



STATEMENT FOLLOWING CHARLIE BENNETT'S SUCCESSFUL APPEAL

At a hearing of the Disciplinary Panel at the British Horseracing Authority today, Charlie Bennett's appeal against the decision of the stewards at Kempton Park on 6th February 2019 to find him in breach of Rule (B) 54 and to suspend him for 12 days for careless riding was upheld, the finding quashed and it was confirmed that the interference was accidental. Charlie was represented by Rory Mac Neice, Partner at Ashfords LLP.

Paul Struthers, Chief Executive of the PJA, said:

"It was with great reluctance that we lodged an appeal against a finding of careless riding after an incident in a race where a jockey ended up in hospital, incredibly fortunate to have been more seriously injured, and a horse suffered a fatal injury. I was at Kempton that day and followed Rab Havlin to hospital, so I can confirm that Charlie's primary concern after the enquiry was for Rab and the horse. However, in our view the footage clearly demonstrated that the incident was accidental and not the result of any riding offence.

"We believed this case was exceptional, that the Stewards conclusion that Charlie had "edged left without correction when not sufficiently clear" was palpably wrong. We felt this was so obvious that we invited the BHA to quash the finding using their powers under Rule (B)18 which would have avoided the need for a Disciplinary Panel hearing at all.

"For Rory and I this was a poor decision and it is deeply concerning coming so soon after the introduction of the BHA's new stewarding system. We can't help but think it is a decision that would never have been taken under the old system.

"This concern is deepened by the BHA's refusal to accept our invitation to quash the finding or to simply offer no evidence. We appreciate that racecourse decisions have to be taken under the pressure of time, though we don't accept that as an excuse in this case. However, the BHA did not have that time pressure when considering our invitation and that they defended the Stewards' decision was a missed opportunity to demonstrate that the new Stewarding model would indeed be more accountable."

Charlie Bennett said:

"I hated the idea of appealing and was absolutely gutted for Rab and the horse, but I just couldn't understand why they'd found me in breach. I was hugely relieved Rab's injuries were not more serious and I hope he's back soon. I'm just pleased this is over and I can put it behind me."

14th February 2019

Notes for Editors: