

Racing Appeals & Disciplinary Board

Media Release

27 January 2017

Racing Appeals & Disciplinary Board

Date of Hearing: Friday, 27 January 2017
Venue of Hearing: Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation
49 Elizabeth Street, Richmond, Victoria
Panel: Mr. Shane Marshall (Chairman), Mr. Terry O'Connor (Deputy
Chairman), and Mr. David Gleeson
Name of Person Charged: Mr. Tony Interligi
Town: Dandenong North
Track: Geelong
Date: 9 August 2016
GAR No: 83 (2)(3)

Offence Charged: Mr. Tony Interligi failed to present the greyhound 'Inter Sandra'
free of any prohibited substance for an event at the Geelong
meeting held on 9 August 2016.

REPORT:

Following advice from Racing Analytical Services Laboratory, the Stewards of Greyhound Racing Victoria conducted an investigation into the results of a pre-race urine sample taken from the greyhound 'Inter Sandra' at the Geelong meeting held on 9 August 2016.

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

After considering the evidence, Stewards charged Mr. Interligi with a breach of Greyhounds Australasia Rule 83(2)(3) in that he failed to present the greyhound 'Inter Sandra' free of any prohibited substance for an event at the Geelong meeting held on 9 August 2016 given that the pre-race urine sample taken from the greyhound indicated the presence of the prohibited substance piroxicam.

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 Friday, 27 January 2017 this matter was heard

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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.

Mr. Tony Interligi represented himself.

Mr. Marwan El-Asmar GRV Managing Principal Lawyer represented the Stewards Panel.

Mr. Tony Interligi pleaded guilty to the charge.

DECISION:

1. Mr. Tony Interligi is a registered trainer of greyhounds and the trainer of greyhound "Inter Sandra". Mr. Interligi presented Inter Sandra to compete in race 6 at Geelong on 9 August 2016. A pre-race swab taken from the greyhound showed the presence of the non steroidal, anti-inflammatory drug, Piroxicam.
2. Stewards of Greyhound Racing Victoria ("GRV") have charged Mr. Interligi with breaching Greyhound Australasia Rule ("GAR") 83 (2) and (3) by presenting a greyhound for an event while not being free of a prohibited substance. Piroxicam is a prohibited substance as defined by the GAR. It is a category 2 prohibited substance under the penalty guidelines document issued by GRV for which a minimum one months' disqualification is suggested. We are informed by those guidelines but not bound by them.
3. According to Dr. Karamatic, GRV's Chief Veterinarian, Piroxicam provides pain relief, anti-inflammatory and fever reducing qualities. It is capable of affecting the condition or performance of a greyhound in a positive way.
4. Mr. Interligi has pleaded guilty to the charge. In a preliminary inquiry held on 22 November 2016, Mr. Interligi told stewards that he had administered an anti-inflammatory gel to Inter Sandra by rubbing it into the inside of the leg of the greyhound. The gel was sold as "Feldene" at Chemist Warehouse. He administered the gel a day or two before the race and now knows it to contain Piroxicam.
5. At the time of the race, Mr. Interligi had only been training for two years. He appears to have been ignorant of the need not to supply anti-inflammatory medications to racing greyhounds.
6. In determining the appropriate penalty, it is necessary for the Board to "balance just punishment, specific and general deterrence, denunciation, the preservation of the integrity of greyhound racing as well as the offenders prospects [of] ... rehabilitation ..."; see Cotton v GRV [2012] VCA7 460 at [9].

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7. In this case specific deterrence is not an important consideration as we believe that Mr. Interligi has learned from this experience and will not administer anti-inflammatory treatment to his greyhounds again. General deterrence and the other factors listed in the previous paragraph are very important considerations. The reality is that in the particular race in question, one greyhound was not drug free and the trainer must be called to account for that fact.

8. The appropriate penalty in this case is not easy to arrive at. That is because there is evidence that Mr. Interligi made a deliberate choice, albeit through ignorance, to administer the anti-inflammatory gel. However, he has not being charged with an administration offence but with a presentation offence. Nonetheless the penalty guidelines note that higher penalties may apply where there is evidence of administration.

9. Bearing in mind the above matters, previous penalties in other category 2 cases and Mr. Interligi's guilty plea and co-operation with the stewards, we impose a fine of \$1,500. We suspend \$500 of that amount for 12 months pending no further breach of GAR83 in the next 12 months. In addition, Inter Sandra is disqualified from race 6 at Geelong on 9 August 2016.

.....End.....