



*INQUIRY INTO THE ANALYSTS' FINDINGS OF COBALT ABOVE THE THRESHOLD IN A URINE SAMPLE
TAKEN FROM SPINSTER GIRL AT ARMIDALE ON 9 SEPTEMBER 2023*

Newcastle Racecourse

22 December 2023

STEWARDS: R W Loughlin (Chair)

S G Railton

J B Marshall

Racing NSW Stewards today conducted an inquiry into certification by the National Measurement Institute (NMI) and Racing Analytical Services Limited (RASL) of Cobalt being present above the threshold, in a urine sample taken from Spinster Girl prior to the mare competing in and subsequently finishing 8th in Race 1 the Maiden Handicap over 1100m, conducted at Armidale on Saturday 9 September 2023.

Evidence was taken from Mr Micheal Rinkin, the trainer of Spinster Girl during the relevant period, Racing NSW Chief Veterinary Officer, Dr Peter Curl, Australian Racing Forensic Laboratory General Manager, Mr John Keledjian and Racing NSW Investigator Mr Daniel Hadley. Mr Rinkin also represented the interests of the connections of Spinster Girl in respect to the provisions of AR240(1).

Charge 1 – AR240(2)

The details of the charge being that licensed trainer, Mr Micheal Rinkin, committed a breach of AR240(2) by reason of the following matters.

1. He is a licensed trainer with Racing NSW and was the trainer of Spinster Girl when the mare was brought to Armidale Racecourse on 9 September 2023 for the purpose of participating in Race 1 the Maiden Handicap over 1100m.
2. Prior to running in Race 1, pre-race urine sample N274756 was taken from Spinster Girl.
3. Cobalt was certified in sample N274756 when analyzed by two Official Racing Laboratories namely, the National Measurement Institute at a level of 470ug/L and Racing Analytical Services Ltd at a level of >200ug/L. Such levels being in excess of 100ug/L, the threshold excepted under Schedule 1, Part 2, Division 3 – Prohibited List B thresholds, part 11.
4. Cobalt is a prohibited substance as it:
 - a. Either directly or indirectly has an action and/or effect on the nervous system, the musculo-skeletal system, the endocrine system and the blood system. Such substances prohibited under Schedule 1, Part 2, Division 1 – Prohibited List B, parts 1(a), 1(e), 1(f), and 1(i).
 - b. Is categorized as a haematopoietic agent. Such substances prohibited under Schedule 1, Part 2, Division 1 – Prohibited List B, part 2(pp).

Plea: Guilty

Penalty

The following matters were considered in respect to penalty:

- Guilty plea.
- Mr Rinkin's full co-operation with Racing NSW officials during the investigation.
- Mr Rinkin's personal and professional circumstances.
- Principles of specific and general deterrence and what message is sent to the industry in respect to such conduct.
- Purpose of issuing penalties as a protective measure for the image and interests of the thoroughbred racing industry.
- Stewards were not able to establish a definitive explanation for the analysts' findings.

Charge 1

Stewards determined the appropriate penalty be a period of 10 months disqualification. In accordance with the provisions of AR283(7) & (8), the commencement of the disqualification was deferred for a period of 7 clear days to commence on Saturday 30 December 2023, however, during this period Mr Rinkin is not permitted to nominate or start a horse in any race or official trial. Mr Rinkin may re-apply for a license on Wednesday 30 October 2024.

Spinster Girl

In accordance with the provisions of AR240(1) Spinster Girl was disqualified from its 8th placing in Race 1 the Maiden Handicap over 1100m at the Armidale race meeting on Saturday 9 September 2023.

Mr Rinkin and the connections of Spinster Girl were advised of their appeal rights.

**R W LOUGHLIN
CHIEF STEWARD
MID NORTH COAST
RACING ASSOCIATION**

Relevant Rules:

Division 2 – Prohibited substance in a sample taken from a horse

AR 240 Prohibited substance in sample taken from horse at race meeting

(1) Subject to subrule (3), if a horse is brought to a racecourse and a prohibited substance on Prohibited List A and/or Prohibited List B is detected in a sample taken from the horse prior to or following its running in any race, the horse must be disqualified from any race in which it started on that day.

(2) Subject to subrule (3), if a horse is brought to a racecourse for the purpose of participating in a race and a prohibited substance on Prohibited List A and/or Prohibited List B is detected in a sample taken from the horse prior to or following its running in any race, the trainer and any other person who was in charge of the horse at any relevant time breaches these Australian Rules.

Division 3 – Prohibited List B thresholds

11. Cobalt at a mass concentration of 100 micrograms per litre in urine or 25 micrograms per litre in plasma.

Division 4 – Penalties

AR 283 Penalties

(7) A person or body authorised by these Australian Rules to suspend or disqualify any trainer may defer the commencement of the period of suspension or disqualification for no more than 7 clear days following the day the suspension or disqualification was imposed, and upon terms and conditions considered fit.

(8) Notwithstanding that the commencement of a period of disqualification may be deferred under subrule (7), a trainer must not start a horse in any race from the time of the decision to disqualify that trainer until the expiration of the period of disqualification.