11 March 2022

**DECISION**

**GREYHOUND RACING VICTORIA**

**and**

**GUISEPPE GIRVASI**

**Date of hearing:** 4 March 2022

**Panel:** Justice Shane Marshall (Chairperson) and Mr Robert Abrahams.

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

Mr Guiseppe Girvasi 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 *“Natalia Lee”.*

3. *“Natalia Lee”* was nominated to compete in, Race 4, Find Us On Facebook, Maiden, conducted by the Warragul Greyhound Racing Club at Warragul on 5 July 2021 (**the Event**).

4. On 5 July 2021, you presented *“Natalia Lee”* at the Event not free of any prohibited substance, given that:

(a) A post-race sample of urine was taken from *“Natalia Lee”* at the Event (**the Sample**);

(b) Procaine was detected in the Sample.

**Pleas:** Guilty

**DECISION**

1. Mr Guiseppe Girvasi is a registered greyhound trainer. He is a hobby trainer who usually trains one greyhound at a time. He has been training greyhounds for over 30 years. He has an unblemished record regarding prohibited substances.
2. On 5 July 2021, Mr Girvasi took a greyhound called Natalie Lee trained by him to Warragul for an event. A post-race swab showed the presence of procaine, which is a prohibited substance. It is a short acting, local anaesthetic now rarely used for that purpose. It can be given to cattle before they are euthanised and is rapidly absorbed by greyhounds after eating the meat of livestock treated with procaine. It provides pain relief and can enduce artificially pain free state in a greyhound that can affect performance in a positive way.
3. Greyhound Racing Victoria (“GRV”) has issued warnings to the industry since August 2016 about the dangers of feeding not fit for human consumption meat to greyhounds and about the dangers of positive swabs to procaine and other prohibited substances.
4. Mr Guiseppe Girvasi had been purchasing chopped beef from Petstock, a pet supply business for many years. He purchased that type of meat because he believed that it was a better quality standard knackery meat. It was inevitable that one day he would have one of his greyhounds produce a positive swab to procaine. He told Stewards that he is now getting his meat from a butchers’ shop, but today told the Tribunal that he still purchases product from Petstock.
5. Stewards have charged Mr Girvasi with presenting a greyhound for an event while not free of a prohibited substance contrary to Greyhounds Australasia Rule (“GAR”) 83(2). He pleaded guilty to the offence. We take that plea into account in reducing what otherwise would have been the penalty. He has no prior relevant offences. He co-operated with the Stewards.
6. In setting a penalty we also take into account the importance of maintaining a level playing field by having a drug free industry. We also take into account general and specific deterrence and recent penalties in like matters.
7. In all the circumstances we impose a penalty of $1,500 with $500 suspended for a period of 24 months pending no further breach of GAR 83. In setting this penalty we are concerned that Mr Girvasi continues to purchase meat from Petstock to supply to his racing greyhounds. Perhaps he should give serious consideration to purchasing chicken or kangaroo as an alternative to buying meat from pet shop suppliers, as recommended by GRV.
8. In addition, Natalia Lee is disqualified from Race 4 on 5 July 2021 at Warragul.

Mark Howard  
Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal