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CHRB NEWS RELEASE

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**STEWARDS SUSPEND PATRICK VALENZUELA**

INGLEWOOD, CA – The stewards summarily suspended jockey Patrick Valenzuela here Friday until they can conduct a formal hearing after he failed to fully comply with the terms of his conditional licensing agreement with the California Horse Racing Board, which requires him to provide samples of his hair for drug testing.

One day after Valenzuela resumed riding following a month-long suspension, the stewards ordered him off all of his mounts beginning Friday evening when he could not provide CHRB investigators with hair samples as required. The 41-year-old jockey has completely shaven his head, chest, armpits, and pubic hair, which are the only areas of his body that could provide a sufficient quantity of hair follicles for testing. He did provide a urine sample before he resumed riding Thursday, which tested negative for drugs. The testing of hair follicles is a more comprehensive test.

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 last January 22 that prompted the Santa Anita Park stewards to suspend him for the rest of 2004. Valenzuela testified May 18 during an appeal hearing that he missed the test because he was severely depressed due to personal problems and the effects of medication prescribed by a psychiatrist. The seven racing commissioners unanimously upheld the stewards' suspension but reduced the term to four months with credit for three months already served. Valenzuela served the fourth month by sitting out the entire month of June.

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 original agreement have involved the testing of Valenzuela's urine samples for illegal substances. All of those tests have been negative. Hair screening is considered far more effective than urinalysis in identifying drug use because drugs can become trapped in hair cells and remain detectable for months. A standard screening requires from 70 to 120 strands of hair.

The original agreement allows for the "summary termination" of his conditional license if Valenzuela fails to fulfill any condition. The May 18 decision of the Board added the requirement for hair screening and specified that failure to complete the required hair follicle testing would be deemed a positive test result and a violation of the conditional license agreement.

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