

IN THE MATTER OF AN APPEAL UNDER THE ENABLING LEGISLATION OF THE
LEGISLATURES OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND, NOVA SCOTIA, AND NEW BRUNSWICK
ESTABLISHING A MARITIME PROVINCES HARNESS RACING COMMISSION AND UNDER
THE RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE MARITIME PROVINCES HARNESS RACING
COMMISSION

Appeal Heard on March 12, 2026

BETWEEN:

Jason Hughes
MPHRC Licensee (276B7)
APPELLANT

AND:

Kent Butler
Senior Racing Judge
RESPONDENT

PRESENT:

A panel consisting of Commissioners Glen Rankin (Chair) NS, Stefan Decourcey, NB, Roger DesRoches, PEI, and Cam MacPhee, PEI convened to hear the appeal. As Chair, Mr. Rankin did not vote. Director of Racing, Derek Folland appeared for the Commission Administration. Mr. Hughes declared a conflict with Commissioner DeCourcey. Mr. DeCourcey obliged and recused himself from the panel.

The Respondent and the Appellant represented themselves.

The Appeal was conducted under the Section 7.3 of the Rules of Standardbred Racing as adopted by the Maritime Provinces Harness Racing Commission.

The Chair informed the appeal that the notice of intent to appeal (December 22nd, 2025) and the appeal form (January 1st, 2026) were filed in the proper timelines and in the required form.

The Chair also informed the panel that the original Hearing date of March 11th, 2026 was rescheduled to March 12th, 2026, due to compassionate reasons, requested by Jason Hughes and agreed upon by commissioners.

THE RESPONDENT:

Associate Racing Judge Butler testified that Jason Hughes (276B7), the driver of HANDSOFFNOSEIN was found in violation of Standardbred Racing Rule 303 (1), (2), (9) by judges during race 10 on December 13th, 2025, at Red Shores Racetrack in Charlottetown.

HANDSOFFNOSEIN driven by Mr. Hughes finished second but was placed fourth because of the violation. As this was the Third interference violation during the race meet for Mr. Hughes, it resulted in a \$300 fine and a two-day driving suspension.

Mr. Hughes had his appeal hearing with the judges on December 20, 2025.

Rule 303: A driver shall not commit any of the following acts which are considered Type 1 offenses against the driving rules:

- (1) Change course or position, or swerve in or out, or bear in or out during any part of the race in such a manner to compel a horse to shorten its stride, or cause another driver to change course, take his or her horse back, or pull his or her horse out of its stride.
- (2) Strike or hook wheels with another sulky.
- (9) Impede another horse or cause it to break from its gait.

The Respondent introduced into evidence race video showing pan and front tower views of the race. They were entered as exhibit 1 and exhibit 2 respectively.

The Respondent testified the panel's decision was interference, caused by Mr. Hughes moving out into the path of Mr. Dowling.

The race video was used to look at the race from the ¾ pole to where the violation occurred.

The respondent testified that WOODMERE SINATRA driven by Mr. Dowling was racing wide in position and in a straight line. When HANDSOFFNOSEIN driven by the appellant moved out into the path of Mr. Dowling. This interference resulting in contact of Mr. Huges wheel and front leg of WOODMERE SINATRA.

THE APPELLANT

The Appellant used the race video introduced into evidence by the respondent to argue his position.

The appellant testified that he was ahead of Mr. Dowling coming into the stretch and that it was Mr. Dowling that came from behind to make contact.

He further testified while reviewing the front tower video exhibit, that from the top of the stretch he had his position and the contact was at the fault of Mr. Dowling.

DECISION OF THE APPEAL PANEL

After a careful consideration of the evidence, the panel unanimously finds for the respondent and denies the appeal. The panel concurs that HANDSOFFNOSEIN driven By Jason Hughes, did move out into the path of WOODMERE SINATRA driven by David Dowling, causing the interference.

The Chair thanked both parties for their professional and respectful approach to the hearing.

For the Appeal Panel,



Derek Folland

Director of Racing - MPHRC