

MEDIA RELEASE

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HARNESS RACING INQUIRY – James Austin.

Panel – M Hoyle, R Brown & L Lord

Office of Racing Integrity Stewards today concluded an inquiry into a report from an analyst that d amphetamine and d Methamphetamine had been detected in a urine sample provided by licenced driver James Austin at the Tasmanian Pacing Club race meeting on 21st December 2018.

At the inquiry, evidence was tendered from Mr James Austin and Mr Paul Zhara from Racing Analytical Services.

After consideration, Stewards charged Mr Austin pursuant to AHRR 250(1)(a) which states;

“A driver commits an offence if a sample taken from him is found upon analysis to contain a substance banned by AHRR 251”.

Mr Austin pleaded guilty to the charge.

In assessing the matter of penalty, Stewards took into account the following:

- Mr Austin’s current circumstances, both personal and financial;
- The nature of the substances detected;
- Mr Austin’s recent record regarding prohibited substances, particularly that this was his third offence for this substance within a short timeframe;
- His guilty plea;
- Mr Austin’s conduct and honesty throughout the inquiry;
- Stewards were mindful of the importance for participants when participating in this sport to be free of prohibited substances to ensure the welfare and safety of all drivers and horses;
- The need for any penalty issued to act as an appropriate deterrent both specific and general.

Mr Austin licence was disqualified for a period of 24 months backdated to commence from 11/1/2019, the day on which he was stood down from driving after receiving notification of this sample and to expire on 10/1/2021.

Mr Austin was advised of his rights to appeal.

Michael Hoyle
Chairman of Stewards