

STEWARDS SUMMARY OF JUDICIAL OUTCOMES

2018 VIRGIN AUSTRALIA SUPERCARS CHAMPIONSHIP – RACE 24

“RABBLE.com Sandown 500”.

Sandown International Motor Raceway, Sandown, Victoria.

14 – 16 September 2018

Document

SSR04

STEWARDS SUMMARY OF JUDICIAL OUTCOMES, Update #1: issued Saturday, 15 September 2018 at 1340hrs.

Friday 14 September 2018

Matters from Practice 1 (Additional Drivers):

Deputy Race Director Incident Determinations

There were no Determinations.

Stewards' Decisions – Penalties imposed

The Stewards imposed a fine of \$500 on Car #7, Aaren Russell, for a breach of Rule D11.4.2 (exceeding Pit Lane Speed limit at Pit entry – 53kph).

Matters from Practice 2 (All Drivers):

Deputy Race Director Incident Determinations

There were no Determinations.

Stewards' Decisions – Penalties imposed

There were no Penalties imposed.

Matters from Practice 3 (Additional Drivers):

Deputy Race Director Incident Determinations

There were no Determinations.

Stewards' Decisions – Penalties imposed

Following the session the DRD conducted an investigation into an alleged breach by Tekno Autosports of Rule A4.4 (Competitor responsible for all safety aspects of the Team including that Competitor's car at all times) after the right front wheel dislodged from Car #19 in the vicinity of Turn 12-13. After an admission to the breach, the Stewards imposed a fine of \$5,000 on Tekno Autosports of which \$2,000 is suspended until 31 December 2018.

STEWARDS SUMMARY OF JUDICIAL OUTCOMES

Saturday 15 September 2018

Matters from Practice 4 (All Drivers):

Deputy Race Director Incident Determinations

There were no Determinations.

Stewards' Decisions – Penalties imposed

There were no Penalties imposed.

Matters from OTR Tailm Bend Supersprint – 26 August 2018

On 15 September 2018 the Stewards conducted a Hearing into a matter that had arisen after Race 23 in connection with Qualifying for Race 23 – refer attached Summary of Stewards Hearing.

Matt Selley
Chairman
Stewards of the Meeting

SUMMARY OF STEWARDS HEARING

2018 VIRGIN AUSTRALIA SUPERCARS CHAMPIONSHIP – RACE 24

“RABBLE.com Sandown 500”.

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SSR09

Hearing (B 3.1)

On 14 September 2018, Mr Masi, the Deputy Race Director informed the Stewards that he had determined to charge Racing Team (Aust) Pty Ltd with a breach of the Rules following an investigation he had conducted following his receipt of a report from the Supercars Sporting & Technical Director that the Drop Gear Ratio in the transaxle used in Car #17 in the Qualifying session for Race 23 at the OTR Tailem Bend Supersprint on 26 August 2018 (the Event) did not comply with the mandated ratio for that Circuit. The Stewards determined to convene a Hearing at 0830hrs on 15 September 2018 to consider that charge and summonsed the Respondent to attend.

The charge concerned an alleged breach of Rule C10.4.1 of the 2018 Virgin Australia Supercars Rules as varied by the Further Supplementary Regulations for Races 22 and 23.

It was alleged that Racing Team (Aust) Pty Ltd had contravened that Rule in that the mandated Drop Gear Ratio for the OTR Tailem Bend Supersprint was 1.00 but in the Qualifying session for Race 23 the Drop Gear Ratio in the transaxle in Car #17 had been 1.07.

The Respondent's Team Manager, Ryan Story, stated that he understood the nature of the charge and was ready to proceed.

The breach was admitted. We therefore find the charge proven.

DRD Submissions on Penalty

The DRD tabled a report from the Supercars Sporting & Technical Director which explained the discovery of an apparent breach following a review of data from Car #17 in the week following the Event.

He explained that Supercars Technical staff had contacted the Respondent's representatives after that discovery who admitted that the transaxle installed in Car #17 on the evening prior to the relevant session had a Drop Gear Ratio of 1.07, said that the wrong transaxle had been installed by mistake and that the error had been rectified prior to Race 23. The Supercars Sporting & Technical Director's report confirmed that the correct Drop Gear Ratio had been used in Car #17 in Race 23. It also observed that the use of a 1.07 Drop Gear Ratio at that Circuit was unlikely to have given a performance advantage. Indeed, it would most likely have been a performance handicap.

The DRD told the Stewards that throughout his investigation the Respondent's representatives had been frank and co-operative. He emphasised, however, that the question whether the technical contravention arguably may have disadvantaged Car #17 was not to the point. Had the breach been established prior to the start of Race 23, the only appropriate Penalty would have been Disqualification of Car #17 from the Qualifying session with the result that Car #17 would have started rear of grid. Because that Penalty was not applied as the breach was only discovered after the Race, Car #17 potentially benefitted from a better finishing position in Race 23 than it would otherwise have achieved. He submitted that regardless of whether Car #17 was disadvantaged by the use of the wrong Drop Gear Ratio, the undetected breach is serious and warrants an appropriate Penalty as a deterrent to other competitors.

SUMMARY OF STEWARDS HEARING

He recommended to the Stewards that a Fine be imposed and that Car #17 be Disqualified from the Qualifying session for Race 23 notwithstanding that the resultant Penalty that Car #17 start from rear of grid in that Race cannot now be applied.

Respondent's Submissions

The Stewards requested that Mr Story explain how a transaxle with the wrong Drop Gear Ratio came to be used in Car #17. He explained that the Team had built a transaxle with a 1.07 Drop Gear Ratio for intended testing at Ipswich as part of its development of the new Mustang but the box in which it had been stored had been incorrectly labelled as a 1.00 transaxle. As a result, when the truck came to be packed for the Tailem Bend Event that box had been loaded in the belief that the transaxle in it was consistent with the label on it.

He further explained that throughout the 2018 Championship the Drivers of both their Cars have repeatedly reported 'notching' on downshifts as a result of which it has been their practice to change the transaxle as a preventative measure. The Driver of Car #17 had reported such an issue in Race 22 as a consequence the Team determined the swap out the transaxle that evening and selected the spare transaxle that had been incorrectly labelled in the genuine belief that it had the correct Drop Gear Ratio.

During the Qualifying session the Driver of Car #17 reported to the Team that there seemed something wrong with the gearbox. After analysing their data from the session they suspected that the wrong ratio was in the transaxle and changed the driveshafts and dogs before Race 23. He said that the use of the shorter ratio meant that Car #17 lost 0.7s on the main straight and agreed with the Sporting & Technical Director's opinion that the inadvertent use of the shorter ratio had prejudiced Car #17 in the Qualifying session.

He said that the issue was the result of a genuine mistake. He acknowledged that had the breach been established before Race 23, Car #17 would have been Disqualified from Qualifying for Race 23 with the result that it would have started rear of grid. He did not take issue with the DRD's recommendation to the Stewards that a Fine is an appropriate Penalty but argued that it should be a lesser Fine in all of the circumstances.

The Hearing adjourned at 0905hrs for the Stewards to deliberate.

The Hearing reconvened at 1230hrs on 15 September 2018.

Penalty

After hearing submissions on penalty and considering all relevant matters we Disqualify Car #17 from the Qualifying session for Race 23 and impose a Fine of \$30,000 on Racing Team (Aust) Pty Ltd of which \$15,000 is suspended until 31 December 2018 and will become immediately payable in the event that the Respondent commits any other breach of Division C of the Rules before that date.

In imposing this Penalty the Stewards accept the Respondent's explanation that the breach was not deliberate. They also accept that in this instance the breach did not result in a performance advantage for Car #17 in the relevant session. However, Rule A3.3 makes clear that if a Team is found not to comply with any Rule it shall be no defence to claim that no sporting or performance advantage was obtained.

SUMMARY OF STEWARDS HEARING

The Stewards convened the Hearing because they were and remain concerned that an undetected breach of this nature potentially prejudices the integrity of the Championship. The Respondent was under no obligation under the Rules to have brought the breach to the attention of Supercars Officials on their own initiative but, of course, by not doing so they took a risk that the breach might be detected later. At the same time, Supercars Technical staff cannot be expected to audit every Team's data following every session to detect a breach such as this. It is nonetheless regrettable that the issue did not come to the attention of the Stewards prior to the start of Race 23. Whether Car #17 achieved a better result in Race 23 than it would have done had it started rear of grid is incapable of determination now.

For these reasons we considered that a severe monetary Penalty is required to deter competitors from infringements of this kind, notwithstanding that in this case we have found the breach was not deliberate and did not result in any performance gain. Were the circumstances to have been different, we would not have suspended any part of the Fine and have contemplated additional Penalties.

The parties were reminded of their right to appeal.



Matt Selley (Chair)
Chairman
Stewards of the Meeting



Trevor Neumann
Steward



Mark Scolah
Steward

15 September 2018