10 July 2020

**DECISION**

**GREYHOUND RACING VICTORIA**

**and**

**MR JOHN BUCKLEY**

**Date of hearing:** 1 July 2020

**Panel:** Judge John Bowman (Chairperson) and Justice Shane Marshall (Deputy Chairperson).

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

Mr John Buckley 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 trainer licensed with Greyhound Racing Victoria (GRV) and a person bound by the GAR and Local Racing Rules.
2. You were at all relevant times the trainer of the greyhound ‘*Mr Daver’.*
3. ‘*Mr Daver*’ was nominated to compete in Race 3, LIKE PRO GREYHOUND TIPS ON FACEBOOK, Tier 3 – Grade 7, conducted by the Healesville Greyhound Racing Club on 27 December 2019 (the Event).
4. On the 27 December 2019, you presented *‘Mr Daver’* at the Event not free of any prohibited substance, given that:
   1. A post-race sample of urine was taken from ‘*Mr Daver’* at the event. (the Sample);
   2. Dexamethasone was detected in the Sample.

**Plea:** Guilty

**DECISION**

1. Mr John Buckley is a registered greyhound trainer and the trainer of the greyhound ‘Mr Daver’. The greyhound competed in race 3 at Healesville on 27 December 2019. Mr Daver won the race. A swab taken from the greyhound showed the presence of the anti-inflammatory drug, dexamethasone.
2. Stewards of Greyhound Racing Victoria (GRV) have charged Mr Buckley with the offence of presenting a greyhound for an event while not free of a prohibited substance contrary to Greyhounds Australasia Rule (GAR) 83(2). Mr Buckley has pleaded guilty to the charge.
3. Mr Buckley has been a greyhound trainer for over 50 years. This is his first positive swab. He blamed the positive swab on his feeding the greyhound meat sourced from an abattoir. Dexamethasone is commonly used in the treatment of sick dairy cattle. The feeding of ‘knackery meat’ creates a risk of inadvertent exposure to the drug to greyhounds. Dexamethasone induces an artificially pain free state in a greyhound. It is capable of affecting the condition or performance of a greyhound in a positive way.
4. Mr Buckley ceased feeding meat to his dog two days before the event, but that did not eliminate the risk of exposure to the drug. Previous advice to trainers was that knackery meat should not be used 72 hours before an event. That advice has been amended to a strong recommendation that knackery meat not be used at all. This may involve extra expense to trainers who previously used knackery meat due to the much higher cost of human consumption meat. However, exposure to a prohibited substance may result in more costly financial penalties, loss of prize money and possibly suspension. Mr Buckley should be aware that future use of knackery meat may result in further transgressions against the Rules of Racing. He now feeds kangaroo meat and chicken.
5. In setting a penalty we take into account Mr Buckley’s guilty plea, his co-operation with the Stewards and his excellent longstanding record here and in New South Wales. We also take into account previous penalties in like cases, the importance of keeping a drug free industry and hence a level playing field. Taking all those matters into consideration, we impose a penalty of $1,500.
6. Mr Daver is disqualified from Race 3 at Healesville on 27 December 2019.

Mark Howard  
Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal