their own name.

(6) Any person who fails to comply with any provision of this rule is guilty of an offence.

Mr Hutchings pleaded guilty to the charges and provided submissions on penalty. Further submissions were provided by Mr Bucksath before Stewards adjourned to consider the matter of penalty.

In determining penalty, Stewards considered:

- Six bets were placed by Mr Hutchings on horses other than those driven by him in the respective races;
- One bet was placed by Mr Hutchings on a horse he drove, in combination with another horse or horses in an exotic bet;
- 14 bets were placed by Mr Hutchings on horses that he drove in the respective races.

In relation to the six charges where Mr Hutchings was found to have wagered on horses other than those driven by him in the respective races, he was disqualified for a period of three months in respect of each charge.

It was further determined that the offences created in each calendar year are to be served concurrently and cumulatively to each individual calendar year (as below).

2013 (Two offences) – Three month disqualification

2016 (Three offences) – Three month disqualification (served cumulative to 2013)

2017 (One offence) – Three month disqualification (served cumulative to 2016)

Continued

For further information on this matter contact:
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TOTAL – Nine month disqualification

In relation to the one charge that Mr Hutchings was found to have wagered on a horse he drove in combination with another horse or horses in an exotic bet, he was disqualified for a period of two months.

2016 (One offence) – Two month disqualification

TOTAL – Two month disqualification (served cumulative to the nine month disqualification as above)

Consequently, Mr Hutchings was disqualified for a period of 11 months to commence from June 19, 2018, (the date upon which Mr Hutchings was stood down) and conclude on May 18, 2019.

In relation to the charges involving the 14 bets where Mr Hutchings was found to have wagered on the horse that he drove in the respective races, he was fined a total of \$1400.

In determining penalty, Stewards were mindful of the following:

- The serious nature of these offences;
- Mr Hutchings' guilty plea;
- Mr Hutchings' licence history;
- Mr Hutchings' cooperation before the Stewards and other personal subjective factors.

Mr Hutchings was advised of his right to appeal this decision.

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