

Racing SA Investigation Report



RACINGSA

Balaklava – Race 4 – 25 May 2022

Panel: - J. Petzer (General Manager Integrity/Chairman of Stewards),
Dr. Toby Koenig BVSc (Hons.) (Chief Veterinary Officer) &
J. Cornell (Equine Welfare Officer)

Thursday, 2 June 2022

On Wednesday 25 May 2022 at the Balaklava Racecourse, Race 4 was started while the racehorse **Flying Barty** was still cast in the barrier structure. Following the running of the race meeting Racing SA advised that a formal investigation into the circumstances which led to the race being started while **Flying Barty** was still cast in the barrier structure would be conducted.

The investigation has now been concluded and the Panel appointed for this purpose (as indicated above) provide the following report in respect of the matter;

The Panel interviewed eleven parties which included the Acting Chairman of Stewards at the meeting, the Starter, the Assistant Starter, the Veterinary Surgeon, five Barrier Attendants and two Riders. The Panel also had regard for video footage of the loading process which included the period leading up to **Flying Barty** becoming cast and up until the start of the race was effected.

The evidence confirmed that **Flying Barty**, after being loaded into its barrier stall, became fractious, reared and fell over and initially became cast in a semi upright position leaning on the back gates of its barrier stall, before later becoming cast in a precarious recumbent position underneath the barrier structure after the back gates of its stall were released in an attempt to free the filly from its stall. **Flying Barty** then kicked out into both adjoining stalls making contact with **Madam Prancealot** and **Spiritual Gal**. As a consequence of these events, all three runners, **Flying Barty**, **Madam Prancealot** and **Spiritual Gal** were declared late scratching's on veterinary advice.

The Panel found that a decision was made by the Starter to not remove the other runners in the field from their barrier stalls, and to recommend to the Acting Chairman of Stewards that the race be started notwithstanding the fact that **Flying Barty** was cast under the barriers based on his own assessment of the circumstances, which included his assessment that the safest and quickest way to extricate **Flying Barty** from its position would be to manoeuvre the barrier structure away from the filly in a controlled and measured manner. He also noted that parts of the barrier structure were in such close proximity to **Flying Barty** effectively making contact with the near side lateral aspect of the filly's body, which he was concerned would likely add risk if the other eleven runners first had to be removed from their stalls given the time required to do so, possibly compromising the safety and welfare of **Flying Barty**. He considered that the risks associated with the start being effected without delay, versus the risks associated with the alternative option (i.e. to remove all runners) best mitigated in favour of **Flying Barty**. The veterinary surgeon on duty concurred with the approach taken by the Starter, and while mindful of the potential for perception of lack of welfare attached to that approach, considered that the individual welfare of **Flying Barty** was an overriding consideration in electing to take this course of action. The evidence of the Barrier Attendants and the Riders confirmed the series of events and explained certain factual matters which occurred at the barriers which do not require detailed reference.

It is noted that the Starter, Mr. Steve Pearson has a long standing (46 years) involvement in the industry and has been involved not only as a Starter but also previously performed the role of Clerk of The Course in both Thoroughbred and Harness racing and was engaged as a Barrier Attendant. It is also noted that the veterinarian on duty, Dr. Brian Agnew is an experienced race day veterinarian of some 32 years.

The Panel also found that communication occurred between the Acting Chairman of Stewards at the meeting, Mr. Sean Callanan, a senior steward with Racing SA, and the Starter prior to the race being started in this manner. Mr. Callanan was guided by, and acted in accordance with, the considered advice of the Starter who had contemporaneous assessment of the circumstances at the barriers.

The Panel also notes that the unprecedented circumstances that the relevant staff were confronted with, required time critical action which led them to respond in real time, under conditions of considerable pressure, which were escalating quickly, and that the course of action taken ultimately resulted in a positive outcome.

Despite the determined course of action and positive outcome achieved, it is the view of the Panel, having regard for other associated risks, that the course of action that ought to have been taken be the removal of all other runners, followed by the extrication of **Flying Barty** from its cast position by the necessary means.

The Panel is comfortably satisfied, in all the circumstances that the staff concerned believed they were acting in the best interests of **Flying Barty** which ended in a positive welfare outcome, and consequently no action will be taken against the staff involved.

An examination of **Flying Barty** undertaken Friday 27 May 2022 at the stables of Mr. Will Clarken by Dr. Toby J. Koenig (Racing SA Chief Veterinary Officer) revealed multiple small lacerations and abrasions to all limbs and the near side pelvic region. The filly was otherwise physically in good condition. On the basis of this examination, there were no immediate welfare concerns in respect to her physical condition.

The Panel will now make internal recommendations, to Racing SA Management, to inform the development of protocols for dealing with circumstances of this kind.

J Petzer
General Manager Integrity/Chairman of Stewards