23 December 2024

**DECISION**

**GREYHOUND RACING VICTORIA**

**and**

**JASON SHARP**

**Date of hearing:** 11 December 2024

**Date of decision:** 11 December 2024

**Panel:** Judge Kathryn Kings (Deputy Chairperson) and Dr June Smith.

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

Mr Jason Sharp represented himself.

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

**Greyhound to be free of prohibited substances**

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

1. *nominated to compete in an Event;*
2. *presented for a satisfactory trial or such other trial as provided for by the Rules; or*
3. *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 *“Country Crusader”.*

3. *“Country Crusader”* was nominated to compete in Race 3, BROAD TREE CARE, Maiden, conducted by the Warrnambool Greyhound Racing Club at Warrnambool on 5 October 2023 (**the Event**).

 4. On 5 October 2023, you presented *“Country Crusader”* at the Event not free of any prohibited substance, given that:

1. A pre-race sample of urine was taken from *“Country Crusader”* at the Event (**the Sample**);
2. Gabapentin was detected in the Sample.

**Plea:** Guilty

**DECISION**

Mr Jason Sharp is a trainer licensed by Greyhound Racing Victoria and bound by the Greyhound Australasia Rules. He has been licensed for approximately 10 years. Mr Sharp is the trainer of “Country Crusader”.

Country Crusader was nominated to compete in Race 3 conducted by the Warrnambool Racing Club at Warrnambool on 5 October 2023.

On 5 October 2023, Country Crusader was presented at the event not free of a prohibited substance given that a pre-race sample of urine was taken from Country Crusader at the event (the sample) and Gabapentin was detected in the sample.

Mr Sharp was charged with a presentation offence under the Greyhound Australasia Rule 141(1) on account of presenting Country Crusader for an event while not free of a prohibited substance. Mr Sharp pleaded guilty to the charge.

Greyhound Racing Victoria Chief Veterinarian, Dr Steven Karamatic provided a report dated 4 December 2023. Dr Karamatic said Gabapentin is a prohibited substance as defined by the Greyhound Australasia Rules (“GAR”). Gabapentin is placed in the category of “therapeutic substances“ of GRV’s Penalty Guidelines. Treatment records provided subsequently were satisfactory. The treating veterinarian, Dr Bell reported that there were no injuries reported for the greyhound. Some were on prescribed medication, but none were on gabapentin. None of the greyhounds had issues with seizures. There were no changes in the feed regimes.

Dr Karamatic said there were no products listed in the Swab Irregularity Inspection Report found during the kennel inspection that would contain gabapentin. Personal contamination from administration of medication containing gabapentin is a potential source of a positive swab as is feeding of unfit for human consumption meat (horse meat). However, these scenarios were not identified during his review of the material. Unfit for human consumption meat is fed but is identified as kangaroo meat from Seymour Knackery. Dr Karamatic said it is possible that meat from a knackery could be contaminated with meat from another specie during processing (for example, a horse treated with gabapentin) however knackeries may have practices that significantly reduce that risk.

The Treatment records did not detail the administration of gabapentin. Dr Karamatic said Gabapentin is capable of affecting the condition or performance of a greyhound and any affect on performance would be dose dependant. At low doses it could be positive by producing an artificially pain free state and at a high dose it could be negative by causing sedation and ataxia.

Mr Sharp said the business had never purchased gabapentin and none of his staff were taking gabapentin medication,

In imposing a penalty we have taken into account his guilty plea, his cooperation with the Stewards and the importance of 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 acknowledge the submissions of the Stewards in relation to penalty. In all the circumstances we impose a fine of $2,000 with $1500 suspended pending no further breach of any Rules of greyhound racing regarded prohibited substances for a period of 24 months.

Country Crusader is disqualified from Race 3 at Warrnambool on 5 October 2023 and the finishing order is amended accordingly.

Mark Howard

Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal