

TRNT Stewards Report – Friday 27 June 2025

Panel: D Hensler (Chairman), R Hamilton
Venue: Stewards' Room, Darwin Turf Club

TRNT Stewards opened an inquiry into comments made by trainer Dick Leech in an interview recorded at his stables on Friday 20 June 2025 and distributed via social media. The comments related to an update he was providing the owners of HASSELTOFF. At the time of the interview the gelding was to be entered in the ROANT Cup to be run over 1300m at the Darwin Turf Club meeting on 28 June 2025.

After being made aware of this interview the Chairman of Stewards contacted Mr Leech on Thursday 26 June 2025 and he advised that HASSELTOFF would be scratched from the ROANT Cup after returning with lameness following a track gallop.

Mr Leech was provided the opportunity to explain the comments made in the interview. He clarified that he was attempting to indicate that in his opinion whilst HASSELTOFF was commencing this preparation over 1300m, the gelding would be more suited to racing over an increased distance and that his comments were the result of his misplaced attempt at humour. In hindsight, he acknowledged the inappropriateness of the comments and was remorseful for what had transpired.

Mr Leech subsequently pleaded guilty to a charge under AR 228(a) of engaging in conduct prejudicial to the image, interests, integrity, or welfare of racing. The specifics being that during the interview he made comments that portrayed the connotation he intended to have HASSELTOFF ridden in a manner that would be contrary to the Australian Rules of Racing.

In consideration of an appropriate penalty Stewards took into account

- The seriousness of the breach
- The circumstances of his conduct
- His responsibility as a licensed trainer to conduct himself in a professional manner
- The fact that HASSELTOFF was scratched from the event avoided further potentially negative inference about the comments
- His previous disciplinary record and personal circumstances
- The penalty must serve as a general and specific deterrent

Mr Leech was fined that sum of \$3000. Under the provisions of AR283(5), \$1000 of this fine was suspended for a period of 2 years on the condition that he is not found guilty of any conduct related breach of AR228.

He has a right of appeal to the TRNT appeal committee and (4) days to lodge an appeal.

Australian Rules referred to in this report.

Division 3 – Conduct detrimental to the interests of racing

AR 228 Conduct detrimental to the interests of racing

A person must not engage in:

(a) conduct prejudicial to the image, interests, integrity, or welfare of racing, whether or not that conduct takes place within a racecourse or elsewhere;

Division 4 – Penalties

AR 283 Penalties

(1) Subject to subrule (3), a person or body authorised by the Rules to penalise any person may, unless the contrary is provided, impose:

(a) a disqualification;

(b) a suspension;

(c) a reprimand; or

(d) a fine not exceeding \$100,000.

(5) Any person or body authorised by the Rules to penalise a person may in respect of any penalty imposed in relation to the conduct of a person and other than in relation to a period of disqualification or a warning off, suspend the operation of that penalty either wholly or in part for a period not exceeding 2 years, on terms they think fit.