16 February 2024

**DECISION**

**RACING VICTORIA**

**and**

**LIAM RIORDAN**

**Date of hearing:** 7 February 2024

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

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

Mr Liam Riordan represented himself.

**Charge:** Australian Rule of Racing (“AR”) 131(a) states:

 A rider must not, in the opinion of the Stewards:

(a) engage in careless, reckless, improper, incompetent or foul riding.

**Particulars of charge:** Near the 200 metres, you have carelessly permitted your mount, Amelie, to shift out when not sufficiently clear of Divine Turf, resulting in Divine Turf being tightened for room between Half Yours and Amelie and, as a consequence of that tightening, Divine Turf has been checked, clipped heels, blundered and rider Madison Lloyd being dislodged.

**Plea:** Guilty

**DECISION**

Mr Liam Riordan, you are appealing against the penalty handed down by the Stewards following your ride on Amelie in Race 4 at Camperdown on 20 January 2024. You are pleading guilty to the charge, but appealing against the magnitude of the penalty imposed.

In the incident, Ms Madison Lloyd was dislodged from her mount, Divine Turf. This incident occurred at approximately the 200 metre mark. Thankfully, Ms Lloyd does not appear to have suffered any long term injury, but she was not permitted by the doctor to ride at the rest of the meeting. She would appear to have been somewhat stunned in the fall. However, there is no suggestion that her evidence on the circumstances of it has been affected to any great degree.

As stated, you are pleading guilty to a charge of careless riding. The Stewards imposed a penalty of suspension for 30 race meetings. The penalty frequently imposed in cases of this nature where a fall has occurred has been expressed in terms of one month. It seems to me a penalty expressed in meetings is more logical, as the number of meetings in a month may vary according to the time of the year.

Mr Quill, on behalf of the Stewards, directed my attention to the penalties imposed in other careless riding or cases where a fall has occurred, including that of Mr John Allen, who was suspended for 30 meetings in July and August last year.

Your main argument in this appeal is that Mr Neil Farley, who was riding Half Yours, contributed in a significant way to the fall. You allege that he was shifting in as you moved out and that this caused Ms Lloyd’s horse to clip his heels and fall. There is no argument but that her horse did make contact with Mr Farley’s mount, but she also stated that the reason for this was that she was pushed from the inside – that is, by your mount.

I have viewed the video many times. It does not seem to me that Mr Farley’s mount moved off it’s line to the inside at the time of the fall. I agree with Ms Lloyd’s summation of the situation. Having viewed the video many times, it seems to me that the cause of the trouble was your moving out and that if there was any movement to the inside by Mr Farley at the time of the fall, it was absolutely minimal. As stated to the Stewards, following the incident his front end came out a little as he was knocked sideways.

In my opinion, there was no meaningful cause or contribution by Mr Farley to the fall. I see no reason for any reduction of the penalty imposed by reason of his riding.

The penalty itself is consistent with prior penalties imposed for careless riding resulting in a fall. Indeed, due to the vagaries of race fixtures in any given month, it is below that imposed in some others. As stated, penalties based on meetings rather than a calendar month seem to me to be more logical. In general terms, I support the proposition that falls usually carry with them greater penalties.

In all the circumstances, I see no reason to interfere with the penalty imposed. I am of the view that it was your riding, and in particular your shifting out when not sufficiently clear of Ms Lloyd, that caused the fall. I do not accept that there was any meaningful contribution by Mr Farley. I regard the penalty as being appropriate. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

Mark Howard

Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal