



NATIONAL STEEPLECHASE ASSOCIATION
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STEWARDS' REPORT

RACE MEETING: Tryon Block House Steeplechase

DATE: April 16, 2022

WEATHER: Slight Overcast, Dry, 70F, WBT 19.6

COURSE CONDITION:
Compaction: 10-11
Moisture: 5-6. (Good)

CLERK OF SCALES: Cathie Jackson

STARTER: Jeff Teter

STEWARDS: Greg Pachman (Presiding)
Phil Hanrahan
Stirling Young
Anne Pezzano (Safety Steward)

OFFICIAL ACTIONS:

Race 1: [Race 1 Chart](#)

Race 2: [Race 2 Chart](#)

At the close of racing, the stewards called rider Richard Boucher to a meeting to discuss his ride in the 2nd race on #3 Tom. Specifically, the horse lost contact with the field at the 8th fence, on the top of the hill, yet continued on course while in last place/distanced 40 plus lengths and jumped the 9th and final fence. Not continuing with tired/distanced horses was briefed thoroughly at the rider's meeting and is an emphasis item with the NSA. Boucher explained that the horse was not tired but that he just mentally gives up/loses interest after about 1 ½ miles and slows himself. He stated that the owner had asked him to try and get the horse to finish and that he felt that safety wasn't compromised in this situation. (In Boucher's defense, in the 3rd race, prior to meeting with the stewards, Boucher pulled up #4 Three O One prior to the last fence from a position that was a lot closer to the field than Tom.). The stewards reemphasized to Boucher that, regardless of the circumstances, it was no longer acceptable to continue on course with horses that had lost touch with the field, for both safety and appearance reasons, and cautioned him against doing it in the future.

Race 3: [Race 3 Chart](#)

Pulled Up: #4-Three O One(9th Fence-Tired) and #7-Criticize (9th Fence-Tired)

At the close of racing, the stewards called trainer Ted Thompson to a meeting to discuss his horse, Jump Ship, in the 3rd race. Prior to the start of racing the stewards learned that Thompson wanted to accompany his horse, who has a history of starting issues, to the start. The stewards discussed it with the starter and tacitly approved it without speaking directly to the trainer. There was no assistant starter available at Tryon.

The start at Tryon takes place right after the first fence on the course and the horses wrap around that fence from right to left prior to entering the box. Thompson released the horse at the appropriate time but, instead of stopping, waiting for all the horses to pass and veering to the right, he continued to walk slowly as the rest of the field passed him and ended up behind the box and on the landing side of the fence. He did not make any noise, wave his arms, or wave an object but he was walking behind the box at the start and the stewards were unable to determine if he actually stepped inside the box prior to the starter dropping the flag. Rule 5.10.B.2 states that "a stable representative...may not...interfere with the field from behind the box". The stewards determined post-race that, in our opinion, Thompson did not "interfere" with the field but the stewards did not like the appearance of it as some

people may deem the presence of a person behind the box as interference and the situation was too close to a rules violation. The steward's reviewed the rule with Thompson and made it clear to him how close he came to a violation and instructed him on how to avoid a repeat in the future.

In our debrief, the stewards also felt that we were remiss in not giving clear detailed instructions to the trainer.

However, there have been enough problems with stable representatives accompanying their horses to the start, and rule 5.10.B is not very specific as to what would be interference, that the NSA might consider offering specific guidance, via policy or rule, as to exactly what is acceptable behavior at the start.

Race 4: [Race 4 Chart](#)

Official Comments:

In an effort to improve safety and reduce course changes after entries are taken, a representative of the stewards met with Tryon Race Director Toby Edwards two weeks before the event to review the condition book, discuss the performance of horses thus far this year, look for ways to make the course safer for the horses that were expected to enter the races, and obviate the need for last minute safety changes which are always contentious and disruptive.

After an initial meeting, the steward's representative reviewed the steward's report, videos, and charts for the previous year's races, checked the condition book and looked at the expected weather. During that time the race director also inspected the course. After a second meeting, Edwards made the decision to remove the 2nd to last fence from the 2021 course leaving a total of 9 fences to jump in 2022 instead of the 11 in 2021. This was done prior to entries for the races.

The results were positive. The horses were able to modulate their speed down the hill and were not faced with steadying for a jump prior to the hill up to the last fence. The horses all maintained good energy jumping the last and there were a number of stretch battles. Edwards stated afterward he was pleased with the result of the course change and would consider leaving the fence out of Tryon's next event.

The stewards strongly believe that the NSA should consider making this process part of every event. One steward from the team working the event can be assigned to meet with the race director early to review the course, fence position, race length, expected weather, turf condition, previous event history, and the condition book to optimize the course for the type of horses that are expected to enter prior to the taking of entries and where any changes can be announced in the Official Notices prior to entries. While there is always the chance of a force majeure situation (such as extreme weather) that can force a last minute safety change to a course, other last minute changes can be prevented. It is unfair for the participants to be asked to run over a course different than the one for which they entered and the NSA should take an active role in minimizing it.

The walk-up start with no post position order was in effect at Tryon and worked very well. All the starts went smoothly.

The stewards also want to note the failure of the steward controlled video replay system in the truck which forced all replays to be manually generated by the director and greatly increased the time it took to review film after the race.

//Signed//

Greg Pachman
Presiding Steward