Racing Steward interview questions

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What to expect

Interviews for Racing Steward roles typically assess your regulatory knowledge, practical racing experience, and ability to make fair judgements under pressure. You will be asked to demonstrate how you apply the Australian Rules of Racing, handle inquiries, and communicate with licensed persons.

- **Process and procedure:** Questions about how you conduct an inquiry, review footage, or prepare a report.
- **Behavioural:** Questions asking for examples of past situations where you demonstrated integrity, judgement, or conflict resolution.
- **Scenario and judgement:** Hypothetical situations where you must decide on the appropriate action under the rules.
- **Technical rules knowledge:** Questions testing your understanding of the Australian Rules of Racing, betting monitoring, or welfare standards.
- **Welfare and safety:** Questions about how you balance enforcement with the welfare of horses and participants.
- **Stakeholder communication:** Questions about how you interact with jockeys, trainers, and other licensed persons, especially in difficult conversations.

The interview usually begins with an introduction and questions about your background in racing. It then moves to scenario-based questions where you might be asked to describe how you would handle a specific incident. There may be a panel including senior stewards or racing officials. You may be asked to review a hypothetical race footage or betting data. The interview concludes with an opportunity for you to ask questions.

1. Walk us through how you would conduct an inquiry into a riding tactics breach.

Why they ask

This assesses your procedural knowledge and ability to apply the rules consistently.

How to structure your answer

A step-by-step walk-through: outline the steps you would take from receiving the report or viewing footage, gathering evidence, interviewing parties, considering the rules, and making a determination.

Example answer

“First, I would review the race footage and any steward's report to identify the specific breach. I would then gather all relevant evidence, including betting data and statements from other riders. Next, I would interview the jockey involved, giving them the opportunity to explain their actions. After that, I would consider the rules and precedents to determine whether a breach occurred. If so, I would prepare a written decision outlining the penalty, ensuring it is fair and consistent with previous cases. Finally, I would document the inquiry and communicate the outcome to all parties.”

2. Tell me about a time you had to make a difficult decision that was unpopular with participants.

Why they ask

This looks at your resilience and ability to stand by your judgement.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: describe the situation, the task you faced, the action you took, and the result.

Example answer

“In a previous race meeting, I had to disqualify a horse that had won due to a serious interference breach. The decision was unpopular with the winning connections and the crowd. I knew the rules were clear, so I reviewed the footage again to be certain, then announced the decision and explained the reasons. The penalty was upheld on appeal, which reinforced that making the correct call, even when unpopular, is essential for integrity.”

3. You notice a jockey using their whip more times than permitted in the final stages of a race. What do you do?

Why they ask

This tests your judgement under pressure and your knowledge of welfare rules.

How to structure your answer

Judgement under pressure: identify the breach, consider the rules, decide on immediate action, and follow up with a report.

Example answer

“I would immediately note the breach and, if necessary, signal to the clerk of the course to report it. After the race, I would review the footage to confirm the number of strikes. I would then interview the jockey, explaining the rule and the welfare concerns. Depending on the severity, I might issue a fine or suspension on the day. I would document the incident in a stewards report and ensure the jockey understands the consequences. The welfare of the horse is paramount, so I would also check with the veterinary team if needed.”

4. What are the key considerations when reviewing betting data for integrity concerns?

Why they ask

This assesses your technical ability to detect unusual patterns.

How to structure your answer

Explain your thought process: what patterns you look for, how you cross-reference with race footage, and when to escalate.

Example answer

“I look for unusual fluctuations in odds, especially late changes that cannot be explained by form or track conditions. I also check for large or unusual bets from a single account or region. If I see a pattern, I cross-reference it with race footage to see if there is any suspicious riding or handling. I might also check if any licensed persons have connections to the betting activity. If concerns remain, I escalate to senior stewards or the integrity unit for a deeper investigation. It is important to document every step.”

5. How do you balance enforcing the rules with ensuring the welfare of horses and participants?

Why they ask

This checks your ability to prioritise welfare while maintaining integrity.

How to structure your answer

Weighing priorities: describe how you assess welfare concerns, when to intervene, and how you document.

Example answer

“Welfare is always the first consideration. If I see a horse distressed or a jockey at risk, I intervene immediately, even if it means stopping a race. When enforcing rules, I consider whether a penalty might deter unsafe behaviour. For example, if a trainer is found to have mistreated a horse, I would impose a penalty that reflects the seriousness of the welfare breach. I also work closely with

veterinary staff and participant support services to ensure that any underlying issues are addressed. Documentation is key, so I record all welfare observations and actions."

6. How do you handle an interview with a trainer who is upset and defensive during an inquiry?

Why they ask

This assesses your stakeholder management and communication skills.

How to structure your answer

Conflict resolution and communication: stay calm, explain the process, ask open questions, and maintain professionalism.

Example answer

"I start by remaining calm and acknowledging their frustration. I explain that the inquiry is a standard process and that my role is to establish the facts. I use open-ended questions to encourage them to share their perspective without feeling attacked. If they become aggressive, I remind them of the need for respectful conduct and that the interview is part of the rules. I take detailed notes and give them the opportunity to provide any evidence. At the end, I summarise the next steps and thank them for their time. The goal is to get accurate information while treating everyone fairly."