10 November 2022

**DECISION**

**GREYHOUND RACING VICTORIA**

**and**

**JOHN McCALLUM**

**Date of hearing:** 9 November 2022

**Panel:** Judge Graeme Hicks (Chairperson) and Mr Robert Abrahams.

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

Mr John McCallum represented himself.

**Charge:** 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:** **Charge 1: GAR 83(2)**

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.

1. You were, at all relevant times, the trainer of the greyhound *“Tzar’s Ghost”.*

1. *“Tzar’s Ghost”* was nominated to compete in Race 4, Good Friday Appeal Cup Ht1, S/E Heat, conducted by the Healesville Greyhound Racing Association at Healesville on 8 April 2022 (**the Event**).

1. On 8 April 2022, you presented *“Tzar’s Ghost”* at the Event not free of any prohibited substance, given that:
   1. A pre-race sample of urine was taken from *“Tzar’s Ghost”* at the Event (**the Sample**);
   2. Sotalol was detected in the Sample.

**Plea:** Guilty

**DECISION**

Mr John McCallum, you have pleaded guilty to breaching Greyhounds Australasia Rule 83(2).

On 8 April 2022 you presented your greyhound, Tzar’s Ghost, in race 4 at the Healesville Greyhound Club meeting when it was not free of a prohibited substance, namely, sotalol. Sotalol can affect the performance of a greyhound.

Dr Steven Karamatic, Chief Veterinarian of Greyhound Racing Victoria, in his report of 6 July 2022, stated that there are many medications fit for human consumption that contain sotalol. In this case, your doctor prescribed a particular medication that contained sotalol for the purposes of controlling your blood pressure. The medication was in the form of a tablet which you would break in half with your hands. Dr Karamatic opined that “therefore contamination from personal medication is a probable source of sotalol being detected” in your greyhound’s blood test.

You are 75 years of age and a pensioner. Your wife is undergoing chemotherapy. You have two greyhounds in work. It is accepted by you that you have a prior offence back on 15 June 2017. You have been in the greyhound racing industry for over 30 years, having first being registered in 1986.

The principle of general deterrence has a part to play in arriving at an appropriate penalty. It is vital that greyhounds race on a level playing field without prohibited substances in their systems.

We have taken into account your personal circumstances and your history in the greyhound racing industry, together with your plea of guilty and your cooperation with the Stewards.

There have been several warnings published as to the dangers of greyhounds producing positive swabs as a result of contamination from human medications.

In all the circumstances we impose a penalty of a 3 month suspension, together with a fine of $300. The suspension shall be effective from today.

We order that Tzar’s Ghost be disqualified from race 4 at the Healesville Greyhound Race Club meeting conducted on 8 April 2022 and that the finishing order be amended accordingly.

Mark Howard  
Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal