

BEFORE THE CALIFORNIA HORSE RACING BOARD
OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of:

**Appeal of the Board of Stewards' Official
Ruling #40, Santa Anita Classic Meet
Dated February 28, 2026**

**Craig Lewis, Trainer
CHRB License No. 052095
Appellant**

Case No. SAC 26-0004

DECISION

The attached Proposed Decision is adopted by the California Horse Racing Board in the above-entitled matter.

The Decision is hereby remanded to the Board of Stewards to issue a ruling and order payment of the seven hundred and fifty dollar (\$750.00) fine.

IT IS SO ORDERED ON July 10, 2026.

Gregory L. Ferraro, DVM, Chairman
California Horse Racing Board

Scott Chaney, Executive Director
California Horse Racing Board

John B. Herbuveaux
13142 Galway Street
Garden Grove, California 92844
Telephone (650) 867-5723

BEFORE THE CALIFORNIA HORSE RACING BOARD

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In The Matter Of:

**Appeal of the Board of Stewards'
Official Ruling No. 40, Santa Anita Classic
Meet
Dated February 28, 2026**

**CRAIG LEWIS
C.H.R.B. LICENSE NO. 052095**

Appellant.

Case No.: SAC 26-0004

PROPOSED DECISION RE:

**APPEAL OF THE BOARD OF
STEWARDS' OFFICIAL RULING
NO. 40, SANTA ANITA CLASSIC MEET
DATED FEBRUARY 28, 2026**

Hearing Date: April 14, 2026
Time: 10:00 a.m.

INTRODUCTION

This matter arises from an Appeal of the Board of Stewards Official Ruling No. 40, Santa Anita Classic Meet, dated February 28, 2026 ("Appeal").

This Appeal came for hearing on April 14, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. via video conference as well as in person at Santa Anita Park Race Track. Michelle Derieg recorded all testimony presented during the proceeding. Pursuant to California Horse Racing Board Rule 1414, Hearing Officer John B. Herbuveaux ("Hearing Officer") presided over the Appeal.

Appellant Craig Lewis ("Appellant" or "Lewis") was present and was represented by Attorney Lawrence Lewis, his brother. The California Horse Racing Board ("Respondent" or the "Board") (collectively, with Appellant, referred to as the "Parties") was present and represented by attorney Jackie Loyd ("Loyd").

The Appeal's evidentiary record closed at the conclusion of the proceedings on April 14, 2026 at approximately 11:07 am.

EXHIBITS ADMITTED INTO EVIDENCE

A. Exhibits Entered into Evidence

The Parties jointly entered the following exhibits into evidence:

Exhibit "1"	Ruling #40 from Santa Anita Classic Meet dated February 28, 2026
Exhibit "2"	Stewards Minutes (Item #1) Santa Anita Classic Meet dated February 28, 2026
Exhibit "3"	Appeal of Stewards ruling #40 filed by Lawrence Lewis on behalf of Appellant dated March 1, 2026
Exhibit "4"	Notice of hearing for instant appeal dated March 4, 2026 and signed by Jose Flores
Exhibit "5"	Rule 1865 Altering of Sex of Horse, Title 4, Division 4, of the California Code of Regulations

LIST OF TESTIFYING WITNESSES

A. Witness Testifying on Behalf of the Appellant

Mr. Craig Lewis

FINDING OF FACTS

After admitting all exhibits and testimony into evidence, this Officer makes the following findings of fact:

I

At all times contained herein Appellant was duly licensed by the California Horse Racing Board as a Trainer (License #052095 - Expires in May of 2028).

II

Appellant is the trainer of record for a thoroughbred horse named STAGE RUN.

III

Appellant entered the horse STAGE RUN for the seventh race at Los Alamitos Race Track to be run on December 14, 2025.

IV

The overnight for the Los Alamitos races run on December 14, 2025 lists the horse STAGE RUN as a colt.

V

On December 14, 2025 the Board of Stewards notified Appellant that it had been reported to them that STAGE RUN was actually a gelding while the official program for the days races listed the horse as a colt.

VI

On December 14, 2025 Appellant was notified by The Board of Stewards that STAGE RUN would be scratched from running in the seventh race at Los Alamitos on that day because the information listed in the official program was not in compliance with Rule 1865 (Altering of Sex of Horse), Title 4 Division 4, California Code of Regulations (The Rule).

VII

On February 23, 2026 Appellant was present at a hearing conducted by the Board of Stewards into complaint #25LT0006 alleging that Appellant was in violation of The Rule.

VIII

On February 28, 2026 The Board of Stewards issued Santa Anita Park Classic Meet ruling #40 which fined Appellant the sum of Seven Hundred and Fifty Dollars (\$750.00) for violation of The Rule.

IX

On March 1, 2026 Appellant filed a timely appeal from the Board of Stewards ruling #40 with the California Horse Racing Board.

X

On March 4, 2026 the California Horse Racing Board sent notice to all parties of the instant hearing scheduled for April 14, 2026 pursuant to Section 1414, Title 4, Division 4, California Code of Regulations.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE PRESENTED

The Respondent did not call any witnesses but Loyd submitted a copy of The Rule, (Exhibit 5). Loyd specifically pointed out paragraph (e) of The Rule and quoted it for the record.

Loyd went on to explain the facts of the case which, in her opinion, holds the trainer of the horse responsible for ensuring that the true sex of the entered horse is listed on its certificate of registration on file in the racing office.

Respondent stated for the record that there are three criteria for overturning a decision by a Board of Stewards which are contained in Business and Professions Code, Division 8, Special Business Regulations, Chapter 4, Horse Racing, Article 19517. Those criteria are:

1. The Steward mistakenly interpreted the law.
2. New evidence of a convincing nature is produced
3. The best interests of racing and the state may be better served.

Testimony of Craig Lewis

On direct examination Appellant noted that he was first licensed as a trainer in California in 1981 and has been licensed in that capacity for 45 years both in California and many other states.

Appellant testified that the horse STAGE RUN arrived at his barn at Santa Anita from Legacy Ranch. When the horse arrived at the Lewis barn appellant duly noted that STAGE RUN was a gelding. Lewis testified that shortly after the horse arrived the Horse Identifier checked STAGE RUN'S microchip and confirmed the identify of the horse. The identifier did not mention to Appellant that STAGE RUN was a gelding.

Lewis testified that STAGE RUN was gelded at Legacy Ranch and that Appellant did not cause the horse to be gelded. Lewis maintained that he never saw a copy of the certificate of registration which identified STAGE RUN as a colt because the registration certificate was emailed directly from Legacy Ranch to the racing office.

On cross examination Appellant testified that he entered STAGE RUN for the seventh race at Los Alamitos on December 14, 2025 but did not state the sex of the horse at that time because no one asked him. Lewis stated that he never saw an overnight for the race in question and never asked Legacy Ranch for a copy of the certificate of registration.

When questioned by Loyd what steps he took to ensure the sex of the horse was correct when the horse was entered by him Appellant stated the horse came in from Legacy as a gelding so Lewis assumed it would be okay to enter STAGE RUN.

When the Board inquired if Appellant had a responsibility under The Rule to ensure the sex of an entered horse is correct Lewis responded that there were exceptions to The Rule. When asked to explain this answer Appellant replied that, since the certificates of registration have been digitized, it's a burden for a trainer to go into the racing office and ask to see the papers. Loyd then asked if Lewis had asked Legacy Ranch to email him a copy of the papers. Lewis responded that no one does that and contended The Rule was obsolete.

On redirect examination Appellant took time to explain that in the past, before certificates of registration were digitized and transmitted electronically, the trainer was usually given the certificate of registration in paper form by the owner. The trainer would then examine the horse with the papers in his hand. According to the Appellant, since the registration papers have become electronic, the rule has become antiquated. Appellant added that a new rule should be implemented mandating that the trainer of the horse should receive a copy of the certificate of registration. When asked if he could go to the racing office and obtain a copy of the certificate of registration Appellant responded that he did not know the answer because he has never been in this situation before.

Appellant stated that he never saw an overnight for the race in question because Santa Anita doesn't make Los Alamitos overnights available on a regular basis and it would have been a burden to drive over to Los Alamitos from Santa Anita to see one. Appellant acknowledged that the overnight lists the sex of all horses entered for that race day.

According to the Appellant he learned by telephone the horse had gotten into the December 14, 2025 race from the agent of the jockey who was going to ride the horse. That agent gave Lewis all the information Appellant thought was pertinent without Lewis ever seeing an overnight for the day in question.

CONTROLLING LAW AND REGULATIONS

Section 1865 Title 4, Division 4, of the California Code of Regulations states:

Altering of Sex of Horse:

- a) Any alteration to the sex of a horse from the sex as recorded on the certificate of foal registration the eligibility certificate or other official registration certificate of the horse shall be reported to the racing secretary and the official horse identifier if the horse is entered to race at any race meeting.
- (b) If a racehorse is gelded or castrated on the premises of a licensed racing association, or other facility under the jurisdiction of the Board, the trainer shall report the alteration within 72 hours.
- (c) If a racehorse is gelded or castrated off the premises of a licensed racing association, or other facility under the jurisdiction of the Board, and the race horse has been previously entered to race at any race meeting in this State, the owner and/or trainer shall report the alteration at the time the horse is next entered to race.
- (d) A report of gelding or castration will include the name of the veterinarian performing the alteration and the date of the alteration, and shall be recorded on the official registration certificate and the official horse identification record of the horse.
- (e) A trainer who enters a horse, or who causes a horse to be entered on his behalf, is responsible for ensuring that the true sex of the entered horse is listed on its certificate of registration on file in the racing office.
 - (1) If the true sex of the horse is not correctly identified in the official program for the race in which the horse is entered, the trainer of the horse shall be subject to a minimum fine of \$1,000.
 - (2) If the true sex of the horse is not reported to the racing office prior to the opening of wagering for the race in which the horse is entered, the stewards shall declare the horse from the race.
 - (3) Deviation from the minimum fine in subsection (e)(1) of this regulation is appropriate if the trainer can demonstrate mitigating circumstances. Mitigating circumstances may include, but are not limited to:
 - (A) Errors made by other parties in recording information correctly provided by the trainer.

Section 19517 Division 8, Chapter 4, Business and Professions Code and Related Laws states:

(a) The Board, upon due consideration, may overrule any stewards's decision other than a decision to disqualify a horse due to a foul or a riding or driving infraction in a race, if a preponderance of the evidence indicates any of the following:

(1) The steward mistakenly interpreted the law.

(2) New evidence of a convincing nature is produced.

(3) The best interests of racing and the state may be better served.

(b) However, any decision pertaining to the finish of a race, as used for the purposes of parimutuel fund distribution to winning ticket holders, may not be overruled. Furthermore, any decision pertaining to the distribution of purses may be changed only if a claim is made in writing to the board by one of the involved owners or trainers, and a preponderance of the evidence clearly indicates to the board that one or more of the grounds for protest, as outlined in the regulations adopted by the board, has been substantiated. The chairperson of the board may issue a stay of execution pending appeal from a steward's decision if the facts justify the action.

DETERMINATION OF ISSUES

As the Board pointed out the burden is on the Appellant to prove by the preponderance of evidence that one of the three criteria contained in Horse Racing Law, Section 19517 has been met in order to overturn a decision of the Stewards. In examining the evidence presented Appellant has fallen short of his obligation.

The Rule, specifically paragraph (e), places the responsibility on the trainer to ensure that the true sex of a horse is listed on the certificate of registration on file in the racing office. Appellant did not meet this requirement.

In explanation, Appellant attempted to put the responsibility on other parties. Legacy Ranch is to blame because it did not give him a copy of the registration certificate that was emailed to the racing office. The horse identifier is negligent because he/she did not mention the sex of STAGE RUN when the horse was first examined at Appellant's barn. Apparently the entry clerk did not fulfill his/her duties because he/she did not ask the sex of STAGE RUN at the time of entry. The Santa Anita racing office is at fault because it did not have a copy of the Los Alamitos overnight for his inspection.

Appellant glossed over The Rule when asked by the Board if he had any responsibility under The Rule for the error by saying there are exceptions to The Rule. His exceptions related to the new practice of registration papers now being digitized and it being burdensome to obtain a copy of the certificates. Appellant admitted however that he never asked Legacy Ranch or the racing office for a copy of the registration certificate.

Lewis acknowledged that the overnight for the race in question would have stated the sex of STAGE RUN but he never made the effort to obtain a copy. An overnight was never directly admitted into evidence but the Stewards minutes for February 28, 2026 (1) (Exhibit 2) stated that Lewis failed to notice that the incorrect sex listed on the "overnight" which is available both electronically and in hard copy.

Had Appellant seen a copy of the overnight between the entry day and the race day there is every reason to believe he would have noticed that STAGE RUN was listed as a colt rather than a gelding and corrected the error. If the correction had been made before wagering opened on the day of the race the horse would not have been scratched and Appellant would not have been penalized.

Appellant contended that The Rule is antiquated and obsolete because it does not account for the new process of handling certificates electronically or digitally rather than being printed on paper as was done in the past. I find this line of reasoning lacking because Appellant admitted he made no effort to obtain a copy of the registration certificates.

CONCLUSION

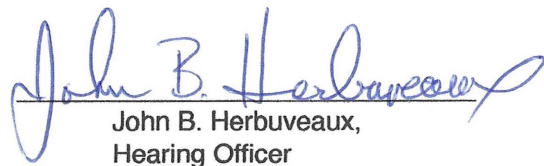
Appellant did not prove, by a preponderance of the evidence, that:

1. The Stewards mistakenly interpreted the law.
2. New and convincing evidence exists.
3. The best interests of racing and the state would be better served.

PROPOSED DECISION

It is hereby recommended that Appellant's appeal of Santa Anita Classic Meet ruling #40 dated, February 26, 2026, be denied and the Seven Hundred and Fifty Dollar (\$750.00) fine imposed be upheld.

Dated: May 14, 2026


John B. Herbuveaux,
Hearing Officer