

MOTORSPORT NEW ZEALAND JUDICIAL COMMITTEE HEARING DECISION

MOTORSPORT NEW ZEALAND INC

DECISION OF THE JUDICIAL COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY MOTORSPORT NEW ZEALAND, NAMELY:

- Barry Higham (Chair)
- Chris Adams
- Craig Finlayson

THE PARTIES CONCERNED

- Howard Hinton
- Nick Simpson (Clerk of the Course)
- MotorSport New Zealand

BACKGROUND

During the Jackson Orchards Sprint Series Round 2 at Highlands Motorsport Park on 22 November 2025, a driving incident occurred on lap 1 of race 2 involving Howard Hinton and Luke Smeets. A Hearing was convened in relation to the driving incident and a penalty imposed. Video evidence suggests that the penalty applied by the Clerk of the Course for the alleged infringement may have been incorrect. Related allegations concerning Luke Smeets conduct at the event, including reported threatening behaviour towards Howard Hinton and alleged damage to Howard Hinton's property is the subject of a separate Judicial Committee Hearing. The Clerk of the Course referred the matter to the Stewards and Motorsport New Zealand, with the Stewards noting that the matter remained outstanding and unresolved and required further consideration by Motorsport New Zealand. These matters were referred to a Motorsport New Zealand Inquiry Review Panel who recommended two separate Judicial Committee Hearings be held.

THE HEARING

The Driving Incident Hearing was conducted in accordance with National Sporting Code (NSC) Article 122 and held remotely via video conferencing at 6pm on Monday 12 January 2026. The Chairman opened the Hearing and Wayne Scott from Motorsport New Zealand outlined the reasons for the Hearing being held. Howard Hinton admitted making contact with the car of Luke Smeets and advised that he had not seen him. Nick Simpson said that he made his decision based on the evidence presented to him and at that time did not have the video footage supplied to the Judicial Committee Hearing.

FINDINGS

The Committee finds that after hearing the evidence from Howard Hinton (car 127), Nick Simpson (Clerk of the Course) and viewing the video footage supplied to all participants in the hearing, that car 127 contacted the right rear of car 56 at turn 14 in race 2. This action resulted in a negative effect on car 56 and as a result it made heavy contact with a concrete barrier.

DECISION

The Judicial Committee, following consideration of the information provided, unanimously determine:

1. Appendix Four Schedule Z Article 15.3 – Code of Driving Contact – causing an avoidable accident – has been breached.
2. Appendix One Schedule P A4Z.7 – Dangerous Driving causing an accident applies.
3. A fine of \$1000 is imposed. The Panel ruled that an amount of \$500 be payable immediately. The balance of \$500 is suspended as a good behaviour bond to apply for a period of six months. If during that period the driver commits any breach of the code or acts in any way prejudicial to the interests of motorsport in general then the balance shall become payable immediately. If after six months the driver has complied with this bond the balance of this fine shall be remitted.

4. You are excluded from the results of race 2
5. Your competition licence is endorsed until 14 July 2026.
6. The Clerk of Course Decision 2 penalties be rescinded.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It was noted that the On-Site Medical Assessment Form completed at the circuit for Luke Smeets was not correctly filled out. The Medic had not answered the "YES/NO" question in Section 7 which relates to whether the competitor is stood down from competition. Whilst the answers to the other questions indicate a "NO" answer is the case it is important that the Medic completes this section. The Committee recommends that the Chief Medical Officer reminds the medics to ensure all sections of the form are completed.

DATED this 16th day of January 2026



Barry Higham
Chairman

RIGHT OF APPEAL

The Parties are reminded of their right of appeal to the National Court of Appeal in accordance with Part XI of the National Sporting Code.