

STEWARDS INQUIRY DECISION

Date of Decision: 9th June 2021

Stewards Panel: S Quill (Chairman), B Plunkett, H Edgecombe

Name: Mr Nathan Ford

Date of Offence: 18 March 2019

Rule no: AHRR 259(1)(a), AHRR 259(7), AHRR 259A

Charge(s): A disqualified person who associated or communicated with persons connected with the harness racing industry for purposes relating to that industry – A disqualified person who fails to comply with this rule is guilty of an offence and is liable to a penalty – In addition to any penalty imposed pursuant to AHRR 259(7) the original period of disqualification shall unless otherwise ordered by the Stewards automatically recommence in full.

Inquiry Decision: Found guilty and no penalty issued under AHRR 259(1)(a) – Recommended disqualification of 16 months under AHRR 259A which is the term Mr Ford was serving when this rule breach took place.

FACTS:

Following the finalisation of a Harness Racing Victoria investigation regarding licensed participant Mr Z Steenhuis which concluded on 21st April 2021, Office of Racing Integrity Stewards were made aware of alleged conversations and/or messages between Mr Z Steenhuis and Mr N Ford whilst Mr Ford was serving a disqualification at that time in March 2019.

INQUIRY:

After considering all evidence tendered, Mr Ford was found guilty of a charge under AHRR 259(1)(a) that as a disqualified person he did communicate with Mr Z Steenhuis who at that time was a licensed participant with the Harness Racing industry for the purpose of that industry on or around the 18 March 2019.

DECISION:

Following submissions on penalty, Stewards determined not to issue a penalty in respect to Mr Ford's breach of AHRR 259(1)(a), however acting under the provisions of AHRR 259A, Stewards ordered that Mr Ford must recommence his disqualification in full. Furthermore, as Mr Ford was serving a number of disqualifications, Stewards ordered that Mr Ford recommence the disqualification period he was serving at the time of the rule breach in March 2019, which was a 16 month disqualification which is to commence immediately 9 June 2021 and expire midnight 8 October 2022.

Mr Ford was advised of his rights of appeal.