

BEFORE THE CALIFORNIA HORSE RACING BOARD
OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Complaint Against:

Case No. 26LA0055

JESUS NUNEZ
Trainer, CHRB License #247831

Respondent

DECISION

The attached Proposed Decision is adopted by the California Horse Racing Board as its Decision in the above-entitled matter. Pursuant to California Horse Racing Board rule #1887 (Trainer or Owner to Insure Condition of Horse), Trainer Jesus Nunez is suspended THIRTY DAYS (30) and fined FIFTEEN HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$1,500.00)* for violation of California Horse Racing Board rules #1843 (a, b and d) (Medication, Drugs and Other Substances) and #1843.1 (b) (Prohibited Drug Substances – Tramadol – Class 2 Penalty B). Additionally, in accordance with California Horse Racing Board rule #1843.4 (Multiple Medication Violations), Jesus Nunez is assessed two (2) points.

The Decision is hereby remanded to the Board of Stewards to issue a final ruling reflecting this decision.

IT IS SO ORDERED ON September 11, 2026.

CALIFORNIA HORSE RACING BOARD
Gregory L. Ferraro, DVM, Chairman

Scott Chaney
Executive Director

State of California

CALIFORNIA HORSE RACING BOARD

**STATEMENT OF DECISION
of the
BOARD OF STEWARDS**

Los Alamitos Race Course

August 29, 2026

Case# 26LA0055

California Horse Racing Board

Vs.

Trainer Jesus Nunez

INTRODUCTION

This matter came for hearing at Los Alamitos Race Course, Cypress, California, before a Board of Stewards consisting of Mr. Tom Ward, Mr. Ron Church and Mr. John Herbuveaux on August 6, 2026. The record was opened at 10:00am.

Present at the hearing was the respondent, Mr. Jesus Nunez (hereinafter Nunez) along with his attorney, Mr. Mike Flory (hereinafter Flory), and Board Supervising Investigator Kevin Kitashima, who presented the case on behalf of the CHRB. The proceedings were recorded by Michelle Derieg, C.S.R

At the hearing the parties were allowed to introduce relevant exhibits, produce witnesses for examination and cross-examination and offer argument. Documentary evidence was submitted, oral testimony was heard, the hearing was then closed and the matter deemed submitted.

BACKGROUND

Respondent Nunez was charged in complaint #26LA0055, filed by Board Investigator Halcromb on behalf of the Board with alleged violations of Board rules #1843 (a), (b) & (d) (Medication, Drugs and Other Substances), #1843.1 (b) (Prohibited Drug Substances), #1843.4 (Multiple Medication Violations) and #1887 (Trainer or Owner to Insure Condition of Horse) of the California Code of Regulations, Title 4, Division 4.

The Complaint states in part;

"The official urine sample #PR05272 taken on April 12, 2026, at Los Alamitos Race Course was reported by Benjamin Moeller, PhD of UC Davis Laboratory to contain Tramadol (3.9 ng/ml): class 2/B. This Sample was obtained from the horse "UNBLEMISHED V" which ran in race #5 at Los Alamitos Race Course on April 12, 2026, and finished 1st. The trainer of record is Jesus Nunez (CHRB License #247831). A split sample analysis was requested in accordance with CHRB #1859.25.

The split sample (#PR05272) was tested and the laboratory analysis confirmed the presence of Tramadol."

The owner of record of the horse UNBLEMISHED V is Valeriano Racing Stables LLC. Stable Manager Sammy A. Valeriano did not appear at this hearing even though Halcromb sent Valeriano notification of the hearing by certified mail. Valeriano, as owner, is not required to attend the hearing but any purse monies earned by UNBLEMISHED V are at risk of redistribution should the presence of Tramadol be in the postrace urine sample #PR05272, be confirmed.

LIST OF EXHIBITS ENTERED INTO EVIDENCE

CHRB EXHIBITS:

1. CHRB Complaint Package

RESPONDENTS

1. C.H.R.B. Complaint Package
2. Prescription for Tramadol, for Mr. Nunez

LIST OF TESTIFYING WITNESSES

A. Witnesses Testifying on Behalf of the CHRB

CHRB Supervising Investigator Kevin Kitashima

a. Witnesses Testifying on behalf of Respondent

Mr. Jesus Nunez

FINDINGS OF FACT

I

On April 12, 2026, the horse, UNBLEMISHED V, competed in and won the fifth race at Los Alamitos Race Course.

II

The Trainer of record was Jesus Nunez.

III

At all times contained herein Nunez was duly licensed as a trainer by the California Horse Racing Board.

IV

The owner of UNBLEMISHED V is Valeriano Racing Stables LLC who was not present for the proceedings.

V

Following the running of the fifth race on April 12, 2026, UNBLEMISHED V was sent to the Test Barn where official urine sample #PR05272 was collected from the filly.

VI

Official urine sample #PR05272 was sent for analysis to the Maddy Equine Laboratory at the University of California, Davis, the official testing laboratory for the Board.

VII

In a letter to the California Horse Racing Board dated April 28, 2026, Dr. Benjamin Moeller PhD, Associate Professor of the Maddy Equine Laboratory, reported that the test results for official urine sample #PR05272 showed the presence of Tramadol

VIII

On April 29, 2026, Investigator Jose Flores reported to Executive Director Scott Chaney and Equine Medical Director, CHRB Jeff Blea, DVM that official urine sample #PR05272 showed the presence of Tramadol at a level of 3.9 ng/ml.

IX

On April 30, 2026, Board Investigators notified Nunez (via telephone call) that the test results for UNBLEMISHED V tested positive for the presence of Tramadol.

X

On May 14, 2026, Nunez informed the investigators that he was requesting a split sample be sent for analysis.

XI

On May 14, 2026, Nunez selected Industrial Labs in Denver Colorado to do the split sample analysis on official urine sample #PR05272.

XII

In a letter to the Board, dated June 12, 2026, Timothy Krueger, Senior Chemist at Industrial Laboratories, confirmed the presence of Tramadol in official sample #PR05272.

XIII

Tramadol is classified by the California Horse Racing Board as a Class 2 drug substance which calls for a Category B penalty.

XIV

UNBLEMISHED V arrived on the grounds of Los Alamitos Race Course and was sent to the barn belonging to Jesus Nunez on February 2, 2026.

XV

On June 20, 2026, Board Investigator Halcromb filed complaint #26LA0055 alleging Nunez violated Board rules #1843 (a), (b) and (d) (Medication, Drugs and Other Substances), #1843.1 (b) (Prohibited Drug Substances), #1843.4 (Multiple Medication Violations) and #1887 (Trainer or Owner to Insure Condition of Horse).

XVI

A hearing into the allegations contained in complaint #26LA0055 was scheduled for August 6, 2026, at 10:00am at Los Alamitos Race Course.

XVII

At the hearing on August 6, 2026, Mr. Flory, counsel representing Nunez, stipulated that Nunez was not contesting how the urine sample was obtained or how the split sample was made. Nunez also did not contest the chain of custody regarding the original or the split sample or how either the original or split sample were sent to their respective laboratories.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

California Horse Racing Board Rule #1843.3 (b) (Penalties for Medication Violations) lists certain factors, either mitigating or aggravating, that must be considered in arriving at a penalty.

- (1) Licensee Past Record.** Mr. Nunez has had one Class 4/c violation within the last twelve months. – Aggravating.
- (2) Potential of the Drug to Influence a Horse's Performance.** Tramadol has the potential to influence a horse's performance – Aggravating.
- (3) Legal Availability of the Drug.** Tramadol is legal with a veterinarian prescription – Neutral.
- (4) Administration of the Drug. Was it Intentional?** No evidence of intentional administration – Mitigating.
- (5) Steps taken by the trainer to safeguard the horse.** There was no direct evidence of preventative actions by the trainer – Aggravating.
- (6) Steps taken by an owner to safeguard against subsequent medication violations.** No evidence on the issue – Neutral.
- (7) Contaminations or other factors.** Mr. Nunez has a valid prescription for Tramadol. The Board of Stewards also considered the possibility of inadvertent exposure of environmental contamination resulting from human use of the medication or other factors - Aggravating.
- (8) Purse of the Race.** Purse of race not significant – Neutral.
- (9) Treatment According to Rule 1842.** Tramadol was not listed on any veterinary confidential – Aggravating.
- (10) Suspicious Wagering.** No evidence of unusual wagering – Neutral
- (11) Whether the licensed trainer was acting under the advice of a CHRB licensed veterinarian.**
Respondent was not under the advice of a licensed veterinarian with respect to Tramadol, therefore this factor is aggravating.

DISCUSSION

Case #26LA0055 was filed against trainer Jesus Nunez as test sample #PR05272 tested positive for the Class 2, penalty B drug Tramadol, a synthetic opioid analgesic. The sample was obtained from the horse UNBLEMISHED V, winner of the fifth race at Los Alamitos Race Course on April 12, 2026. Unblemished V is owned by Valeriano Racing Stables, LLC. The sample was originally tested at UC Davis Laboratory and reported by Dr. Benjamin Moeller to be positive for Tramadol (3.9 ng/ml). As per Mr. Nunez' request, the split sample was then sent to Industrial Laboratories in Denver, Colorado, where it was tested and found to be positive for the drug at a level of 2.0 Ng/ml.

A hearing was held in the Stewards' Office on August 6, 2026, at which time Unblemished V was disqualified for the findings in the test sample #PR05272. Subsequently, ruling #LAQL 68 was issued, formalizing the disqualification. The ruling was NOT appealed.

Following the disqualification portion of the case, a hearing was held into possible disciplinary action against Jesus Nunez. During the hearing, Mr. Nunez testified on the record that he has been taking the drug Tramadol for a number of years. He did not, however, offer that as the reason Unblemished V tested positive for the drug, nor did he offer any other relevant reason for the findings. His attorney, Mike Flory, Esq., did attempt to implicate the owner to some degree as Samuel Valeriano, the owner of Valeriano Racing Stables LLC, has been implicated, but not convicted, of involvement in drug cases in another jurisdiction.

This Board of Stewards cannot find anything of consequence which would mitigate a penalty for Mr. Nunez. The minimum penalty called for in this case, absent mitigating factors, is a thirty-day suspension and a fine of \$1,500.00.

PROPOSED DECISION

Pursuant to California Horse Racing Board rule #1887 (Trainer or Owner to Insure Condition of Horse), Trainer Jesus Nunez is suspended THIRTY DAYS (30) and fined FIFTEEN HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$1,500.00)* for violation of California Horse Racing Board rules #1843 (a, b and d) (Medication, Drugs and Other Substances) and #1843.1 (b) (Prohibited Drug Substances – Tramadol – Class 2 Penalty B).

Additionally, in accordance with California Horse Racing Board rule #1843.4 (Multiple Medication Violations), Jesus Nunez is assessed two (2) points.

Dated August 30, 2026, by this Board of Stewards:

Steward John Herbuveaux

Signed by:

Tom Ward

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Steward Tom Ward

Signed by:

Ron Church

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Steward Ron Church