27 May 2025

**DECISION**

**GREYHOUND RACING VICTORIA**

**and**

**IAN DANN**

**Date of hearing:** 15 May 2025

**Date of decision:** 15 May 2025

**Panel:** Judge Marilyn Harbison (Deputy Chairperson) and Ms Maree Payne.

**Appearances:** Ms Yana Podolskaya appeared on behalf of the Stewards.

Mr Ian Dann represented himself.

**Charges and particulars:**

**Charge No.  1 of 3**

Greyhounds Australasia Rule 156(f)(ii) reads as follows:

**Rule 156 General Offences**

*An offence is committed if a person (including an official):*

1. *has, in relation to a greyhound or greyhound racing, done something, or omitted to do something, which, in the opinion of a Controlling Body or the Stewards:*

1. *constitutes misconduct or is negligent or improper;*

**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.

1. You have, in relation to a greyhound or greyhound racing, done something, which, in the opinion of the Stewards, constitutes misconduct and/or is improper, in that;

1. On 17 September 2024 at Warragul, you were in the kennel area shortly after the running of Race 6;

1. You stated words to the effect of ‘they are fucking brain dead’ in relation to the Stewards conducting sampling activities at the race meeting;

1. This conduct was in the presence of a Club Official, a Participant and Stewards.

**Charge No.  2 of 3**

Greyhounds Australasia Rule 156(f)(ii) reads as follows:

**Rule 156 General Offences**

*An offence is committed if a person (including an official):*

1. *has, in relation to a greyhound or greyhound racing, done something, or omitted to do something, which, in the opinion of a Controlling Body or the Stewards:*

1. *constitutes misconduct or is negligent or improper;*

**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.

1. You have, in relation to a greyhound or greyhound racing, done something, which, in the opinion of the Stewards, constitutes misconduct and/or is improper, in that;

1. On 17 September 2024 at Warragul, you were in the kennel area shortly after the running of Race 6;

1. Whilst you were engaged in a verbal interaction with Steward Mr. Bradley Martin, you have made purposeful and unnecessary physical contact with Mr. Martin on (at least) two (2) occasions.

**Charge No.  3 of 3**

Greyhounds Australasia Rule 165(c) reads as follows:

**Rule 165 Conduct detrimental to the interests of greyhound racing**

*An offence is committed if a person (including an official):*

1. *engages in contemptuous, unseemly, improper, insulting, or offensive conduct or behaviour in any manner or form towards, or in relation to:*

1. *a Steward or any other official of a Controlling Body or a Club;*

**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.

1. You engaged in contemptuous, unseemly, improper, insulting, or offensive conduct or behaviour in relation to a Steward, in that;

1. On 2 October 2024, you were in attendance at a Stewards inquiry at the Warragul Greyhound Racing Club;

1. You stated during the inquiry, words to the effect of ‘If I was 50 years younger he would be bloody dead’ in relation to Steward Mr Brad Martin.

**Pleas:** Guilty to all Charges.

**DECISION**

1. Mr Ian Dann has been charged with three offences. The first two are offences of misconduct and the third is an offence of engaging in conduct detrimental to the interests of greyhound racing. He has pleaded guilty to all three offences.
2. These offences arise out of his conduct on 17 September 2024 at the Warragul Greyhound Racing Club. On that day, whilst waiting to be able to access his dogs in order to take them home, he uttered several extremely disparaging words to the Stewards and in relation to the Stewards.
3. Charge 1 arises out of his description of the Stewards who were blocking his path in the kennel area as being “fucking brain dead”. Charge 2 arises out of his having made actual physical contact with Steward, Mr Bradley Martin, in the course of a verbal altercation with him. The Stewards held an inquiry into this conduct on 2 October 2024. Charge 3 relates to his having said during that inquiry that “if I were 50 years younger, he would be bloody dead”, this remark having been directed to Steward Mr Bradley Martin.
4. It is an extremely serious thing for a participant to threaten a Steward. The Stewards have a very important job to perform. Lack of respect to a Steward and an attempt to intimidate, let alone to make physical contact with a Steward, is to be deplored. We have a significant responsibility to demonstrate to other participants that conduct such as this will be met with a stern response.
5. We do note that Mr Dann has since apologised for his behaviour. We note also that he maintains in relation to Charge 1 that he was not speaking of any particular Steward, but was complaining about the system that was in place. It was causing him to have to wait around late at night when he wanted to get home to feed his dogs. This is not an excuse, but we do accept that he was not directing his remarks to any particular Steward.
6. In relation to the charge of actual physical contact, we accept that this happened over a short space of time and in a confined area.
7. In relation to the third charge, we accept that, although the remark was clearly a threat and was completely out of order, it would have been clear that this was a threat that he had no intention of carrying out, or indeed any capacity to carry out, given that he is of advanced years and not in good health.
8. Nonetheless, we note that the steward felt intimidated and unsettled as a result of this incident. His sense of safety in his workplace is now affected. He sees his work environment as being unpredictable and he is concerned about the future risk to his safety from participants.
9. In imposing a penalty to Mr Dann today, we need to reinforce both the principles of general deterrence and specific deterrence, as it appears to us that Mr Dann has not fully appreciated the effect of his aggressive behaviour on these two occasions. We also note that he was not cooperative in the investigation, treating the Stewards in a belligerent manner and challenging their authority to conduct the investigation.
10. Mr Dann is almost 79 years of age. He has been in this industry for 60 years. We know very little about his personal circumstances, save that he lives on a pension. He presently has 10 greyhounds in his care.
11. Apart from two Stewards’ warnings in 2020 and 2022, he has never been in any serious trouble. This is an excellent record, and we take it into account in determining our penalty. It is because of this otherwise excellent record that we have moderated the penalties which we would otherwise have imposed for this most aggressive and unpleasant behaviour.
12. On Charge 1, which is a charge of misleading conduct or improper conduct, the penalty which we impose is a fine of $1,000.
13. On Charge 2, which is a further charge of misleading conduct or improper conduct, the penalty which we impose is a period of suspension for 6 months with four months suspended for a period of 24 months. This is a term of suspension of 2 months, provided that Mr Dann does not come back before the Tribunal for any related offences over that time. The suspension is to commence today.
14. On Charge 2, which is a charge of engaging in conduct detrimental to the interests of greyhound racing, the penalty which we impose is a fine of $1,000. This is to be cumulative on the fine imposed in charge 1. Thus, the effective total of the fines imposed is a sum of $2,000.

Mark Howard

Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal