



## NATIONAL STEEPLECHASE ASSOCIATION

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### STEWARDS' REPORT

**Race Meeting:** Grand National

**Date:** April 21, 2018

**Stewards:** Gregg Morris  
Gus Brown  
Bruce Rodman

**Weather:** Clear

**Course:** Compaction: 80  
Moisture: 7-9

**Clerk of Scales:** Jake Chalfin

**Starter:** Chris Daney

**Official Actions:** In the week before the races, DE CHERA changed ownership. It was determined that the horse would run in the name of his new owner, Armata Stable, but would remain in the custody of trainer H. Bruce Fenwick until after the race.

**Race 3:** SOVEREIGN FUNDS, trained by Stephanie Dowling, was randomly selected for pre-race 'milkshake' testing.

DE CHERA was pulled up after the 14<sup>th</sup> fence. Jockey Gracie said the horse was 'not traveling well.'

GAS CAN EDDIE fell with Bryan Cullinane at the 15<sup>th</sup> fence. Cullinane was cleared to ride by the course physician.

DERWIN'S PROSPECTOR lost rider Gonzague Cottreau at the 16<sup>th</sup> fence. Cottreau was NOT CLEARED by the course physician.

Immediately after the race a Steward's Inquiry was posted due to what appeared to be interference at the last fence involving the first two finishers. After reviewing the video, it was determined that the incident did not alter the order of finish and the race was declared official.

**Race 2:** Chris Gracie replaced the injured Cottreau on POCKET TALK.

OUT PLAYING was pulled up after the 13<sup>th</sup> fence. Jockey Kelly said the horse had gotten 'slammed on both sides and no longer wanted to run.'

FORMIDABLE HEART fell with Archie MacAuley at the 14<sup>th</sup> fence. MacAuley was cleared by the course physician.

SPIRIT OF SHANKLY was jumping dramatically to the right toward the end of this race. Rider/trainer Beecher said this was not normal for the horse and thought he might have stung himself on an earlier fence.

The timer reported the time of this race to be 6:55 4/5. This seemed unusual since the first race,

at the same distance, had run in 6:05. The video displayed a time of 5:58 4/5 and this was made the corrected official time of the race.

After the races the Stewards held an official hearing with Mark Beecher about the incident involving his mount, RAVEN'S CHOICE, who finished second, and the winner, SENIOR SENATOR, ridden by Eric Poretz. The Stewards reviewed available video of the incident with Beecher, including the HCP video and drone video provided by Robert Stevenson who was working with, although not employed by HCP. The video showed that SENIOR SENATOR had clearly established his position to the inside of RAVEN'S CHOICE approaching the last fence. The view from the drone also showed that Beecher was not only crowding Poretz from the second last to the last fence, he also came very close to forcing SENIOR SENATOR off course at the last by failing to give him enough room to jump.

Therefore Beecher was fined \$500 for reckless riding, pursuant to NSA rules 7.7.B 1., 2., and 5.

**Official Comments:**

The wing added to the beacons approaching the penultimate fence on both courses was a significant improvement in keeping the field on course. It is recommended that the stakes holding the wing be removed or covered when not in use to protect a loose horse from possible injury.

Video coverage provided by a drone is invaluable to the Stewards. It is hoped that this will become a part of the overall video coverage at every race meet.

Other notable improvements on the day were utilization of the Quick Official and requiring horses to be saddled in the barn and come to the paddock as a group.

Gregg Morris, Presiding