

12 February 2024

DECISION

GREYHOUND RACING VICTORIA

and

BRIAN HODGSON

- Date of hearing:** 30 January 2024
- Panel:** Judge John Bowman (Chairperson) and Mr Greg Childs.
- Appearances:** Mr Steve Brnovic, instructed by Mr Anthony Pearce, appeared on behalf of the Stewards.
Mr Brian Hodgson represented himself.
- Charges:** Greyhounds Australasia Rule ("GAR") 165(c) states:
An offence is committed if a person (including an official):
(c) engages in contemptuous, unseemly, improper, insulting, or offensive conduct or behaviour in any manner or form towards, or in relation to:
(i) a Steward or any other official of a Controlling Body or a Club.
- GAR 156(f)(ii) states:
An offence is committed if a person (including an official):
(f) 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:
(i) constitutes misconduct or is negligent or improper.
- GAR 165(a) states:
An offence is committed if a person (including an official):
(a) commits or omits to do any act or engages in conduct which is in any way detrimental or prejudicial to the interest, welfare, image, control or promotion of greyhound racing;

Particulars:

Charge 1: GAR 165(c)

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 engaged in contemptuous, unseemly, improper, insulting, or offensive conduct or behaviour towards a Steward or any other official of a club, in that;

(a) On 26 June 2023, you were in attendance at the Ballarat Greyhound Club;

(b) Following the running of Race 2, your conduct towards GRV Stewards and a Club official has included;

i. in the vicinity of the stir up yard area, you yelled and verbally berated GRV Stewards Mr Bernard Blood and Ms Lee Fahry on the condition of the track; and/or

ii. in the vicinity of the stir up yard area, you spoke in a loud and aggressive manner towards Ballarat Greyhound Club official, Mr Shaun Boag, saying words to the effect of “the track is a fucking disgrace”; and/or

iii. whilst walking the track near the 545m boxes, you were abusive, loud and aggressive in nature towards Mr. Boag, which included pointing and gesticulating your hands in an angry, hostile and demanding manner; and/or

iv. in the vicinity of the 545m boxes, you said to Mr. Boag, words to the effect of “don’t you give a shit about the dogs” in an angry and hostile manner.

Charge 2: GAR 156(f)(ii)

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. At the Ballarat Greyhound Racing Club on 26 June 2023 following the running of Race 2, you entered the Track.

3. You did not have permission from the Stewards to enter the Track, which is contrary to the “Greyhound Racing Victoria – Track Rules” requirements.

4. In the opinion of the Stewards, entering the track without the permission of the Stewards, constitutes misconduct or is improper.

Charge 3: GAR 165(a)

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 engaged in conduct which is detrimental or prejudicial to the interest, welfare, image, control or promotion of greyhound racing, in that;

(a) On 26 June 2023, you were in attendance at the Ballarat Greyhound Club;

(b) Following the running of Race 2, your conduct towards GRV Stewards and a Club official has included;

i. in the vicinity of the stir up yard area, you yelled and verbally berated GRV Stewards Mr Bernard Blood and Ms Lee Fahry on the condition of the track; and/or

ii. in the vicinity of the stir up yard area, you spoke in a loud and aggressive manner towards Ballarat Greyhound Club official, Mr. Shaun Boag, saying words to the effect of “the track is a fucking disgrace”; and/or

iii. whilst walking the track near the 545m boxes, you were abusive, loud and aggressive in nature towards Mr Boag, which included pointing and gesticulating your hands in an angry, hostile and demanding manner; and/or

iv. in the vicinity of the 545m boxes, you said to Mr Boag, words to the effect of “don’t you give a shit about the dogs” in an angry and hostile manner.

(c) Your conduct was in view of other licensed persons, GRV and club officials, and members of the public.

Pleas: Guilty to all Charges

Mr Brian Hodgson, there are very marked similarities between the charges laid against you and those laid against Ms Deborah Coleman. We would refer to that decision. Whilst you were not particularly well known to each other, both sets of charges arose out of the perceived state of the track after Race 2 at Ballarat on 26 June 2023. Both involve heated abuse of the Stewards and entering on to the track without permission.

We will not set out the details in full, but would refer to the matters set out in our decision in relation to Ms Coleman. A distinction between the two cases is that you are pleading Guilty to all three charges, whereas she pleaded Not Guilty to Charge 2, the entry on to the track.

The comments that we made in Ms Coleman’s case concerning the work done by the Stewards are again appropriate. They apply both to the manner in which you addressed them and to your going on to the track.

Our observations concerning the state of the track and the work that had to be done on it are again relevant.

You are an experienced trainer, albeit with a much smaller number of dogs in your kennels as compared to Ms Coleman. No relevant prior offences are alleged. Your kennels are at Smythesdale, near Ballarat, and you have a long history in the industry, being first registered as a public trainer in excess of 25 years ago.

You accept that you wrongfully and publicly abused the Stewards and that you went on to the track, albeit towards the outer side of the track end and not for a particularly lengthy period.

In all the circumstances, we are of the view that the following penalties are appropriate:

Charge 1: two months suspension.

Charge 2: \$1,000 fine.

Charge 3: two months suspension which is wholly concurrent with the penalty imposed on Charge 1.

The end result is that you are suspended for a period of two months, to commence immediately, and are fined \$1,000.

Kathleen Scully
Assistant Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal