

STEWARDS RULING
May 3, 2017

Stewards: Gregg Morris
Tad Zimmerman
Gus Brown

Licensee: Todd McKenna

After the Maryland Hunt Cup on April 29, 2017 the Stewards were notified that trainer Todd McKenna had been observed kicking his horse SERENE HARBOR in the belly while enroute to the paddock from the barn area. SERENE HARBOR subsequently exhibited unusual behavior while in the paddock by laying down. Course veterinarian Rachel Westerlund was notified and she continued to observe the horse during his warm up. Prior to the start of the race Dr. Westerlund recommended to the Stewards that the horse be scratched and he was.

On Sunday, April 30, 2017, Mr. McKenna was notified by the Stewards of the allegations regarding his actions and was asked for an explanation.

Pursuant to NSA Rule 5.2.B.3 which states: *“The Stewards have power to regulate and control the conduct of all officials, and of all owners, trainers, riders, grooms and other persons attendant on horses, as well as employees of the Association”*, a telephonic hearing was held for Mr. McKenna, the three Stewards listed above and NSA representative William Gallo on May 2, 2017.

During the hearing, McKenna was informed that the Stewards had testimony from several witnesses that he did in fact kick his horse in the belly and that he had done so in full view of several spectators and photographers. McKenna stated that he was trying to keep his horse from lying down and could not remember whether or not he had kicked the horse.

There is zero tolerance for the physical abuse of horses at NSA regulated meets.

The Stewards, based on the testimony of numerous witnesses and Mr. McKenna, find trainer Todd McKenna in violation of NSA Rule 11.1.F which states: *“While on Association grounds, no person shall subject any animal to any form of cruelty, mistreatment, neglect or abuse, or permit any animal under his control, custody or supervision to suffer any such cruelty, mistreatment, neglect or abuse”*, and NSA Rule 5.2.B.15 which states: *“The Stewards shall take notice of any conduct which appears not to be in the best interests of racing, with or without complaint thereof”*.

Because of his egregious conduct, owner/trainer Todd McKenna’s licenses are immediately suspended and this matter is hereby referred by the Stewards to the NSA Stewards Advisory Committee for further review and a hearing to determine the ultimate penalty.