

#### RACING APPEALS AND DISCIPLINARY BOARD

## DECISION

# RACING VICTORIA STEWARDS and

#### PETA TAIT

Date of Hearing: 23 January 2019

Panel: Judge John Bowman (Chair)

- <u>Appearances:</u> Mr Darren Triandafillou appeared on behalf of the Stewards. Mr Matthew Hyland appeared on behalf of Ms Peta Tait.
- Charge: Breach of AR 135(b)
  - (b) The rider of every horse shall take all reasonable and permissible measures throughout the race to ensure that his horse is given full opportunity to win or to obtain the best possible place in the field.
- <u>Particulars:</u> The charge relates to Ms Tait's ride on *Unruly Student* during the running of Race 2, *The Ryan Tronson Memorial Cup Open Trophy Race Handicap over 1008m*, at Woolamai on 5 January 2019.

After passing the 500m after giving her mount a slap down the shoulder and until passing the 250m she failed to put any pressure on her mount to improve into the race when she had the opportunity to do so.

Between the 250m until approaching the 100m when a run presented between *Heaven's Reject* and *Punjab Rocket* she failed to ride her mount with sufficient vigour to improve its position when she had an opportunity to do so.

Plea: Guilty.

**Decision:** The Board finds the charge proved.

Ms Tait convicted and suspended for 4 picnic race meetings, commencing midnight 23 January 2019 and expiring midnight 9 February 2019.

# TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

### RACING APPEALS AND DISCIPLINARY BOARD

#### HIS HONOUR JUDGE J. BOWMAN, Chairman

#### EXTRACT OF PROCEEDINGS

DECISION

#### **RACING VICTORIA STEWARDS**

- and -

PETA TAIT

#### **RACING VICTORIA CENTRE, FLEMINGTON**

#### WEDNESDAY, 23 JANUARY 2019

MR D. TRIANDAFILLOU appeared on behalf of the RVL Stewards

MR M. HYLAND appeared on behalf of Ms P. Tait

CHAIRMAN: Ms Peta Tait, you have pleaded guilty to a breach of AR 135(b). That rule can be summarised as requiring jockeys to take all reasonable and permissible measures throughout a race to ensure that their mounts are given full opportunity to win or to obtain the best possible place in the field. The offence to which you are pleading guilty occurred in race 2 over 1008 metres at Woolamai picnic races on 5 January last.

You were riding Unruly Student which is part-owned by you, along with the trainer, Mr Reg Manning. Essentially, it is asserted by the Stewards that between the 500-metre mark and the 250-metre mark, you failed to put any pressure on Unruly Student in order to improve your position when you had the opportunity so to do between the 250-metre mark and the 100-metre mark when a run presented itself and you failed to ride your mount with sufficient vigour to improve its position when you had the opportunity to do so.

I note that Unruly Student finished sixth of eight, beaten some 11 and a half lengths. It finished approximately 2.7 lengths behind the third placegetter. The winner, Stanborough, which was a horse which you were going to try and follow, won by eight lengths.

Your horse started at 25 to 1 which made it the equal outsider of the field. It had drifted in the betting, but as stated by Mr Triandafillou on behalf of the Stewards, that is nothing unusual in relation to outsiders at picnic race meetings. It was emphasised by him that there was no suggestion of anything sinister associated with your ride or behaviour. As stated, you have pleaded guilty to the charge. It is a serious offence. This may be picnic racing but that is no excuse. Picnic meetings are very popular, particularly in the holiday season. It is apparent from the video shown - which, I might add, were of high quality for a picnic meeting - that there was a large crowd present. Prizemoney at picnic meetings has improved quite dramatically. In addition, there is considerable on-course betting. The punters who back each horse are entitled, regardless of the odds of the horse, to see it given every chance. Furthermore, if a horse is not given full opportunity to obtain the best possible place in the field, this is bad for the image of racing generally, whether it be picnic racing or a Group 1 event. Jockeys, whether they be picnic riders or full-time successful professionals at the top of their profession, must bear this in mind.

There is no argument but that this was a bad ride where full opportunity to obtain the best possible place in the field was not given. As stated, there is also no suggestion that there was anything sinister or dishonest about the ride. As I stated, you are a part-owner of the horse and I accept that you are greatly attached to it. His record has not even very good in recent times. He has not won a race for over a year and that was in a field of three. By my reckoning, it had not managed a place in some 18 runs before this race. However, like every other runner, it is entitled to be given every possible chance.

You have pleaded guilty to this charge which is to your credit. You have an outstanding record, having ridden for 20 years without ever being suspended,

much less being guilty for a breach of this rule. You have put before me excellent character references. I accept that this whole affair has upset you greatly and you were noticeably distressed during the hearing. Horses and racing are a very large part of your life as explained by Mr Hyland on your behalf. You work long hours riding trackwork, assisting at stables and the like.

Mr Triandafillou directed my attention to the case of the last picnic jockey to be convicted of a breach of this rule and that was Mr Robert Kirkpatrick on 31 January 2017. Mr Triandafillou asserts that your breach of the rule is more serious than that of Mr Kirkpatrick who essentially used up his horse far too much in attempting to lead and establish a winning break. In general terms in relation to this case, I tend to agree with Mr Triandafillou that your ride looks worse. However, Mr Kirkpatrick, who was suspended for four picnic meetings, pleaded not guilty and contested the charge. Further, whether he had the outstanding record over 20 years that you have is something which frankly I cannot recall.

As stated, you are clearly greatly upset by the charge. You have admitted the mistake that you made. You are clearly sorry for what happened and you have an outstanding record.

In summary, these matters seem to me to balance the fact that your ride may have been worse than that of Mr Kirkpatrick. Mr Triandafillou has informed the hearing that the Stewards' range of suggested penalties are of a suspension for six meetings for what could be described as high-range offences, four for medium and two for low.

When everything is taken into account, it seems to me that the penalty of suspension for four picnic race meetings is warranted and that is the penalty which I impose.

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