



## **NATIONAL STEEPLECHASE ASSOCIATION**

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### **STEWARDS' REPORT**

**RACE MEETING:** PA Hunt Cup

**DATE:** 11/05/2023

**WEATHER:** Mostly sunny, 64°

**COURSE CONDITION:**

Compaction: 120

Moisture: 3.14

**CLERK OF SCALES:** Mary Guessford

**STARTER:** Burling Vannote  
**Asst. Starter:** R. Barry Watson

**STEWARDS:** Gus Brown  
Charles Fleischmann  
Gregg Morris  
Doris Paxson, Safety Steward

#### **OFFICIAL ACTIONS:**

The Stewards chose #3 (Monbeg Stream - IRE) from the third race for pre-race testing.

Elizabeth Voss runners Lady Raven (race #4) and Cabin Fever (race #5) as well as Liam Bourke's Ajourneytofreedom (race #5) were all thirty minutes late arriving for their pre-race examination. After interviewing trainer Bourke and Casey Pinkard, the representative for trainer Elizabeth Voss, it was determined that both parties had experienced unforeseen travel issues. Under these extenuating circumstances, and the fact that all three runners were not entered to run on Lasix, the stewards did permit all three horses to run.

The stewards were notified before the first race that jockey Harrison Beswick had been sent to the hospital after having a fall the previous day. Beswick had passed the concussion protocol but had not been medically cleared by the on-course physician at Montpelier Races. Beswick met with the stewards and explained the prior day's events. He provided the stewards with medical paperwork from his hospital visit. Beswick was also examined by Dr. Erica Gaertner, the NSA chief medical advisor. Dr. Gaertner reviewed Beswick's medical records and cleared him to ride.

**Race 1:**

**Hard Strike**, ridden by jockey Harrison Beswick, went off course at a beacon between fence six and fence seven, and while pulling up, interfered with both The Butler Yates and Hero's Return (finished 3rd). This action caused the two impeded runners to check up and lose ground while also being carried out.

**The Butler Yates (IRE)**, was pulled up before fence fifteen.

The stewards reviewed all available videos and took testimony from Harrison Beswick. Based on all the available information, and Rule 7.7.F.2, Mr. Beswick was fined \$250 for going off course. He was also fined an additional \$500 for careless riding when he guided his horse back across the field.

The Butler Yates was examined by the course veterinarian and cleared to travel home.

**Race 2:**

Prior to the running of the 2nd race, jockey Harrison Beswick was replaced on Rhythmia with Jockey Freddy Proctor, at the direction of trainer Todd McKenna.

**Mr. Fine Threads** fell at fence thirteen. Jockey Teddy Davies was cleared by the course physician. Mr. Fine Threads was examined by the course veterinarian and cleared to travel home.

**Race 3:**

**Renegade River** was pulled up after jumping the sixteenth fence.

**Monbeg Stream (IRE)** fell heavily at the seventeenth fence, while in contention for the lead. The horse stayed down and was quickly attended to by an on-course veterinarian and the primary horse ambulance. He remained down for an extended time and was treated on the racecourse for exhaustion. He was eventually able to stand and walked back to the stabling enclosure under his own power. Monbeg Stream was cleared to ship home but was referred to NBC for evaluation.

Renegade River was returned to the unsaddling area after being eased. After being untacked he collapsed on the racecourse. The horse was immediately attended to by a 2nd course veterinarian and 2nd horse ambulance. Unfortunately, Renegade River succumbed to his condition.

Following the running of this race, clerk of scales Mary Guessford contacted the stewards and reported that Tom Garner, the jockey aboard 2nd place finisher **Shootist**, had failed to weigh back in following the race. The stewards were able to locate Mr. Garner in the stable area. Mr. Garner, Mary Guessford, and an additional witness were all interviewed. Based on all of the available information as well as testimony from the parties, the stewards determined, based on Rule 7.8.D.4, that Shootist is disqualified and is recorded as unplaced for the purposes of purse distribution.

**The new order of finish: #2 (Royal Ruse)- first, #1(Awesome Adrian) - second.**

Jockey Tom Garner was fined \$500 under Rule 7.8.D.4 for failure to weigh in.

**Race 4:**

The start of this race was unorganized and the field was extremely scattered from front to rear when released by the starter. In addition, there were multiple outriders close to the starting area, causing additional congestion and confusion.

**Band Tour** unseated jockey Gretchen Eisenberg pulling up after the race. Eisenberg was cleared by the course physician. Band Tour did require sutures from an injury caused during the incident. The horse was treated by the stable veterinarian and was cleared to travel home.

Tom Young, aboard Eleazar, requested an outrider's assistance following this race, complaining of lightheadedness. Young did dismount his horse and then passed out. The medical crew quickly attended to him. Mr. Young was treated on course for a cardiac event and recommended to be transported via ambulance for further evaluation. Mr. Young refused transport. The course physician recommended a follow-up by a specialist. Mr. Young was not cleared to ride by the course physician.

Following this race starter Burley Vannote, and assistant starter Barry Watson were interviewed by the stewards regarding the chaotic start. Mr. Vannote was reminded that as the starter, he is always in control of all affairs at the start. He was also reminded of the importance of a fair start for all runners, and to remove all lead ponies and outriders from the start as the runners are being assembled.

The head outrider, James Paxson, also met with the stewards following this race. Mr. Paxson was asked to remind his crew to remain away from the start once runners begin to assemble, and for every outrider to know where they are on the racecourse during the running of every race. Mr. Paxson assured the stewards that this message would be conveyed to the entire outriding staff.

**Race 5:**

This race was delayed by approximately twenty minutes while medical personnel attended to the jockey from the previous race.

This race did have one false start, and on the second attempt, all runners were dispatched in good order.

Following this race, the starter and assistant starter again met with the stewards regarding the conduct of jockey Teddy Davies during and following the first attempted start. Both officials reported that Mr. Davies was combative and disrespectful towards both officials regarding the starting procedures. Mr. Davies met with the stewards and also gave testimony regarding his version of events at the start. Based on all of the testimony - and Mr. Davies having been warned previously regarding his behavior towards racing officials - Mr. Davies was fined \$200 under the revised code of conduct (05/19/23 - *As a condition of license, all NSA licensees are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the best interests of racing. Any conduct deemed to be detrimental to the sport, the NSA, or the individual race meets and their representatives, or conduct prejudicial to the sport's reputation, will subject the offender to a fine or suspension, or both, in accordance with the NSA Rules of Racing.*) for showing disrespect towards a racing official.

**Official Comments:**

On the Tuesday following the races, the stewards were notified by the NSA office that there had been a written complaint of abusive behavior lodged against licensee Todd McKenna by a race day

volunteer. The volunteer, a gate attendant responsible for access to the stretch alleged in her statement that Mr. McKenna had sought access to the racecourse before clearance had been given to open the gates. In the course of this confrontation with the volunteer, Mr. McKenna used both physical intimidation as well as vulgar language. It was alleged that he ultimately gained access to the course before permission was granted. It was also stated that he did return later to apologize. While investigating this matter, the stewards learned via first-hand account that Mr. McKenna had also contacted one of the meet's racechairpersons, to offer an apology for his behavior and gave his explanation for his actions.

The stewards contacted trainer McKenna and notified him that a complaint had been filed and a formal hearing would be conducted telephonically at noon on Wednesday, November 11, 2023.

A formal hearing was held. Mr. McKenna presented his side of the case and admitted to having been involved in the interaction. Based on his testimony, the testimony of the volunteer, and all of the information available to the stewards, Mr. McKenna has been fined \$500 under the revised code of conduct (05/19/23 - *As a condition of license, all NSA licensees are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the best interests of racing. Any conduct deemed to be detrimental to the sport, the NSA, or the individual race meets and their representatives, or conduct prejudicial to the sport's reputation, will subject the offender to a fine, or suspension, or both, in accordance with the NSA Rules of Racing.*) for showing disrespect towards a race day volunteer.

The stewards would like to thank the medical professionals, attending veterinarians, and equine ambulance crews for their hard work and quick responses throughout the day. The race committee is also commended for providing a quality racecourse and event for participants, spectators, and volunteers. A final thank you to paddock judge Andy Elser, safety steward Doris Paxson, and stable manager Charlie Brown for keeping the race schedule running ahead of time throughout the day.

Gus Brown