1 December 2020

**DECISION**

**HARNESS RACING VICTORIA**

**and**

**RODNEY PETROFF**

**Date of hearing:** 29 July 2021

**Panel:** Judge John Bowman (Chairperson).

**Appearances:** Mr Scott Gillespie appeared on behalf of the Stewards.

Mr Rodney Petroff represented himself.

**Charge:** Australian Harness Racing Rule (AHRR) 163(1)(d) states “A driver shall not directly or indirectly cause another runner to shift inside the line of marker posts or into the sprint lane”.

**Particulars of charges:** Mr Rodney Petroff as the driver of Punt For Pleasure permitted his drive to shift in when not sufficiently clear of Aimforthestarzzz, causing that horse to shift inside marker pegs soon after the start.

**Plea:** Guilty

**DECISION**

Mr Rodney Petroff, you are pleading guilty to a breach of Australian Harness Racing Rule (“AHRR”) 163(1)(d). It relates to your drive of “Punt For Pleasure” at Kilmore on 10 June 2021. It is alleged that you shifted in when not sufficiently clear of “Aimforthestarzzz”, causing that horse to shift inside the marker pegs.

Originally, you pleaded not guilty. The Stewards found the charge proven and a penalty of suspension for ten days was imposed. You appealed against the finding of guilty and the penalty.

You are now pleading guilty to the charge, so that your appeal against conviction is withdrawn. The Stewards have recommended that the penalty be reduced to suspension for seven days. It is a penalty with which you agree and accept, assuming it is approved.

Of course, the ultimate decision is always one for the Tribunal. However, I have no hesitation in approving the penalty and making the proposed Order. The parties are to be congratulated for the very sensible approach that has been adopted.

Accordingly, your appeal against penalty is upheld and your licence to drive in races is suspended for seven days, commencing at midnight on Saturday, 31 July 2021.

Mark Howard
Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal