28 September 2021

**DECISION**

**GREYHOUND RACING VICTORIA**

**and**

**ASHLEY CRAVEN**

**Date of hearing:** 15 September 2021

**Panel:** Justice Shane Marshall (Deputy Chairperson) and Mr Des Gleeson.

**Appearances:** Mr Marwan El-Asmar appeared on behalf of the Stewards.

Mr Ashley Craven represented himself.

**Charge:** Greyhounds Australasia Rule (“GAR”) 83(2)(a) states:

(2) The owner, trainer or person in charge of a greyhound-

1. nominated to compete in an Event;

shall present the greyhound free of any prohibited substance.

**Particulars of charge:** 1. You were, at all relevant times, a trainer registered with Greyhound Racing Victoria (“GRV”) (Member No. 55232) and a person bound by the Greyhounds Australasia Rules (“GAR”) and Local Racing Rules (“LR”).

2. You were, at all relevant times, the trainer of greyhound “Tarra Rocket” (VHNZA).

3. Tarra Rocket (VHNZA) was nominated to compete in Race 10 at The Meadows on the 31 March 2021 (**the Event**).

4. On 31 March 2021, you presented Tarra Rocket at the Event not free of any prohibited substance, given that:

1. A pre-race sample of urine was taken from Tara Rocket at the Event (**the sample**);
2. Pholcodine and Morphine were detected in the sample.

**Plea:** Guilty

**DECISION**

1. Mr Ashley Craven is a registered greyhound trainer and, at all material times, was the trainer of the greyhound “Tarra Rocket”. Tarra Rocket competed in Race 10 at The Meadows on 31 March 2021. She finished in fifth place. A pre-race swab taken from the greyhound showed the presence of prohibited substances pholcodine and morphine.
2. Stewards of Greyhound Racing Victoria (“GRV”) have charged Mr Craven under Greyhounds Australasia Rule (“GAR”) 83(2)(a). That provision prohibits a trainer from presenting a greyhound for an event while not free of a prohibited substance.
3. Mr Craven was cooperative with the Stewards and entered a guilty plea at the earliest opportunity. It appears that a possible cause of the positive swab may have been the giving of cough medicine to Tarra Rocket by a child or children of Mr Craven, or alternatively, by inadvertent transmission from Mr Craven.
4. GRV industry veterinarian, Dr Steven Karamatic, opined that the most likely cause of the pholcodine transmission was the administration of cough mixture. Further, he was of the view that it was most likely that the positive swab to morphine arose from morphine being a metabolite of pholcodine which shows when pholcodine is administered within days of the taking of the swab.
5. After the positive swab, Mr Craven retired the greyhound, not wanting to take a risk that anything similar could happen in the future. He is of good character, remorseful and was cooperative with the Stewards. He has a good record. He is devastated by this positive swab. Specific deterrence does not inform our sentencing discretion in this matter.
6. In setting a penalty, we take into account general deterrence, the importance of maintaining a level playing field by keeping a drug free industry and the importance of stopping the administration of cough medicine to greyhounds in racing or prior to racing. We also take into account recent penalties in like matters and Mr Craven’s lack of relevant prior offending. He has an extensive, honourable history in the industry.
7. In all the circumstances, we impose a penalty of three months suspension, wholly suspended on the condition that Mr Craven not commit any offence under GAR 83 in the next 24 months.
8. In addition, Tarra Rocket is disqualified from Race 10 at The Meadows on 31 March 2021.

Kathleen Scully  
Assistant Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal