



INQUIRY INTO AN ALLEGATION OF AN ASSAULT COMMITTED BY STABLEHAND MR GARRY CLIFFORD ON STABLEHAND MR MITCHELL MCDUFF AND AN ALLEGATION OF HARRASSMENT AND BULLYING CONDUCT COMMITTED AGAINST STABLEHAND MS KIERA HEAD BY STABLEHANDS MS NATALIE WILKINSON AND MR MITCHELL MCDUFF.

Stewards Room

4 May 2021

Warwick Farm Racecourse

**Stewards: M F Van Gestel (Chairman)
S G Railton
C Albrecht**

Racing NSW Stewards today conducted inquiries into an allegation of an assault committed by stablehand Mr Garry Clifford on stablehand Mr Mitchell McDuff on 31 March 2021 and an allegation of harrasment and bullying conduct committed against stablehand Ms Kiera Head by stablehands Ms Natalie Wilkinson and Mr Mitchell McDuff. Evidence today was taken from Mr Clifford, Mr McDuff, Ms Wilksinson, Ms Head, stablehand Ms R Rowe, stablehand Ms J Peever and stablehand Mr C Webber.

The following charges and penalties were issued.

Charges

1. Mr Garry Clifford – AR228(b) – Improper Conduct

Pleaded guilty to committing an assault on stablehand Mr Mitchell McDuff on 31 March 2021 in the Warwick Farm stable complex.

Penalty: 6 months suspension to commence on 31 March 2021, the day Mr Clifford was stood down, and to expire on 30 September 2021. Under the provisions of AR283(5) the final 3 months was suspended on basis Mr Clifford does not offend the conduct rules for a period of 2 years, allowing Mr Clifford to return from suspension on 30 June 2021.

2. Mr Mitchell McDuff – AR228(b) – Improper Conduct

- a. Pleaded guilty to sending and/or was a party to sending a threatening message to stablehand Mr Garry Clifford on 16 February 2021.

Penalty: 3 months suspension to commence on 4 May 2021 and to expire on 4 August 2021. Under the provisions of AR283(5) the final 6 weeks was suspended on basis Mr McDuff does not offend the conduct rules for a period of 2 years, allowing Mr McDuff to return from suspension on 18 June 2021.

- b. Pleaded guilty to sending and/or was a party to sending an improper message to stablehand Ms Keira Head between January and March 2021.

RACING NSW – STEWARDS INQUIRY

Penalty: 6 weeks suspension to commence on 4 May 2021 and to expire on 18 June 2021. Such penalty to be served concurrently with charge a.

3. Mr Caleb Webber – AR228(b) – Improper Conduct

Pleaded guilty to sending and/or was a party to sending a threatening message to stablehand Mr Garry Clifford on 16 February 2021.

Penalty: 3 months suspension to commence on 4 May 2021 and to expire on 4 August 2021. Under the provisions of AR283(5) the final 2 months was suspended on basis Mr Webber does not offend the conduct rules for 2 years, allowing Mr Webber to return from suspension on 4 June 2021.

4. Ms Natalie Wilkinson – AR228(b) – Improper Conduct

Pleaded guilty to sending and/or was a party to sending threatening and/or improper messages to stablehand Ms Keira Head between January and March 2021.

Penalty: 2 months suspension to commence on 4 May 2021 and to expire on 4 July 2021. Under the provisions of AR283(5) the final month was suspended on basis Ms Wilkinson does not offend the conduct rules for 2 years, allowing Ms Wilkinson to return from suspension on 4 June 2021.

5. Ms Kiera Head – AR228(b) – Improper Conduct

Pleaded guilty to sending and/or was a party to sending threatening and/or improper messages to stablehand Ms N Wilkinson and Mr M McDuff between January and March 2021.

Penalty: 2 months suspension to commence on 4 May 2021 and to expire on 4 July 2021. Under the provisions of AR283(5) the final month was suspended on basis Ms Head does not offend the conduct rules for 2 years, allowing Ms Head to return from suspension on 4 June 2021.

Relevant Rules

AR 228 Conduct detrimental to the interests of racing

A person must not engage in:

(b) misconduct, improper conduct or unseemly behaviour;

AR283 – Penalties

AR283(5) - *Any person or body authorised by the Rules to penalise a person may in respect of any penalty imposed in relation to the conduct of a person and other than in relation to a period of disqualification or a warning off, suspend the operation of that penalty either wholly or in part for a period not exceeding 2 years, on terms they think fit.*