

Racing Appeals & Disciplinary Board

Media Release

15 March 2017

Racing Appeals & Disciplinary Board

Date of Hearing: Wednesday, 15 March 2017
Venue of Hearing: Law Institute of Victoria
470 Bourke Street, Melbourne
Panel: Mr. Shane Marshall (Chairman), and Mr. Phillip Pryor
Name of Person Charged: Mrs. Elizabeth Steel
Town: Nullawarre North
Track: Warrnambool
Date: 15 September 2016
GAR No: 83 (2)(3)

Offence Charged: Mrs. Elizabeth Steel failed to present the greyhound 'Airborn And Gone' free of any prohibited substance for an event at the Warrnambool meeting held on 15 September 2016.

REPORT:

Following advice from Racing Analytical Services Laboratory, the Stewards of Greyhound Racing Victoria conducted an investigation into the results of a post-race urine sample taken from the greyhound 'Airborn And Gone' at the Warrnambool meeting held on 15 September 2016.

During the investigation, Stewards received evidence from registered trainer Mrs. Elizabeth Steel, Mr. David Batty (Racing Analytical Services Laboratory) and Dr. Steven Karamatic (GRV Chief Veterinarian).

After considering the evidence, Stewards charged Mrs. Steel with a breach of Greyhounds Australasia Rule 83(2)(3) in that she failed to present the greyhound 'Airborn And Gone' free of any prohibited substance for an event at the Warrnambool meeting held on 15 September 2016 given that the post-race urine sample taken from the greyhound indicated the presence of the prohibited substance Atenolol.

Under Rule 47.1 of the Greyhound Racing Victoria Local Rules a breach of GAR83 (2)(3) constitutes a Serious Offence. As a result on Wednesday, 15 March 2017 this matter was

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heard before the Racing Appeals and Disciplinary Board in the first instance under Greyhound Local Racing Rule 47.3 and Sections 83C(b) and 83M(1) of the Racing Act.

Mrs. Elizabeth Steel represented herself.

Ms. Jade Murphy GRV Senior Lawyer instructed by Mr. Marwan El-Asmar GRV Managing Principal Lawyer represented the Stewards Panel.

Mrs. Elizabeth Steel pleaded guilty to the charge.

DECISION:

1. Mrs. Elizabeth Steel is a registered trainer of greyhounds and the trainer of the greyhound 'Airborn And Gone'. Airborn And Gone competed in and won race 3 at Warrnambool on 15 September 2016. A post-race sample of urine taken from the greyhound revealed the presence of the prohibited substance, Atenolol.
2. Stewards of Greyhound Racing Victoria ("GRV") have charged Mrs. Steel with breaching Greyhound Australasia Rules ("GAR") 83 (2) and (3) by presenting a greyhound for an event while not being free of a prohibited substance. Mrs. Steel has pleaded guilty to the charge.
3. According to GRV's Chief Veterinary Officer, Dr. Steven Karamatic Atenolol is a beta blocker which slows the heartbeat and is capable of affecting the performance of a greyhound in a negative way.
4. Mrs. Steel was not present at Warrnambool on the day of the race. She had left Australia three days earlier for an overseas holiday. The greyhound was handled by her owner, Mr. Andrew Hull. Mrs. Steel told a Stewards' inquiry into the positive swab that both she and Mr. Hull use Atenolol for blood pressure issues. She said there must have been contamination from either source to the greyhound. Given that Mrs. Steel left Australia three days before the race, it is more likely that the contamination came from the owner given Atenolol's elimination half life is 3.2 hours in dogs, according to Dr. Karamatic.
5. Whatever the source of the contamination, Mrs. Steel, as the registered trainer, remains responsible for the greyhound being presented for the race in a drug free state. It does not matter that the drug did not affect the result of the race as the greyhound still won. The problem is that it had the capacity to affect the result of the race.
6. According to Dr. Karamatic Atenolol is a category 3 substance under the GRV's penalty guidelines document under the heading "Stimulants and Depressants". The penalty

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guideline document suggests a minimum disqualification period of six months. We are informed by the document but not bound by it.

7. In setting a penalty in this matter we take into account Mrs. Steel's guilty plea. We also balance just punishment, specific and general deterrence, denunciation, preservation of the integrity of greyhound racing, animal welfare considerations and Mrs. Steel's prospects of rehabilitation. We also take into account Mrs. Steel's good record and excellent character.
8. Although the breach of GAR 83 (2) was inadvertent, it is still a matter that the Board must take very seriously. General deterrence is a most important consideration as trainers and those who work for them must be careful not to contaminate their greyhounds with their own personal medication. We find the charges proven.
9. In all the circumstance we consider that the appropriate penalty is three months disqualification. However because of Mrs. Steel's good record, excellent character, guilty plea and co-operation with the Stewards we consider that the disqualification should be fully suspended for a period of six months. In addition, "Airborn And Gone" is disqualified from race 3 at Warrnambool on 15 September 2016.

.....End.....