23 December 2020

**DECISION**

**RACING VICTORIA**

**and**

**WILL PRICE**

**Date of hearing:** 17 December 2020

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

**Appearances:** Mr Corie Waller appeared on behalf of the Stewards.

Mr Will Price represented himself.

**Charge:** Australian Rule of Racing (“AR”) 131(a) states a rider must not, in the opinion of the Stewards, engage in careless, reckless, improper, incompetent or foul riding.

**Particulars of charges:** Mr Will Price was found guilty of a charge of careless riding under the provisions of AR131(a), the carelessness being that near the 75 metre he permit his mount to shift out resulting in contact between his mount and Hard Landing and then again near the 25 metre he permitted his mount to shift out resulting in Hard Landing being tightened for room and having to be checked. In issuing the charge Stewards noted that there had been a contribution from Young Cool Harry which had shifted in. Will Price’s permit to ride in races was suspended for a period of 6 race meetings (2 Metropolitan, 4 Provincial) to commence at midnight the 19th December and to expire at midnight the 29th December. In assessing penalty Stewards deemed the incident to be in the low range and took into account his exceptional riding record (over 830 rides) and took into account the contribution from Young Cool Hard (which also resulted in a charge to rider Michael Walker).

**Plea:** Not guilty

**DECISION**

Mr Will Price, you are appealing against a decision of the Stewards that you were guilty of careless riding in Race 5, a heat of the 55 second challenge, at Moonee Valley on the night of 11 December 2020.

You were riding “The Last Napoleon”. Other horses and jockeys involved included Mr Lachlan Neindorf riding “Hard Landing”. He was the victim of the interference that undoubtedly took place close to the finishing post. Mr Michael Walker was riding “Young Harry Cool”, which was to the outside of Mr Neindorf and clearly shifted in close to the post. Mr Walker has already been found guilty of careless riding and, as I understand it, suspended for seven meetings. Ms Madison Lloyd was riding the ultimate winner, which was ahead of the three horses which I have mentioned. That mount’s only relevance is that she shifted in and helped create a possible run for you to the inside of Mr Neindorf.

I have viewed the video many times. There are two distinct incidents. You moved out at about the 75 metre mark and bumped Mr Neindorf’s mount. You then took a run to his inside as Ms Lloyd’s mount moved towards the rail. Mr Neindorf was the victim of much greater interference in the last few strides.

Mr Waller, on behalf of the Stewards, very fairly conceded that, had the only incident been that at the 75 metre mark, you would not have been charged with careless riding. It’s relevance was more that it should have put you on alert over the concluding stages, when the Stewards allege that you moved outward again, effectively sandwiching Mr Neindorf between your mount and that of Mr Walker, who was shifting in.

Thus, the bottom line is the question of whether you moved out in the last few strides or maintained a straight line.

I cannot be comfortably satisfied that you did move out. Unquestionably, you moved out and bumped Mr Neindorf near the 75 metre mark. However, having viewed the complete video many times during the hearing and again when considering my decision, I cannot be satisfied that you changed your position after the 75 metre mark and before the post. You appear to have gone in a straight line. Undoubtably, Mr Walker moved in and undoubtably Mr Neindorf suffered interference, but I am not comfortably satisfied that you changed your line and contributed to the interference.

My conclusion is that I cannot be comfortably satisfied that you are guilty of careless riding. The appeal is upheld and the charge dismissed.

Mark Howard  
Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal