

**CALIFORNIA HORSE RACING BOARD**

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**REPORT OF THE BOARD OF STEWARDS  
LOS ALAMITOS RACE COURSE  
Cypress, California  
TO THE CALIFORNIA HORSE RACING BOARD**

Honorable Gregory L. Ferraro DVM, Chairman  
Honorable Oscar Gonzales, Vice Chairman  
Honorable Dennis V. Alfieri, Member  
Honorable Damascus Castellanos, Member  
Honorable Brenda Washington Davis, Member  
Honorable Thomas C. Hudnut, Member  
Honorable Peter Stern, Member  
C. Scott Chaney, Executive Director  
Cynthia Alameda, Deputy Executive Director  
Darrel McHargue, Chief Steward

**Report for the Week of Wednesday, June 11, through Sunday, June 15, 2025.**

**WEDNESDAY**06/11/25<sup>1</sup>**DUTY STEWARD**

Steward Ron Church was present to oversee entries for Saturday, June 14, 2025, and will record the minutes for this reporting period.

**THURSDAY**06/12/25<sup>1</sup>**ENTRIES AND SCRATCHES**

Steward Ron Church was once again present to oversee entries for Sunday, June 15, 2025, and changes to Saturday's program.

06/12/25<sup>2</sup>**ENTRY PANEL**

The entry panel met this morning to discuss Saturday's program. After reviewing all entries, there were no recommended panel changes.

06/12/25<sup>3</sup>**TRAINER GAIL RUFFU (Case #25GS0023)**

A formal hearing was held this morning to address a complaint filed by the California Horse Racing Board against trainer Gail Ruffu alleging a violation of HISA Rule #2272 (c) (Shock Wave Therapy).

Ms. Ruffu was advised of her rights and agreed to go forward without representation. According to the complaint Ms. Ruffu's horse, Don't Get Me Wrong, received Shock Wave Therapy on March 15, 2025. On March 22, 2025, Don't Get Me Wrong completed an official workout at Los Alamitos Race Course, just seven days after receiving the Shock Wave Therapy.

Present, in addition to the Board of Stewards Tom Ward, David Nuesch and Ron Church was trainer Gail Ruffu and Court Reporter Michelle Derieg who recorded the proceedings. CHRB Investigator Jennifer Tolman attended via Microsoft Teams presenting the case for the CHRB. Ms. Ruffu testified on her own behalf and there was no other witness called by either side; documentary evidence was entered into the record and the hearing was closed. A decision will be forthcoming.

06/12/25<sup>4</sup>

**TRAINER JESUS NUNEZ (Case #25LA0082)**

We held an informal hearing today into case #25LA0082 which was a complaint filed by the California Horse Racing Board against trainer Jesus Nunez alleging a Trichlormethiazide positive (Class 4/ Penalty C). Present at the hearing were the Board of Stewards, and Mr. Nunez representing himself. Oral testimony was heard, and the complaint packet was entered into evidence. The hearing was closed; a decision will be forthcoming.

06/12/25<sup>5</sup>

**ENTRY DENIED – VESSELS MATURITY TRIALS**

The entry of the champion Quarter Horse “Empressum” into the trials for the Vessels Maturity this coming Sunday June 15, 2025 was denied by the Board of Stewards today as, by majority decision, (Steward Church dissenting) it was felt that there was too much of a connection between the former trainer, Heath Taylor, who is currently under summary suspension in New Mexico while several Class 1 drug positives are being adjudicated, and Empressum. First a little background. Last weekend the Stewards were told that the horse was at Los Alamitos, had come through the Stable Gate with Kristen Watanabe as trainer, and was going to the barn of trainer Jesus Nunez. We were also informed that, ironically, Mr. Nunez’ barn is directly adjacent to that of Ms. Watanabe, who is the former assistant to Heath Taylor and currently has some horses trained by Taylor prior to his New Mexico problem. The proximity to Ms. Watanabe’s barn was a major “red flag” for the Stewards, and the horse was placed on the Stewards’ List while we sorted things out.

Mr. Church, who has entry duty this week, received a call from one of Empressum’s owners, Steve Holt, regarding the situation. He readily told Mr. Church that he had wanted Ms. Watanabe to train the horse, except for one reason. Since she had worked for Heath Taylor, the AQHA, by rule, would not assign points for the finals under those circumstances. He was hoping Empressum could still be World Champion for 2024, and the Maturity would help the horse accrue points. As an aside, we contacted Ms. Janet Van Beeber, President of the AQHA, who informed us that balloting does not work on a “points system”.

How Mr. Holt chose Mr. Nunez to be the new trainer is currently not known, but it would likely not take too much detective work to find out.

This morning, we received information that Empressum schooled at the starting gate. The interesting fact, however, was that Mr. Nunez was not with the horse when it schooled – Ms. Watanabe supervised the action at the gate. That was the final straw. It was decided that the horse would remain on the stewards list until we were satisfied with a different trainer. This decision is in no way a reflection on Mr. Nunez; it was just the circumstances under which he received the horse.

**FRIDAY**

06/13/25<sup>1</sup>

**ENTRY PANEL**

The entry panel met this morning to discuss Sunday’s program. After reviewing all entries, there was one entry listed as a hard watch and no other panel recommendations.

06/13/25<sup>2</sup>

**SCRATCHES**

Steward Ron Church was present to oversee scratches and changes to Sunday’s program.

**SATURDAY**

06/14/25<sup>1</sup>

**RULING #87**

**Ruling #87**

Trainer Margie Cantrell, having appeared and complied with the provisions of California Horse Racing Board rule #1876 (Financial Responsibility), is restored to good standing. Ruling #172, issued at Los Alamitos Quarter Horse Racing Association on November 23, 2024, is set aside.

The above ruling was issued after Post Time Self Insurance Group notified the Stewards that Ms. Cantrell had satisfied her alleged debt.

06/14/25<sup>2</sup>

**RULING #88**

Ruling #88

Jockey Cruz Mendez is fined THREE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$300.00)\* for violations of California Horse Racing Board rule #1688 (b)(1)(Use of Riding Crop – during training when not necessary for safety of horse or rider).

The above ruling was issued after Mr. Mendez met with the Stewards and could not offer an excuse for his crop violation.

06/14/25<sup>3</sup>

**RULING #89**

Ruling #89

Pursuant to California Horse Racing Board rule #1887 (Trainer or Owner to Insure Condition of Horse), trainer Jesus Nunez, who started the horse Sentella Olimpia, the second place finisher in the fifth race at Los Alamitos Race Course on March 29, 2025, is fined FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARD (\$500.00)\* and assessed ½ point in accordance with California Horse Racing Board rule #1843.4 (Multiple Medication Violations – expires 03/28/2026) for violation of California Horse Racing Board rule #1843 (a, b & d)(Medication, Drugs and Other Substances), #1843.1 (Prohibited Drug Substances – Trichlormethiazide – Class 4/C).

After considering the evidence from the Nunez hearing held on Thursday June 12, 2025, we issued the above ruling.

06/14/25<sup>4</sup>

**DECLARATIONS, CHANGES AND REFUNDS**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Race #3 Delightful Reserve (Tr. J. Ramos) – Sick – Dr. Fitzgerald – Refund: \$280.40  
#6 Cangrejo (Tr. S. Sherman) – Claimed by Trainer Sergio Morfin
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Race #7 Stay Zappy (Tr.F.Gonzalez) Claimed by Trainer Angela Aquino
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Race #3 Newpark (IRE) (Jockey Francisco Orduna Rojas) Replaced by Cesar Franco  
#6 Marks Hip (Tr. S. Morfin) – Sick – Dr. Fitzgerald – Refund: \$471.60
- 4<sup>th</sup> Race No Changes
- 5<sup>th</sup> Race No Changes
- 6<sup>th</sup> Race No Changes
- 7<sup>th</sup> Race #5 Slots Of Fun (Tr. V. Zamudio) – Sick – Dr. Fitzgerald – Refund: \$99.40
- 8<sup>th</sup> Race No Changes

06/14/25<sup>5</sup>

**DAILY ATTENDANCE & HANDLE**

<b>ON TRACK</b>	698	\$91,173.50
<b>SCOTWINC</b>	1,111	\$231,261.00
<b>OUT OF STATE + ADW</b>	N/A	\$1,060,745.01
<b>TOTAL</b>	1,809	\$1,383,179.51

**SUNDAY**

06/15/25<sup>1</sup>

**RULINGS #90**

Ruling #90

Trainer Gail Ruffu is suspended for SEVEN CALENDAR DAYS (June 23, 2025, through June 29, 2025) and fined TWO THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$2,500.00)\* for violation of HISA rule #2272 c (Worked Don't Get Me Wrong within fourteen days of Shock Wave Treatment). Suspension to commence on June 23, 2025.

The above ruling was issued by unanimous decision after the Stewards considered the evidence and testimony presented during the formal hearing held on Thursday June 12, 2025.

06/15/25<sup>2</sup>

**RULINGS #91**

Ruling #91

Jockey Eduardo Nicasio is fined THREE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$300.00)\* for violation of California Horse Racing Board Rule #1688 (b) (3) (Use of Riding Crop – striking mount with crop during post parade/warm up period) prior to the seventh race at Los Alamitos Race Course on June 14, 2025.

Jockey Eduardo Nicasio failed to appear this evening as directed to review his crop use during the post parade in the seventh race on Saturday June 14, 2025. In a unanimous decision we issued the above ruling.

06/15/25<sup>3</sup>

**DECLARATIONS, CHANGES AND REFUNDS**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Race #2 Thirsty Gambler (Tr. J. Nunez) – Sick – Dr. Fitzgerald – Refund: \$219.63  
#3 Devil Moon (Jockey Francisco Orduna Rojas) – Replaced by Francisco Ramirez
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Race No Changes
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Race No Changes
- 4<sup>th</sup> Race No Changes
- 5<sup>th</sup> Race #5 Mask Mandate (Tr. J. Flores) – Sick – Dr. Fitzgerald – Refund: \$412.88
- 6<sup>th</sup> Race No Changes
- 7<sup>th</sup> Race No Changes
- 8<sup>th</sup> Race No Changes
- 9<sup>th</sup> Race No Changes

06/15/25<sup>4</sup>

**DAILY ATTENDANCE & HANDLE**

<b>ON TRACK</b>	1,037	\$105,913.00
<b>SCOTWINC</b>	997	\$207,208.10
<b>OUT OF STATE + ADW</b>	N/A	\$1,264,905.27
<b>TOTAL</b>	2,034	\$1,578,026.37

**SUMMARY**

	<b>Fri 6/13</b>	<b>Sat 6/14</b>	<b>Sun 6/15</b>	<b>Week</b>	<b>Meet</b>
<b>Accidents</b>	D	0	0	0	4
<b>Cal-Bred Races</b>	A	0	0	0	1
<b>Claims</b>	R	2	2	4	44
<b>Disqualifications</b>	K	0	0	0	10
<b>Inquiries</b>	D	0	0	0	11
<b>Refunds</b>	A	3	2	5	169
<b>Rulings</b>	Y	3	2	5	91
<b>Voided Claims</b>		0	0	0	12

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Ron Church, Steward

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Tom Ward, Steward

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David Nuesch, Steward

BOS:RC:dj