



INQUIRY INTO THE COLLAPSE AND CATASTRPHIC INJURY SUSTAINED BY THE RACEHORSE
SANDANEY AT WARWICK FARM RACECOURSE ON 30 DECEMBER 2019.

RNSW Offices
Druitt Street
Sydney

20 January 2020

Stewards: M F Van Gestel (Chairman)
T P Moxon
T J Vassallo

Racing NSW Stewards today conducted an inquiry into a report received relative to the collapse and catastrophic injury sustained by the racehorse Sandaney at Warwick Farm racecourse on 30 December 2019.

Evidence today was taken from trainer of Sandaney Mr Rick Worthington, Stablehand Riders Mr Patrick Shanahan and Mr Bruno Neto, Trainers Mr Clarry Conners and Mr Bryce Heys, ATC Trackwork Supervisor Mr John McGarr, Mr Paul Messara representing Arrowfield Stud, the Owners of Sandaney, and Racing NSW Chief Veterinary Officer Dr Toby Koenig. A report and statement tendered by Dr James Whitfield from Randwick Equine Centre was also considered along with a necropsy report provided by the University Teaching Hospital Camden. Racing NSW Senior Investigator Ms Jacqueline Johnstone assisted the inquiry.

The evidence disclosed;

1. Sandaney was offered for sale at the 2018 Yearling Sales, but was passed in.
2. X-rays performed on the gelding in preparation for the yearling sales had revealed both fetlocks to have developed progressive osteoarthritic changes.
3. Sandaney was subject to arthroscopic surgery on 16 October 2018, whereby bone fragments were removed from the off fore fetlock joint.
4. Advice from the veterinarians was guarded to fair prognosis for Sandaney to race and after spending 12 months spelling under veterinary advice, the gelding was broken in and placed into light work.
5. Treatment records obtained from Arrowfield Stud did not reveal any treatments of concern that had indicated any lameness issue whilst spelling.
6. On 23 December 2019 Sandaney entered Mr Worthington's Warwick Farm stables for training, following being broken in at Mr Worthington's farm and there were no treatments provided to the gelding. Mr Worthington advised the horse had not displayed any lameness.
7. On 30 December 2019 Mr Shanahan rode the gelding in trackwork, however did not adhere to the directions of Mr Worthington to work the horse slow and on the "polo field" track, in that he worked Sandaney quicker than slow and was worked on the Polytrack.
8. During its trackwork Sandaney became distressed and commenced to tire near the 400m before collapsing and sustaining fractures to both forelimb sesamoid bones and being humanely euthanased.

Mr Patrick Shanahan

Charge 1 – AR231(1)(a) - Mr Shanahan pleaded guilty to a charge under AR231(1)(a) in that he committed an act of cruelty to Sandaney on the morning of 30 December 2019 by;

1. Despite being given instruction by trainer Mr Rick Worthington to work the gelding two laps slow on the “polo field” track (circumference 1000m) he decided without permission of trainer Mr Rick Worthington to work Sandaney two laps on the Polytrack (circumference 1700m).
2. He worked Sandaney faster than slow work on the Polytrack and over a longer distance than instructed which contributed to the horse commencing to become distressed and tire near the 400m on the second lap of work.
3. He then committed an act of cruelty in that that he mistreated Sandaney by
 - a. Using a non-approved whip unreasonably and/or excessively on the gelding over the final 400m.
 - b. Continuing to encourage the gelding by pushing and/or riding it out over the final 400m
4. Such actions detailed above contributing to Sandaney collapsing near the winning post and sustaining catastrophic fractures to both forelimbs and being euthanaised.

Penalty: 18 months disqualification reduced to 13 ½ months for guilty plea. Disqualification commences 30 December 2019, the day Mr Shanahan was stood down, and to expire on 13 February 2021.

Charge 2 – AR132(1) – Mr Shanahan pleaded guilty to a charge under AR132(1) in that he carried a whip of design and specification not approved by Racing Australia at trackwork on 30 December 2019

Penalty: \$500

In assessing penalty for both charges Stewards took into consideration Mr Shanahan’s guilty plea, his good record and remorse he exhibited. However, the Stewards also considered the seriousness of the matter and actions of Mr Shanahan.

Further, the general principles that apply when issuing penalty

1. What message is to be given to Mr Shanahan to ensure that in the future this type of conduct is not repeated.
2. What general message is sent to the community at large to indicate to those who might be likeminded to engage in such conduct, what the likely consequences are.
3. To indicate to the broader community who are not likely to engage in the type of conduct that, should it be detected, the industry is operating at the highest possible welfare standards and serious penalties apply for those who breach the horse welfare rules.

Mr Rick Worthington

Mr Worthington pleaded guilty to a charge under AR103(4)(b) in that he failed to lodge a stable return for Sandaney when it entered his stable on 23 December 2019.

Penalty: \$400 (first offence)



Relevant Rules

AR 231 Care and welfare of horses

(1) A person must not:

- (a) commit or commission an act of cruelty to a horse, or be in possession of any article or thing which, in the opinion of the Stewards, is capable of inflicting cruelty to a horse;

AR 132 Limits on the use of a whip by a rider

(1) A rider may only carry in races, official trials, jump-outs, or trackwork a padded whip of a design and specification approved by Racing Australia (“approved whip”) which is in a satisfactory condition and has not been modified in any way.

AR 103 Trainers to lodge Stable Returns

(4) The trainer of a horse must:

- (b) lodge a stable return immediately upon a horse joining the trainer’s stable;

**M F Van Gestel
Chairman of Stewards
General Manager - Integrity**