

DECISION

Racing Integrity Act 2016, sections 252AH, 252BM

Review application number	RAP-157	
Name	Christopher Meehan	
Panel	Mr K J O'Brien AM (Chairperson)	
	Mr E Wilkinson (Panel Member)	
	Mr K Waller (Panel Member)	
Code	Thoroughbred	
Rule	Australian Rules of Racing 131(a)	
	<i>A rider must not, in the opinion of the Stewards engage in careless, reckless, improper, incompetent or foul riding</i>	
Penalty Notice number	PN-011755	
Appearances & Representation	Applicant	Self-represented
	Respondent	R Neal - Queensland Racing Integrity Commission
Hearing Date	8 July 2025	
Decision Date	8 July 2025	
Decision	Pursuant to 252AH(1)(a) the Racing Decision is Confirmed	

- [1] This is an application by licensed jockey Christopher Meehan for the review of a racing decision made by Stewards at Townsville on 29 June 2025. On that date, the Applicant had ridden the horse Lucky Rolla in Race 4, a benchmark 60 handicap, at the Townsville Turf Club race meeting. Following a Stewards' Inquiry the Applicant was found guilty of an offence contrary to Australian Rule of Racing 131(a). The penalty imposed was a licence suspension of 10 days operative from 13 July 2025 until 23 July 2025.
- [2] The allegation against the Applicant was that near the 700-metre mark of the race he had allowed his horse to shift inward, resulting in another horse, Bright Daisy, being checked and losing its rightful running. The Applicant pleaded not guilty to the charge but having viewed the race footage and taken evidence, the Stewards reached a determination of guilty and imposed the penalty of 10 days licence suspension referred to above.
- [3] The period of suspension was calculated in accordance with the Careless Riding Template as involving low range carelessness with level two consequences of a check or loss of rightful running occasioned to another horse. The suspension was ordered to commence at the expiration of a penalty imposed for a careless riding offence in respect of which the Applicant had been found guilty on the previous day at Laura.
- [4] The Applicant contends now that he is not guilty of the offence. He says in his Notice of Application, as he argues before this Panel, that his riding line was dictated by a horse to his outside ridden by licensed jockey Ryan Wiggins and that he had done everything he could to prevent being carried off his racing line. The position of the Stewards in relation to the incident is perhaps adequately summarised in the following passage from the Steward's Hearing¹:

We've given it all due consideration and we're still of a mind that you were at fault in this and that you haven't - while you haven't intentionally gone to the inside. You've permitted your mount to shift in and as a consequence, Justin Stanley has been placed under significant pressure and has had to check out of it. As I say, there's no intent, but there doesn't need to be intent for a careless riding charge to emanate. The fact is that you've been out there, you weren't aware that he was to your inside and your horse may have wanted to shift a little bit of ground, but it's not until you actually run Jockey Stanley out of room that you then come off and relieve that pressure.

- [5] The position for the Applicant is set out sufficiently well in his arguments at the Stewards' Inquiry as follows²:

I've permitted my horse to move in. I feel haven't permitted my horse to move in. At the whole time, I feel I've been three-quarters of length down and outside Ryan Wiggins. He has dictated my run and sort of carried me across and at every point, as we've seen through the inquiry, I've had a hard hold of my horse's head. His head has been turned out the whole way. I've never once just let my horse roll to the rail and I've been carried from a three-wide position into a half-off position and Ryan has ended up in a two to two-and-a-half-off position as well. I, at no point, feel that I've let my horse, or permitted my horse to just roll in off its own accord. So - and I feel that I've done everything I could (sic) possible at that time to keep my horse straight. Yes, I wasn't aware Justin was there, but I think that is irrelevant, that I wasn't going just to the rail, I was being dictated and

¹ Transcript of Stewards' Hearing, lines 220-229

² Ibid lines 242-257

carried across and I've done everything that I could to try and stay off, like considerably off the rail. So, with that I would like, sir, to plead not guilty.

- [6] This Panel of course must reach its own conclusions in relation to the circumstances of the incident. We've had the opportunity to view the relevant footage on numerous occasions, and we have considered the evidence that was given before the Stewards as well. There are two angles which provide the best viewing of the incident.
- [7] The footage from the inside shows when running past the 800-metre mark, Jockey Stanley on Bright Daisy is racing last on the fence. The Applicant is to his outside approximately length in front of him. In front of the Applicant is the horse Savee, ridden by Jockey Taylor, on the fence, and to his outside is Albanian Bay, ridden by Jockey Kendal. Three quarters of a length back and to the outside of those runners is Lady Damus, ridden by Jockey Wiggins. Approaching the 700-metre mark, it appears that when Jockey Stanley gets to the inside of the Applicant's heels, his mount may be laying out slightly. Jockey Stanley then takes hold of his mount, checking off the heels of the Applicant. Two lengths in front of the Applicant, Jockey Kendall appears to be having some trouble with her mount, which is inclined to want to get in.
- [8] Turning then to the head on footage. At approximately the 700-metre mark Jockey Stanley is on the fence, a length to three quarters of a length back on the inside of the Applicant. Jockey Wiggins is a horse away to the outside of those runners with a margin of approximately half a length in front. Directly after, Jockey Stanley has his horse's head turned in and checks off the heels of the Applicant. In front of the Applicant, Jockey Kendall is having trouble with her mount wanting to get in and across Jockey Taylor's heels. The Applicant's mount does appear to want to lay in at the corner where he has its head turned out slightly. At the point of the interference to Jockey Stanley, it does not appear that Jockey Wiggins has dictated the Applicant in.
- [9] In considering the whole of the evidence, the Panel is satisfied that the Applicant is unaware of the presence of Jockey Stanley to his inside. We consider that there should have been much greater effort made by the Applicant to ensure that Jockey Stanley had adequate room to his inside. It is evident the Applicant's mount is inclined to want to lay in, but we do not consider this to be a consequence of being dictated to by Jockey Wiggins on his outside. Ultimately the Applicant has a responsibility to ensure that Jockey Stanley to his inside was afforded sufficient running. Jockey Stanley was entitled to that run and the Applicant's failure to do so constitutes, to our satisfaction, careless riding.
- [10] So far as the penalty is concerned, the application of the template and appropriate regard to AR 283(4) supports the determination of the Stewards, and we see no basis at all for interfering in any way with that determination.
- [11] In the result in respect of this particular matter, the order of the Panel, pursuant to section 252(1)(a) of the *Racing Integrity Act 2016* is that the decision of the Stewards, the subject of this application is to be confirmed.