

22 July 2024

DECISION

GREYHOUND RACING VICTORIA

and

DAMIAN MEADE

Date of hearing: 4 July 2024

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Panel: Judge John Bowman (Chairperson) and Dr Andrew Gould.

Appearances: Mr Anthony Pearce appeared on behalf of the Stewards.
Mr Damian Meade represented himself.

Charge: Greyhounds Australasia Rule ("GAR") 141(1) states:

Greyhound to be free of prohibited substances

(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:

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 "Johari".

3. “Johari” was nominated to compete in Race 3, MR AUDACIOUS @ STUD (1-3 WINS), conducted by the Traralgon Greyhound Racing Club at Traralgon on 18 August 2023 (**the Event**).

4. On 18 August 2023, you presented “Johari” at the Event not free of any prohibited substance, given that:

(a) A pre-race sample of urine was taken from “Johari” at the Event (**the Sample**);

(b) D-ARG2 DERMORPHIN 1-4 OH was detected in the sample.

Plea: Guilty

DECISION

Mr Damian Meade, you are pleading guilty to a breach of GAR 141(1). This Charge originates from a pre-race sample taken from Johari, trained by you. Johari ran in Race 3 at Traralgon on 18 August 2023, a race in which it ran second.

The sample proved positive to the prohibited substance D-ARG 2 Demorphin 1-40H, which we shall refer to as Demorphine.

Why the dog proved positive to this particular substance is something of a mystery, Whilst you were in the habit of using knackery meat, whether or not this was the cause is totally unclear. Thus, while there is no argument but that the dog tested positive, the source of the Demorphine is unclear. It is not asserted by Mr Pearce, on behalf of the Stewards, that there was any direct administration, deliberate or accidental, by you or by anyone on your behalf or assisting you.

Your position is that you are a 55 year old man who has been training a small number of dogs that are essentially “give aways”, and doing that with some success. Since this problem has arisen, you have returned a couple of dogs to their owners and kept approximately six which you own. In recent times, you have not had any dogs competing. You have been a public trainer since July 2018 and a limited amount of being involved as a registered participant before that. You have an absolutely clean record in relation to any offence of this nature or significance, or indeed of any lesser relevant offences.

You sustained a major accident many years ago when a tree fell on you whilst you were in the course of your employment, which involved the felling of trees. This injury seems to have been to your spine and legs. You have undergone some 26 surgical procedures since then and essentially have not been able to engage in employment. You get some assistance with the dogs and from your 25 year old son, but essentially you perform the bulk of the training.

You live on a seven acre property and have 9 kennels. The only dogs you now have number six, but they are all now retired. You have no intention to remain as a trainer. You have more surgery upcoming.

Prohibited substances, such as demorphin, are so prohibited for very good reasons. The image of the level playing field and drug free industry is vital to the well-being and future prospects of greyhound racing.

We have had regard to the decisions in prohibited substance cases and to the very few cases regarding Demorphin.

We are of the view that the imposition of a period of disqualification is necessary. We accept what Mr Pearce has submitted in regard. We also take into account the many things in your favour and your unfortunate situation.

Our conclusion is that you are disqualified for a period of 12 months, but that 8 of those 12 months be suspended for a period of 24 months. In the unlikely event that you commit a relevant offence in that 24 month period, the suspended penalty of 8 months would be activated. We repeat that the immediate disqualification is one of 4 months.

Finally, Johari is disqualified from Race 3 at Traralgon on 18 August 2023 and the finishing order is amended accordingly.

Mark Howard
Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal