

Stewards Decision

Tasracing Integrity Unit

and

Ian Johnson

Date of Decision	22 nd July 2026
Decision Makers	Mr. T.T. Styles, Mr. A. Hyde, Mr. J.W. Marsh
Respondent	Mr. Ian Johnson assisted by Mr. Jim Murdoch KC
Rule	AR233(a): A person must not breach a policy, regulation or code of practice published by Racing Australia or a PRA.
Plea	Not Guilty
Inquiry Decision	Guilty
Penalty	Fine of \$1250
Summary of Facts	1. Mr. Johnson was at all relevant times a Tasracing Licensed Thoroughbred trainer and as such a person bound by the Australian rules of Racing. 2. The Tasracing Integrity Unit were made aware of a video posted on social media from the 9th January 2026 depicting a horse restrained with hobbles attached to a lead rope unsupervised at a training facility on King Island 3. An investigation into the alleged matter was undertaken by Tasracing Integrity Unit Investigators. Contact was made to sources known to the Investigator regarding observations they had made on 9th of January 2026 of a horse being left unattended whilst hobbled with a rope attached to the head collar at different time periods that morning at the training facility of Mr. Ian Johnson. 4. Investigators interviewed Mr. Johnson who confirmed he had restrained the horse using hobbles and a lead attached from the hobbles to the head collar. He stated that this method was used to address the horse's resistance to bridling and to ensure his own safety after the horse had previously lifted its head and struck him. He maintained that the restraint was applied carefully, the horse was used to wearing hobbles and that it was not distressed or harmed. Mr. Johnson acknowledged that he left the horse unattended but did not believe the horse was at risk.

5. During an inquiry, Stewards considered evidence from a number of sources including but not limited to, an evidence report from Tasracing Integrity Unit Investigator Ms. Kylie Batten, evidence from Dr. Martin Lenz, Tasracing Chief Veterinary and Animal Welfare Officer, an affidavit from Registered Queensland Veterinarian Dr. David Hodge for Mr. Johnson and all evidence tendered by Mr. Johnson assisted by Mr. Murdoch KC.
 6. On 24th June 2026, Mr. Johnson pleaded not guilty to a charge issued pursuant to AR 233 A person must not: (a) Breach a policy, regulation or code of practice published by Racing Australia or PRA.
 7. The specifics of the charge were that Mr. Ian Johnson being a licensed person at his property on King Island on Friday 9th January 2026, by tying the head of the PIERRO-WILLINGA ELECTRA gelding with a rope attached to hobbles around its front fetlocks and by leaving the gelding unattended for an extended period of time constituted a breach of S9.2 of the Tasracing Animal Welfare Code of Practice for Racehorse Welfare:
 - A person responsible for a racehorse must ensure that any method employed in training the racehorse:
 - (b) make appropriate use of equipment and facilities
- Stewards found it was not proper supervision on his behalf for that gelding and therefore not appropriate use of the equipment.
8. After considering Mr. Johnson's plea, Stewards were unanimous in their view that the elements of the charge were supported to the requisite degree and made a finding of guilty.
 9. Stewards fined Mr. Johnson \$1250 for the breach of AR233(a).

Penalty Discussion

In arriving at a penalty, the Decision Makers considered all available evidence, including but not limited to:

- The Not Guilty plea for the charge.
- The submission on penalty from Jim Murdoch KC on behalf of Mr. Johnson.
- Mr. Johnson's long and unblemished record.
- Character references that attest to his standing in the Racing Industry and being a respected member of the King Island community.
- The nature of the offence and its overall implications for the image of the Racing Industry.
- That any penalty should be a deterrent both general and specific.

Mr. Johnson was advised of his rights to appeal the Stewards decision.