

Comparisons have been made concerning the interference by Prince Hector (Race 7 on 1/8/2019) and Gandalf in the 2018 Midsummer Classic. Gandalf was disqualified and the rider fined and Prince Hector was not disqualified (but the rider fined). To the untrained eye the interference seemed similar in both races, and so why were different penalties applied.

The answer lies in understanding the 'interference rules' of the BTC and knowing how to interpret and apply them.

As a brief summary, interference resulting from a jockey's riding is classified into four (4) categories, namely: (i) Foul riding, this being the most serious type of interference and the others in descending order of severity are (ii) Reckless riding, (iii) Irresponsible riding and (iv) Careless riding. A disqualification automatically follows a finding of Foul and Reckless riding. A disqualification will also follow a finding of Irresponsible riding (except in a few prescribed minor circumstances). Almost all the instances of interference at the Garrison that the Stewards are required to adjudicate upon fall within the categories of Irresponsible riding and Careless riding. Knowing how to distinguish between the two is critical to understanding Stewards decisions. Stewards are trained to know the difference.

Another material rule is the 'marker pole rule', which requires riders after the start to keep a straight course until they reach the marker pole, and if ridden in violation of this rule, horses may be disqualified or the rider otherwise punished. However, as an exception riders are allowed to come across two (2) stall widths **only** before reaching the marker pole, provided that no interference is caused to horses from those stalls.

Gandalf was disqualified by the Raceday Stewards who classified the interference caused by the rider of Gandalf as Irresponsible riding. The Stewards decision was appealed and the Appellate Body dismissed the appeal and upheld the decision of the Stewards of the day, confirming that the interference was caused by Irresponsible riding as defined by the Rules of Racing.

It should be noted therefore that as a result of the Stewards classification of the interference (namely Irresponsible riding) caused by Gandalf's rider they had no choice in accordance with the Rules but to disqualify Gandalf.

In reaching their decision it was found from the evidence in the Gandalf case that the rider manoeuvred across the track from stall 8 at an angle with a seeming fixed intention of getting to the rail as quickly as he could. In the process having little regard to the horses on his inside and in so doing breached the marker pole to a significant degree. His attempt to use his left rein to pull Gandalf off came too late as the interference had already been caused.

Now contrast the Prince Hector decision.

The interference caused by Prince Hector's rider although appearing similar to that of Gandalf's rider was materially different and is distinguishable in the following respects. The rider of Prince Hector:

- i) did not breach the marker pole rule,
- ii) appeared to be conscious of his horse drifting over to the rail and made visible attempts to use his left rein to prevent his horse from drifting. Although those attempts to straighten his horse did not have the desired effect, the evidence showed that the attempts were made and his horse's head was seen to be inclined to the left at all material times.

Consequently Prince Hector's rider was not guilty of Irresponsible riding and as such the Stewards were not mandated to disqualify Prince Hector (as they were with Gandalf).

The Racecourse Stewards therefore classified the interference caused by Prince Hector's rider as Careless Riding and being guilty of Careless riding was fined for that.