

Stephanie B. Nixon, *Chair*  
John F. Tanner, Jr., *Vice Chair*  
Bette Brand  
Gillian Gordon-Moore  
Stuart C. Siegel



Waqas Ahmed  
*Executive Secretary*

**Virginia Racing Commission**  
10700 Horsemens Road  
New Kent, Virginia 23124  
Phone: (804) 966-7400  
[www.vrc.virginia.gov](http://www.vrc.virginia.gov)

## **STEWARDS' REPORT**

**RACE MEETING:** Virginia Gold Cup

**DATE:** May 3, 2025

**WEATHER:** partly cloudy, 76°

**COURSE CONDITION:** firm  
Compaction: est. 121 psi  
Moisture: 9

**CLERK OF SCALES:** Harrison Young

**STARTER:** Sterling Young

**STEWARDS:** Tad Zimmerman  
Larry Curtis  
Beale Payne

Wayne Van Sant (Safety Compliance Officer)

### **OFFICIAL ACTIONS:**

**First Race:** There was a Stewards' Inquiry to review multiple incidents during the running of the race. No action taken.

*MADE TO BE LUCKY* slipped after the second fence and lost his rider, Evan Dwan.

*MOONEY LOVE* slipped on the west turn before the third fence and lost his rider, Jamie Bargary.

*RISK TAKING* lost his footing behind on the east turn, and fell with his rider Gerard Galligan.

*THE LAUNDRER* got tangled with the fallen *RISK TAKING* and unseated his rider, Stephen Mulqueen.

*BARREL AGED* finished lame. He was shipped home with a reported tendon injury.

Dwan, Galligan, and Mulqueen were examined by the Course Physicians and cleared to ride. Bargary was examined by the Course Physicians and not cleared to ride due to a possible fracture of his left hand.

**Second Race:** The second race was delayed by 35 minutes in order to address the condition of the turns. After consultation with the riders, remediation efforts were undertaken at the direction of the Race Director and NSA Safety Committee Representative and with the agreement of the rider representatives and Stewards. At the east turn sand was applied, the beacons leading into the turn were moved outwards considerably to ease the turn in the area of counter-banked topography, and at the request of the riders. the running rail on the beacon at the top of the stretch was removed.

There was a Stewards' Inquiry into the running of the race. Bernie Dalton, the rider of third place finisher *MORTLACH*, claimed foul against the first and second place finishers, *FASHION LINE* and *ANIMAL KINGSTON* for having cut the altered beacon on the east turn the first time around. The video clearly shows the first and second place finisher running to the inside of the beacon and the third, fourth and fifth place finisher running to the outside of the beacon. The Race Director, testified that the beacon in question was to be honored only on the second circuit. The prescribed course rule would require the disqualification of the third, fourth, and fifth place finishers. The margin between the first and second place finishers and the rest of the field was 15 lengths. Taking into account confusion that may have arisen as a result of the last minute course alteration made in the interest of safety, and the evidently imperfect understanding of those changes by the riders, the Stewards did not declare the horses who had gone outside the beacon to have been off course. The claim of foul was disallowed. No change to the order of finish.

**Third Race:** without incident.

**Fourth Race:** Prior to the fourth race the beacon coming out of the west turn was repositioned in an effort to ease the turn.

All horses in the race had blood drawn pre-race for TCO2 testing.

*BELFAST BANTER* was pulled up one fence from home and was reported to have tired.

**Fifth Race:** All horses in the race had blood drawn pre-race for TCO2 testing.

*WAGNER* slipped and fell on the west turn with rider Freddie Proctor.

*UCO VALLEY*, distracted by the loose horse, went off course jumping a hurdle before unseating his rider Gerard Galligan.

Proctor and Galligan were examined by the Course Physician and cleared to ride.

**Sixth Race:** The course was altered to further ease the west turn by eliminating the first hurdle on the backside and flagging the course to the outside of the abandoned hurdle. The Stewards met with the three riders and it was agreed to run over the modified course.

The race ran without incident.

**Seventh Race:** With a warning from the Safety Director over the approach of a dangerous thunderstorm and ongoing concern over the condition of the course, the Stewards cancelled the seventh race.

All wagers were refunded.

**OFFICIAL COMMENTS:**

The first and second place finishers in each race were selected for post-race testing.

The exemplary professionalism of the starts and absence of falls over fences was completely overshadowed by the multiple mishaps on the turns.

Some of the course modifications made this year seemed to work. However more work, likely including fundamental reengineering, is needed. As a premier venue for the sport, the course deserves thoughtful, well informed, and farsighted investment.

Total handle:   \$147,189

---

Tad Zimmerman, Commonwealth Steward