25 November 2020

**DECISION**

**GREYHOUND RACING VICTORIA**

**and**

**MRS LESLEY RUSSELL**

**Date of hearing:** 6 November 2020

**Panel:** Justice Shane Marshall (Deputy Chairperson) and Ms Judy Bourke.

**Appearances:** Mr Marwan El-Asmar appeared on behalf of the Stewards.

Mrs Lesley Russell represented herself.

**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 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 *“Pine Gem”*.

3. *“Pine Gem”* was nominated to compete in, Race 1, G&T SHARP PLASTERING, Maiden, conducted by the Sale Greyhound Racing Club at Sale on 30 April 2020 (**the Event**).

4. On 30 April 2020, you presented *“Pine Gem”* at the Event not free of any prohibited substance, given that:

1. A pre-race sample of urine, upon arrival to the course, prior to kennelling was taken from *“Pine Gem”* at the Event (**the Sample**);
2. Procaine was detected in the Sample.

**Plea:** Guilty

**DECISION**

1. Mrs Lesley Russell is a registered trainer of greyhounds and the trainer of “Pine Gem”. Pine Gem competed in Race 1 at Sale on 30 April 2020. A pre-race swab showed the presence of Procaine.
2. Stewards of Greyhound Racing Victoria (“GRV”) have charged Mrs Russell under Greyhounds Australasia Rule (“GAR”) 83(2) with presenting a greyhound for an event while not free of a prohibited substance. Mrs Russell has pleaded guilty.
3. Procaine is an analgesic which provides pain relief. It is often given to cattle before they are killed in abattoirs. It is usually contained in knackery meat which is fed to greyhounds. That is why in 2016 GRV issued a warning against the feeding of not fit for human consumption meat.
4. Mrs Russell has been training greyhounds for about 40 years. She has been using knackery meat for 30 years. However, since the positive swab she has switched to human consumption meat and no longer uses knackery meat.
5. In setting a penalty in this matter, we take into account general deterrence and the importance of maintaining a level playing field by keeping a drug free industry. We also take into account recent penalties in like matters, the guilty plea and Mrs Russell’s good record and character.
6. In all the circumstances, we impose a fine of $1,500 with $500 suspended for 12 months given no further breach of GAR 83(2).
7. In addition, Pine Gem is disqualified from Race 1 at Sale on 30 April 2020.
8. We observe, finally, that the Tribunal is concerned about increasing number of cases involving knackery meat. The Tribunal will consider, in future cases, increasing penalties in these matters, as the message is not getting through to trainers to a significant extent that knackery meat should not be fed to racing greyhounds. However, the present case is not a suitable vehicle for that to happen.

Kathleen Scully
Assistant Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal