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CHRB NEWS RELEASE

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RACING COMMISSIONERS RULE ON VALENZUELA APPEAL

INGLEWOOD, CA – The seven commissioners who serve on the California Horse Racing Board unanimously upheld the stewards' suspension of Patrick Valenzuela following an appeal hearing Tuesday but reduced the suspension to four months and imposed additional requirements that the jockey perform 100 hours of community service and be subject to testing of his hair follicles.

After crediting the three months already served on the suspension issued by the stewards at Santa Anita Park, Valenzuela has 30 days remaining on the four-month suspension imposed by the commissioners. He has been riding at Hollywood Park since April 25 under a stay issued by CHRB Chairman John Harris pending the appeal hearing. That stay will be lifted on June 1 at which time Valenzuela will be required to serve the remaining 30 days. He will have access to the racetrack during the suspension, meaning he will be able to exercise horses in the mornings but he will not be permitted to ride in any races.

Valenzuela must submit a proposal to the CHRB within 30 days detailing how he intends to perform 100 hours of community service. If the Board finds his proposal acceptable, he will have until the end of the year to complete the service.

Valenzuela has been riding for the last few years under a signed agreement with the CHRB, which among other things requires him to submit to drug and/or alcohol testing as directed. It was his failure to appear for a drug test on January 22 that prompted the stewards to suspend him for the rest of the year. Valenzuela testified Tuesday that he missed the test because he was severely depressed due to personal problems and the effects of medication prescribed by a psychiatrist.

In addition to all of the conditions of his ongoing agreement with the CHRB, which includes mandatory participation in a rehabilitation program, the commissioners ordered that Valenzuela also be subject to testing of his hair follicles with or without probable cause. All of the hundreds of tests performed under the agreement have involved the testing of Valenzuela's urine samples for illegal substances. All of those tests have been negative. The testing of hair follicles is considered a more stringent test. Under the agreement, Valenzuela must pay for the tests himself.

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