10 November 2020

**DECISION**

**GREYHOUND RACING VICTORIA**

**and**

**MR SCOTT MELVILLE**

**Date of hearing:** 28 October 2020

**Panel:** Judge John Bowman (Chairperson) and Dr Andrew Gould.

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

Mr Scott Melville 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 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 *“Shifting Sands”.*

3. *“Shifting Sands”* was nominated to compete in, Race 12, JOIN THE 525 CLUB NOW, Grade 5, conducted by the Meadows Greyhound Racing Association at the Meadows on 8 April 2020 (**the Event**).

4. On 8 April 2020, you presented *“Shifting Sands”* at the Event not free of any prohibited substance, given that:

1. A post-race sample of blood was taken from *“Shifting Sands”* at the Event (**the Sample**);
2. Meloxicam was detected in the Sample.

**Plea:** Guilty

**DECISION**

Mr Scott Melville, you have pleaded guilty to a breach of Greyhounds Australasia Rule (“GAR”) 83(2). You were the trainer of “Shifting Sands”, which ran in Race 12 at the Meadows on 8 April 2020. Shifting Sands won the race.

A post-race blood sample proved positive to the prohibited substance, Meloxicam. It is a substance frequently found in knackery meat. That was the most likely source of it in this case.

Meloxicam is a substance which can be used for pain relief and thus may have a positive effect upon a dog’s performance. Shifting Sands is a dog which has had a shoulder problem, but it is not suggested by the Stewards that the Meloxicam was knowingly or deliberately administered.

However, Greyhound Racing Victoria (“GRV”) alerted those in the industry some four years ago as to the risks involved in using knackery meat. There have been a number of cases concerning it before this Tribunal and its predecessor. You admit that you were aware of the risks associated with knackery meat, but had adopted the practice of not using it for two days prior to a race. You are not sure what went wrong on this occasion.

You are a pensioner and a hobby trainer with nine dogs. Shifting Sands was at long odds on the occasion in question. It won the race and you did not have a bet on it or attend at the Meadows. The owner of the dog handled it. You changed from the meat that you had been using immediately upon being told of the positive return. This has increased your weekly meat bill by some $70. You have an excellent record and cooperated fully with the Stewards from the outset.

General deterrence is an important factor. As stated, the industry has been warned about knackery meat and there have been a number of cases involving it. However expensive it may be, we again urge trainers to avoid knackery meat and use meat fit for human consumption, including kangaroo meat. Given your complete cooperation and knowledge of the situation, we are not of the view that specific deterrence is a factor of any magnitude.

Bearing all of the above in mind, including your situation, your excellent record and your full cooperation, we are of the view that a fine of $1,000 is appropriate, with $500 of that suspended for a period of 12 months. It will become payable if you offend again.

Shifting Sands is disqualified from Race 12 at the Meadows on 8 April 2020 and the finishing order is to be amended accordingly.

Mark Howard
Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal