

Auckland RC 29 February 2020 - R 4 (request for a ruling) - Chair, Mr A Dooley

Rules:

[632\(1\)](#)

Stipendiary Steward(s):

Mr J Oatham - Chief Stipendiary Steward

Name(s):

Mr L Innes - Rider of MANCHU, Mr L Noble - Trainer of MANCHU, Mr T McGovern - Starter, Mr C Baker - Executive General Manager Racing

Facts:

Following the running of Race 4 the Go Racing Syndications 1200, Chief Stipendiary Steward Mr J Oatham, lodged an Information requesting a ruling pursuant to Rule 632 (1) to establish whether MANCHU was denied a fair start.

Rule 632 provides *"If, in the opinion of the Judicial Committee, a horse which does not finish in the first three placing's was prevented from taking an effective part in a race owing to the mechanical failure of starting stalls, or is denied a fair start and such occurrence materially prejudiced the chances of that horse (but not where the horse is slow away of its own accord), the Judicial Committee may declare such horse to be a non-starter."*

Decisions:

Using available video footage Mr Innes submitted that several horses, including his mount MANCHU, anticipated the start of the race and lunged forward, but the barrier gates did not open. He said as a result MANCHU nearly fell and hit his head on the front of the stalls. Mr Innes said he expected the horses to be Vet checked prior to start being effected. He stated that his feet were out of the irons when the starter activated the gates and as a consequence he was dislodged from his mount when the gates opened.

Mr McGovern, the Starter, submitted that he was just about to "set the start" when a couple of horses lunged forward but he was not aware they had hit the front of the gates. He added that he was not aware that Mr Innes' feet were not in the irons and none of his assistants nor other riders yelled out that they were not ready for the start.

When invited to make submissions Mr Noble, the Trainer of MANCHU, had further to add.

Mr Oatham submitted it was the Stewards' view that MANCHU was denied a fair start and should be declared a non-starter.

The Committee gave careful consideration to the submissions presented and reviewed the video footage.

The Committee found that under the circumstances MANCHU was prevented from taking an effective part in the race due to being denied a fair start. It was clear on the video footage that several horses, including MANCHU lunged forward and charged the front of the barriers prior to the start being effected. After MANCHU made solid contact with the front of the barriers Mr Innes had both of his feet out of the irons when the barriers opened.

Mr Innes quite correctly expected that the horses involved in the incident would be checked by the Vet prior to the Starter releasing the field. It was therefore not unreasonable for Mr Innes to have anticipated this would occur when both of his feet were out of the irons. As such when the gates opened Mr Innes was dislodged, and MANCHU's chances were materially prejudiced.

The Committee declared MANCHU to be a non-starter and we authorised payment of dividends pursuant to our decision.