13 May 2020

**DECISION**

**GREYHOUND RACING VICTORIA**

**and**

**MR BOBI VELESKI**

**Date of hearing:** 6 May 2020

**Panel:** Judge John Bowman (Chairperson) and Judge Marilyn Harbison.

**Appearances:** Mr Andrew Cusumano appeared on behalf of the Stewards

Mr Bobi Veleski represented himself.

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

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

1. nominated to compete in an Event;
2. presented for a satisfactory, weight or whelping trial or such other trial as provided for pursuant to these Rules; or
3. presented for any test or examination for the purpose of a period of incapacitation or prohibition being varied or revoked

shall present the greyhound free of any prohibited substance.

**Particulars of charge:**

* 1. You are and were at all relevant times a public trainer/breeder licenced by Greyhound Racing Victoria and a person bound by the GAR and Local Racing Rules.
	2. You were at all relevant times the trainer of the greyhound “Cavernando” (NFDVJ).
	3. “Cavernando” was nominated to compete in Race 12 at the Bendigo Racing Club meeting on 31 August 2019 (the Event).
	4. On 31 August 2019, you presented “Cavernando” at the event not free of any prohibited substances, given that;
1. A pre-race sample of urine was taken from “Cavernando” at the Event (the Sample);
2. Dehydronorketamine, Norketamine and 4-Hydroxylazine was detected in the Sample.

**Plea:** Guilty

**DECISION**

Mr Bobi Veleski, you have pleaded ‘guilty’ to a breach of GAR83(2). Cavernando, trained and owned by you, competed in Race 12 at Bendigo on 31 August 2019. Cavernando won the race. A pre-race swab gave a positive return, essentially to ketamine and xylazine. Ketamine is a permanently prohibited substance. There is no challenge to the proposition that the positive swab most likely resulted from the dog being fed knackery meat. Positive swabs to knackery meat have been around for some time. There seems to have been a recent increase, although the particular substance has only been detected twice since 2017. However, problems related to the use of knackery meat are well known in the industry.

You have been an owner/trainer since 25 January 2018. Cavernando is the only dog that you have that is racing, although you also have a pup and a retired greyhound. The dogs are kept on the domestic house block and at this stage it is not your intension to increase the number of dogs.

You are 33 years of age. You are in full-time employment as a warehouse supervisor. You and your partner have a young baby, who was born not long after the race at Bendigo. We note the good reference provided by Mr and Mrs Hellmuth, who know you well. You have no prior convictions of any kind. We accept that you are a person of high integrity and that you are most upset by what has occurred. We also accept that you have changed the type of meat that you feed your dog.

However, we have to take into account general deterrence and the fact that those in the industry have been warned about the use of knackery meat. Further, unfortunately ketamine is a permanently prohibited substance.

The penalty imposed for a breach involving ketamine has consistently been a 4-month suspension with 2 months in turn suspended for 12 months. It has been that for the last 10 cases. We sympathise with you, as a person with a very good reputation. Further, we again warn trainers of the well-known risk associated with knackery meat.

However, we try to be consistent. We are of the view that the penalty imposed in the last 10 cases should again be imposed.

Accordingly, you are suspended for a period of 4 months, 2 months of which is in turn suspended for a period of 12 months if there is no further breach of this Rule. We are confident that there will not be. We will not impose a fine.

Further, Cavernando is disqualified as the winner of Race 12 at Bendigo on 31 August 2019 and the finishing order be amended accordingly.

Mark Howard
Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal