28 August 2024

**DECISION**

**GREYHOUND RACING VICTORIA**

**and**

**COLIN BAKER**

**Date of hearing:** 15 August 2024

**Date of decision:** 15 August 2024

**Panel:** Judge John Bowman (Chairperson).

**Appearances:** Mr Paul Searle appeared on behalf of the Stewards.

Mr Colin Baker represented himself.

**Charge:** Greyhounds Australasia Rule (“GAR”) 124 states:

Subject to rule 125, where, in the opinion of the Stewards, a greyhound fails to pursue the lure during an Event, the Stewards must impose a period of suspension in respect of the greyhound pursuant to rule 127, which is to be recorded by them as part of the identification record.

**Particulars: “**Aaron Alpaca” (visibly eased turning off the back straight) underwent a post–race veterinary examination and was re–examined later at 9:52pm - no apparent injury was reported. Stewards spoke to trainer Mr. Colin Baker regarding Aaron Alpaca’s racing manners turning off the back straight. Acting under the provisions of GAR 124, Aaron Alpaca was charged with failing to pursue the lure with due commitment. Mr Baker pleaded not guilty to the charge. Aaron Alpaca was found guilty and suspended for 28 days (1st offence) at Geelong and must perform a satisfactory trial in accordance with GAR 127, and pursuant to GAR 132, before any future nomination will be accepted.

**Plea:** Not Guilty

**DECISION**

Mr Colin Baker, you are appealing against a decision of the Stewards that a dog trained by you eased visibly during the course of a race and without there being any injury and was thus in breach of Greyhounds Australasia Rule (“GAR”) 124. The dog in question is “Aaron Alpaca”, which was competing in Race 8 at Geelong on 9 August 2024.

The case presented by Mr Paul Searle on behalf of the Stewards is essentially that the dog eased visibly whilst turning off the back straight and dropped back to last, a substantial distance behind the second last dog. She had been racing in approximately third or fourth position, but dropped back sharply to be approximately four to six or more lengths behind the second last dog. She basically maintained that position, although she may have made up a little ground. Mr Searle submitted that there was no sign of any interference to the dog and post-race veterinary examinations were normal.

You, Mr Baker, argued that there had been, or must have been, interference to Aaron Alpaca, which caused her to lose ground sharply, after which she maintained her position. You submitted that the absence of appropriate head-on cameras at this track made it more difficult to ascertain exactly what had occurred and, particularly in the absence of head-on camera coverage, the case against Aaron Alpaca had not been made out. You submitted that your appeal should be upheld and the Charge dismissed.

I have viewed the video of the race many times and examined the still photographs. I am comfortably satisfied that the Charge has been proven. There is simply no indication that any other dog caused Aaron Alpaca to lose ground rapidly or checked her in any way. I appreciate the argument advanced by you on behalf of Aaron Alpaca, but I find that the Charge has been proven.

Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

Kathleen Scully

Assistant Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal