RACING APPEALS AND DISCIPLINARY BOARD



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APPEAL RESULT

DISTRIBUTION: Chief Executive

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FROM: Registrar – Racing Appeals and Disciplinary Board

DATE: 9 February 2016

SUBJECT: APPEAL HEARING RESULT – JOCKEY: CRAIG WILLIAMS

<u>Panel</u> Judge Bowman (Chair).

Appearances Mr Robert Cram appeared on behalf of the stewards.

Mr Des O'Keeffe appeared on behalf of Mr Williams.

At Caulfield on Saturday 6 February 2016, jockey Craig Williams pleaded guilty to a charge of careless riding on his mount *Danjeu* (IRE) in Race 2 the *Robert Hunter Handicap* (2400m).

The carelessness being that passing the 700m he rode his mount to the outside of *Black Jag* to obtain running where there was insufficient room between *Black Jag* and *Lucques* resulting in heavy contact being made with *Lucques* on two occasions which unbalanced that gelding.

In assessing penalty Stewards took into account Craig Williams' guilty plea and good recent record and that the incident was in the low range.

A Notice of Appeal against the severity of the penalty was lodged on Sunday, 7 February 2016.

A stay of proceedings was not requested.

DECISION: Appeal dismissed. Penalty to remain standing.

TRANSCRIPT OF

PROCEEDINGS

RACING APPEALS AND DISCIPLINARY BOARD

HIS HONOUR JUDGE BOWMAN, Chairman

EXTRACT OF PROCEEDINGS

DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF THE ROBERT HUNTER HANDICAP OVER 2400 METRES AT CAULFIELD ON 6/2/16

JOCKEY: CRAIG WILLIAMS

MELBOURNE

TUESDAY, 9 FEBRUARY 2016

MR R. CRAM appeared on behalf of the RVL Stewards

MR D. O'KEEFFE appeared on behalf of the Appellant

CHAIRMAN: Mr Craig Williams has pleaded guilty to a charge of careless riding, in that at Caulfield on 6 February 2016 in race 2, the Robert Hunter Handicap, essentially he rode his mount Danjeu between Black Jag, ridden by Dwayne Dunn, and Lucques, ridden by Damian Lane, where there was insufficient room, resulting in contact being made with Lucques on two occasions, unbalancing that horse.

The Stewards suspended Mr Williams for eight meetings and the appeal is against the severity of that sentence. Looking at the transcript of the discussions between the Stewards and Mr Williams, it is apparent that one of his real concerns was that an eight-meeting suspension would mean he would miss effectively, as the last such meeting, a metropolitan meeting which is a black-type program, including a Group 1 event. The significance of this was also referred to by Mr O'Keeffe on behalf of Mr Williams.

In this regard, there is no argument that Mr Williams is a star jockey of this state and is highly successful. The impact upon his earnings with an eight-meeting suspension is doubtless far greater than a similar suspension on jockeys who earn their living at provincial and country meetings. However, there is another side to that coin. The percentage drop in earnings might be just as great for what I might call a battling jockey as it is for a leading or star jockey. Missing eight provincial meetings might mean a great deal to a jockey with a comparatively low earning rate.

.Williams 9/2/16

Also, if a jockey is a star or leading jockey as is Mr Williams, as a role model, arguably there is an expectation of greater carefulness, rather than what one might find in a less talented jockey.

Comparisons with other penalties imposed for careless riding are useful and important. Fairness in sentencing is something that is very desirable. By the same token, each case has to be considered on its individual merits and its individual circumstances.

Comparison has been made to Stephen Baster who, on the same day as Mr Williams, was suspended for seven meetings for careless riding. However, Stewards described Mr Baster as having an excellent record. I note that during 2015, he was suspended for careless riding on two occasions for a total of 16 meetings. During 2015, Mr Williams was suspended on four occasions for a total of 33 meetings and was severely reprimanded on another occasion. Frankly, his record could not be described as being excellent or as good as that of Stephen Baster's.

Certainly a very rapid indication of guilt is exemplary, but the Stewards took this into account. The incident itself was careless. In essence, because he was in some difficulty on the rails behind Dwayne Dunn's mount, he pulled out and forced a passage where none existed, noticeably bumping Damian Lane's mount twice and one at least appearing to be quite a solid bump.

.Williams 9/2/16

It is unfortunate that a leading jockey such as Mr Williams would probably have got close to a full book of rides at next Saturday's black-type meeting and will probably miss rides at other venues which he would have had, but in my opinion, despite the matters put forcefully and eloquently by Mr O'Keeffe and Mr Williams himself, the period of suspension of eight meetings imposed by the Stewards was reasonable and appropriate and I do not intend to alter it. The appeal is dismissed.

.Williams 9/2/16