19 July 2022

**DECISION**

**GREYHOUND RACING VICTORIA**

**and**

**FRED VASSALLO**

**Date of hearing:** 8 July 2022

**Panel:** Magistrate John Doherty (Deputy Chairperson) and Mr Josh Bornstein.

**Appearances:** Mr Anthony Pearce appeared on behalf of the Stewards.

Mr Fred Vassallo represented himself.

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

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

 (a) nominated to compete in an Event;

 (b) presented for a satisfactory, weight or whelping trial or such other trial as provided for pursuant to these Rules; or

 (c) 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 trainer licensed by Greyhound Racing Victoria and a person bound by the Greyhounds Australasia Rules.

2. You were, at all relevant times, the trainer of the greyhound “Speedy Villain”.

3. Speedy Villain was nominated to compete in, Race 2, LIKE GRVictoria ON FACEBOOK, Mixed 6/7, conducted by the Healesville Greyhound Racing Association at Healesville on 3 October 2021 (the Event).

4. On 3 October 2021, you presented Speedy Villain at the Event not free of any prohibited substance, given that:

(a) A post-race sample of urine was taken from Speedy Villain at the Event (the Sample);

(b) Procaine was detected at in the Sample.

**Plea:** Guilty

**DECISION**

Mr Fred Vassallo has been involved in greyhound racing for over 50 years. He has been a registered public trainer since 1988 and currently trains two greyhounds. He is 82 years of age and lives off a pension. He has readily admitted his presentation offence and no longer feeds his greyhounds knackery meat. Being illiterate, he was not aware of past notices issued by Greyhound Racing Victoria (“GRV”) of the danger of feeding non-human consumption meat.

The drug procaine is a prohibited substance under the Rules of greyhound racing. It is classified by GRV as a therapeutic substance by inducing an artificial pain free state.

Mr Vassallo’s greyhounds have been subject to 45 samples. He does have two prior matters on his activity report. One matter over 20 years ago and the last in March 2020 for a matter dissimilar to today’s hearing.

Mr Vassallo has pleaded guilty and has been cooperative with GRV Stewards. He has changed his feeding practice. Reference has been made to consistency in penalty and the need for that penalty to reinforce general and specific deterrence and provide a level playing field for all participants.

In the event, we are not persuaded to impose a higher penalty upon Mr Vassallo than that imposed in similar recent cases. We impose a three month suspension, that suspension wholly suspended for 24 months. In addition, we impose a fine of $2,000 with $1,000 wholly suspended for 24 months. In addition, “Speedy Villain” is disqualified from Race 2 at Healesville on 3 October 2021.

Kathleen Scully
Assistant Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal