



INQUIRY INTO THE RIDING OF *BARCELONA EXPRESS* IN RACE 5 MAIDEN HANDICAP 1310M AT BALLINA RACECOURSE ON THURSDAY 29 JUNE 2023

Coffs Harbour Racecourse

17 August 2023

**Stewards: M. A. Holloway (Chairman)
T. L. Vanderstok**

Stewards today concluded an inquiry opened at Ballina racecourse on Thursday 29 June 2023 into jockey R. Spokes riding of *Barcelona Express* in Race 5 Maiden Handicap 1310m that day.

Evidence was taken from R. Spokes, licensed trainer Mr D. Matts and licensed stablehands Mr C. Baker, Ms H. Turtle and Mr S. Traacey. RNSW Betting Analyst Mr H. Smithers provided a written report on the betting on the event.


After the consideration of all evidence, R. Spokes was issued the following charge under AR129(2) -

AR129 Running and Handling

(2) A rider must take all reasonable and permissible measures throughout the race to ensure that the rider's horse is given full opportunity to win or to obtain the best possible place in the field.

The details of the charge being that in Race 5 Maiden Handicap 1310m at Ballina racecourse on Thursday 29 June 2023 licensed jockey Raymond Spokes as the rider of *Barcelona Express* did fail to take all reasonable and permissible measures throughout the race to ensure that *Barcelona Express* was given full opportunity to win or to obtain the best possible place in the race by reason of all or part of the following particulars –

- 1) Between the 600m to the entrance to the straight when racing at the rear of the field, approximately three lengths behind *Majestical* and *She's Soo Good*, he did fail to ride his mount with sufficient purpose and vigour to improve on his mount when it was reasonable and permissible for him to do so.
- 2) From the entrance to the straight until near the 150m he did fail to ride his mount with sufficient purpose and vigour to improve into a run between *Majestical* and *Hadmytime* when it was reasonable and permissible for him to do so.
- 3) From near the 150m until near the 50m he did fail to ride his mount with sufficient purpose and vigour to improve into a run between *Majestical* and *Alcoota Angel* when it was reasonable and permissible for him to do so.
- 4) In the alternative to particulars 2 and 3, he did, approaching and rounding the home turn, fail to shift his mount wider and follow either *She's Soo Good* or *Victory Beans* into the



straight in an effort to provide his mount with a clear uninterrupted run to the finish line when it was reasonable and permissible for him to do so.

Plea: Guilty

Stewards considered the following matters when assessing penalty –

1. Guilty plea.
2. Nature of the offence & the explanation offered.
3. Disciplinary history & years involved in industry.
4. Personal and professional circumstances.
5. Principle of specific and general deterrence and what message is to be sent to the industry, and greater public, in respect to such conduct.
6. Purpose for issuing penalties as a protective measure for the image and integrity of the thoroughbred Industry.

Stewards were of the opinion that the starting point for the offence be a 6 week suspension of Mr Spokes' license to ride in races. Having regard to his guilty plea and other mitigating factors, stewards issued a 4 week suspension of his license to ride in races. Such suspension to commence on Wednesday 23 August 2023 and expire on Wednesday 20 September 2023, on which day he may ride.

R. Spokes was advised of his appeal rights.

M. A. Holloway (Chief Steward NRRA)