4 July 2025

**DECISION**

**GREYHOUND RACING VICTORIA**

**and**

**JOHN MCCALLUM**

**Date of hearing:** 16 June 2025

**Date of Decision:** 16 June 2025

**Panel:** Judge Kathryn Kings (Deputy Chairperson) and Ms Amanda Dickens.

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

Mr John McCullum represented himself.

**Charges and Particulars:**

Greyhounds Australasia Rule 141(1) reads as follows:

**Rule 141 Greyhound to be free of prohibited substances**

1. The owner, trainer or other person in charge of a greyhound:
2. nominated to compete in an Event;
3. presented for a satisfactory trial or such other trial as provided for by the Rules; or
4. 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 of the Charge being**:

1. You were, at all relevant times, a trainer registered with Greyhound Racing Victoria (GRV) and a person bound by the Greyhounds Australasia Rules.
2. You were, at all relevant times, the trainer of the greyhound “Hudson Flyer”
3. “Hudson Flyer” was nominated to compete in Race 5, DOWNOAD THE WATCHDOG APP (300+RANK), Grade 7, conducted by the Geelong Greyhound Racing Club at Geelong on 30 July 2024 (The Event).
4. On 30 July 2024, you presented “Hudson Flyer” at the Event not free of any prohibited substance, given that:
   1. A pre-race sample of urine was taken from *“*Hudson Flyer*”* at the Event (**the Sample**);
   2. Sotalol was detected in the Sample.

**Plea:** Guilty

**DECISION**

Mr John McCallum is a trainer licensed by Greyhound Racing Victoria (“GRV”) and bound by Greyhounds Australasia Rules (“GAR”). He has been in the industry since 1986 as an owner and since 1989 as a public trainer.

Mr McCallum has been charged with breaching GAR 141(1), a presentation charge. Mr McCallum is the trainer of “Hudson Flyer” who was nominated to compete in Race 5 at Geelong Greyhound Racing Club on 30 July 2024. On 30 July 2024, Hudson Flyer was presented at the event not free of a prohibited substance given that a pre-race sample of urine was taken from Hudson Flyer at the event and Sotalol was detected in the sample. Mr McCallum was charged with a presentation offence, under GAR 141(1) on account of presenting Hudson Flyer for an event while not free of a prohibited substance.

Mr McCallum pleaded guilty to the charge.

In a report dated 2 October 2024, Dr Steven Karamatic, Chief Veterinarian for GRV, confirmed Sotalol is a prohibited substance under the GAR. It is placed in the category “Stimulants depressants and other prohibited substances” of GRV’s Penalty Guidelines. He said currently there are no Australian Pesticides and Veterinarian Medicines Authority registered products that contain Sotalol. There are 24 Therapeutic (human) products that contain Sotalol.

During the Kennel Inspection, Mr McCallum produced personal medication APX Sotalol 80mg tablets that contain Sotalol. The medication is prescribed by his General Practitioner for a medical condition to be taken one tablet daily in the morning, at least half an hour before food. Mr McCallum advised he takes one tablet in the morning and one in the evening.

Dr Karamatic said that contamination from personal medication is a possible source of the positive swab. Treating Records did not detail the administration of Sotalol to any greyhound.

Dr Karamatic said Sotalol slows the heartbeat, controls irregular rhythm and would have a negative effect on performance such as reducing cardiac output.

In his report, Dr Karamatic referred to Notices published and provided to the Industry by GRV in August 2016 and July 2020, warning participants of potential risks of inadvertent positive swabs from the use of personal medications and provides the industry with some guidance to minimize those risks. Dr Karamatic concluded that Sotalol can affect the conduct or performance of a greyhound with any effect on performance more likely to be negative.

Mr McCallum said he washes his hands after taking the medication. In a preliminary Inquiry conducted by Ms Roslyn Fazulla on 29 September 2024, Mr McCallum said the medication made him perspire. He wears gloves when preparing meals for the greyhounds. He takes his evening medication just before going to bed.

In imposing a penalty we take into account Mr McCallum’s guilty plea, his cooperation with the Stewards, his attempts to prevent further positive swabs and the importance of reinforcing specific and general deterrence.

Mr McCallum has two prior offences for Sotalol in 2017 and 2022. As a result of this offence, he no longer owns greyhounds.

The Tribunal accepts the submissions of the Stewards in relation to penalty. We also acknowledge the importance of maintaining a level playing field by having a drug free industry. We take into account penalties in recent cases as a guide.

In all the circumstances we impose a penalty of 6 months suspension to take effect immediately.

Hudson Flyer is disqualified form Race 5 at Geelong Greyhound Racing Club on 30 July 2024 and the finishing order is amended accordingly.

Paige Macdonald

A/Assistant Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal