29 November 2024

**DECISION**

**GREYHOUND RACING VICTORIA**

**and**

**RACHAEL BUSUTTIL**

**Date of hearing:** 20 November 2024

**Date of decision:** 20 November 2024

**Panel:** Judge Kathryn Kings (Deputy Chairperson) and Ms Judy Bourke.

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

Ms Rachael Bussutil represented herself.

**Charge:** Greyhounds Australasia Rule (“GAR”) 141(1) states:

(1) The owner, trainer or other person in charge of a greyhound:

(a) nominated to compete in an Event;

(b) presented for a satisfactory trial or such other trial as provided for by the Rules; or

(c) presented for any test or examination for the purpose of a stand-down period being varied or revoked,

must present the greyhound free of any prohibited substance.

**Particulars:** 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 “Audacious Rachel”.

3. Audacious Rachel was nominated to compete in Race 8, SPORTSBET MAKE IT LOOK EASY (275+RANK), Grade 5, conducted by the Traralgon Greyhound Racing Club at Traralgon on 25 September 2023 (the Event).

4. On 25 September 2023, you presented Audacious Rachel at the Event not free of any prohibited substance, given that:

(a) A pre-race sample of urine was taken from Audacious Rachel at the Event (the Sample);

(b) Guaifenesin was detected in the Sample.

**Plea:** Guilty

**DECISION**

Ms Rachael Busuttil is a trainer licensed by Greyhound Racing Victoria (“GRV”) and bound by the Greyhounds Australasia Rules (“GAR”). She has been licensed as a trainer for approximately 16 years. Ms Busuttil is the trainer of the greyhound, “Audacious Rachel”.

Audacious Rachel was nominated to compete in Race 8 at Traralgon on 25 September 2023. The greyhound was presented at the event not free of any prohibited substance, given that a pre-race sample of urine was taken from the dog at the event and guaifenesin was detected in the sample.

Ms Busuttil was charged with a presentation offence pursuant to GAR 141(1). Ms Busuttil has pleaded guilty to the charge.

GRV Chief Veterinarian, Dr Steven Karamatic, provided a report dated 24 November 2023. Dr Karamatic confirmed that guaifenesin is a prohibited substance under the GAR. He said that guaifenesin is placed in the category of therapeutic substances in the GRV Penalty Guidelines. Dr Karamatic said that there were no products found during the kennel inspection as listed in the Swab Irregularity Report that would contain guaifenesin. Ms Busuttil had fed unfit for human consumption meat to the greyhound from Maffra Meats and this is considered to be the possible explanation for the positive sample.

Dr Karamatic concluded that the finding of guaifenesin as detected in urine sample confirmed the presence of a prohibited substance. Dr Karamatic said guaifenesin is capable of affecting the condition or performance of a greyhound and any effect of performance is more likely to be negative by causing muscle relaxation.

Guaifenesin can be ingested and is used in veterinary medicine, including in the surgical treatment of horses and therefore, the feeding of knackery meat is a risk of inadvertent exposure. Industry participants have been warned of the risk of inadvertent exposure. Publications have been circulated to participants in the industry in August 2016 and in July 2020 via Greyhound Monthly Victoria, which was emailed to all participants and published online. An article warned of the issues related to feeding knackery meat to race dogs.

We accept Dr Karamatic’s evidence that the most likely cause of the positive sample is the feeding of unfit for human consumption meat. Ms Busuttil said that she fed knackery meat to racing greyhounds. The meat is purchased from Maffra Meats. She was aware of the potential risks, but four days prior to a race she fed human consumption meat. Since the positive sample she no longer feeds any racing dogs knackery meat.

In imposing a penalty, we have taken into account Ms Busuttil’s guilty plea, her cooperation with the Stewards, her excellent record and the importance of specific and general deterrence. We also acknowledge the importance of maintaining a level playing field by having a drug free industry. We take into account penalties in like matters. We note that this is Ms Busuttil’s first offence in a long history in the industry. We also note that participants in the industry have been on notice of the risks of feeding knackery meat for some time.

We accept the submissions of the Stewards in relation to penalty. In all the circumstances we impose a penalty of a fine of $1,500, with $500 suspended for 24 months pending no further relevant offences during that time.

In addition, Audacious Rachel is disqualified from Race 8 at Traralgon on 25 September 2023 and the finishing order is amended accordingly.

Kathleen Scully

Assistant Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal