

22 August 2023

**DECISION****GREYHOUND RACING VICTORIA**

and

**DANNY CORTESE**

- Date of hearing:** 15 August 2023
- Panel:** Justice Shane Marshall (Deputy Chairperson) and Mr Josh Bornstein.
- Appearances:** Mr Anthony Pearce appeared on behalf of the Stewards.  
Mr Danny Cortese represented himself.
- Charge:** Greyhounds Australasia Rule (“GAR”) 141(1) states:  
(1) The owner, trainer or other person in charge of a greyhound:  
(a) nominated to compete in an Event;  
(b) presented for a satisfactory trial or such other trial as provided for by the Rules; or  
(c) 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 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.
  2. You were, at all relevant times, the trainer of the greyhound “Donald Lane”.
  3. “Donald Lane” was nominated to compete in Race 2, HARD STYLE RICO @ STUD, Tier 3 – Maiden, conducted by the Traralgon Greyhound Racing Club at Traralgon on 12 December 2022 (**the Event**).
  4. On 12 December 2022, you presented “Donald Lane” at the Event not free of any prohibited substance, given that:

- (a) A pre-race sample of urine was taken from “Donald Lane” at the Event (**the Sample**);
- (b) Dexamethasone was detected in the Sample.

**Plea:** Guilty

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## DECISION

1. Mr Danny Cortese is a registered greyhound trainer and at all material times was the trainer of the greyhound “Donald Lane”. Donald Lane competed in Race 2 at Traralgon on 12 December 2022. A pre-race sample of urine taken from the greyhound showed the presence of the prohibited substance dexamethasone.
2. Dexamethasone is an anti-inflammatory drug which is often given to cattle to produce a pain free state before slaughter. It is commonly found in not for human consumption meat, also known as knacker meat which trainers usually buy at establishments which sell pet supplies. Dexamethasone is capable of affecting the performance of a greyhound, in a positive way by inducing an artificially pain free state in a greyhound thereby increasing the threshold for fatigue.
3. The most likely cause of the contamination was the eating of knacker meat by Donald Lane. Mr Cortese has for many years purchased a product called “racing beef” from a pet shop supply shop in Dandenong West. He appears to have been fortunate in not experiencing any prior positive swabs for dexamethasone or other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.
4. Mr Cortese told investigative Stewards at an inquiry into the positive swab that he now feeds his greyhounds with kangaroo and chicken only in the 72 hours prior to a race.
5. Stewards of Greyhound Racing Victoria (“GRV”) have charged Mr Cortese with an offence under Greyhounds Australasia Rule 141(1) with presenting a greyhound for an event whilst not free of a prohibited substance. Mr Cortese pleaded guilty to that charge. What follows are the reasons of the Tribunal for the penalty to be imposed in this matter.
6. For many years GRV has warned trainers about the dangers of feeding greyhounds not fit for human consumption meat in GRV publications. Notwithstanding that, many GRV trainers take their chances in buying meat that may contain prohibited substances, but is cheaper for them than fit for human consumption meat. The Tribunal has, since its inception 4 years ago, repeatedly said that, unless the message about knacker meat gets

through to trainers, higher penalties will ensue for breaches of the relevant rule. This Tribunal's predecessor, the GRV Racing Appeals and Disciplinary Board, said likewise.

7. In this matter, in setting a penalty we take into account the warnings given to the industry by the industry regulator, GRV, about knackery meat, as well as general deterrence and, to a lesser extent, specific deterrence. We are further mindful of the importance of having a level playing field by striving for a drug free industry. Also relevant is the guilty plea of Mr Cortese and his good record.
8. In all the circumstances, we impose a penalty of a fine of \$1,500.
9. In addition, Donald Lane is disqualified from Race 2 at Traralgon on 12 December 2022.

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Mark Howard  
Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal