

7 March 2024

DECISION

GREYHOUND RACING VICTORIA

and

GREGORY SCHOFIELD

Date of hearing: 20 February 2024

Panel: Judge John Bowman (Chairperson) and Ms Maree Payne.

Appearances: Ms Amara Hughes, instructed by Mr Anthony Pearce, appeared on behalf of the Stewards.
Mr Gregory Schofield represented himself.

Charges and particulars:

Charge No. 1 of 4

Greyhounds Australasia Rule (GAR) **156 (i)**, reads as follows:

GAR 156 General Offences

An offence is committed if a person (including an official):

(i) prevents, attempts to prevent, interferes with or attempts to interfere with the carrying out of any identification, examination, test, necropsy, analysis, inquiry, investigation or inspection (including a kennel inspection) pursuant to the Rules.

Particulars of the Charge being:

1. You were, at all relevant times, a trainer registered with Greyhound Racing Victoria (**GRV**) (Member No. 3701) and a person bound by the Greyhounds Australasia Rules and Local Racing Rules.

2. On 20 July 2023, Investigative Stewards attended your registered property address 126 Golf Links Drive, Beveridge, 3753, for the purposes of conducting a kennel inspection.
3. You have refused the Investigative Stewards entry to your property, thereby preventing the carrying out of a kennel inspection.

Charge No. 2 of 4

Greyhounds Australasia Rule (GAR) **156 (h)**, which reads as follows:

GAR 156 General Offences

An offence is committed if a person (including an official):

(h) disobeys or fails to comply with a lawful order of a Controlling Body, the Stewards, or another person authorised by a Controlling Body with official duties in relation to greyhound racing;

Particulars of the Charge being:

- 1 You were, at all relevant times, a trainer registered with Greyhound Racing Victoria (**GRV**) (Member No. 3701) and a person bound by the Greyhounds Australasia Rules and Local Racing Rules.
- 2 On 20 July 2023, when attending your registered property address at 126 Golf Links Drive, Beveridge, 3753, Investigative Stewards issued you a verbal lawful order (Lawful Direction) for you to allow GRV Investigative Stewards to conduct a kennel inspection at that time.
- 3 You failed to comply with that lawful order by refusing Investigative Stewards entry to your property for the purposes of a kennel inspection.

Charge No. 3 of 4

Local Racing Rule (LR) **68.1.2**, reads as follows:

LR 68. Prohibition on suspended person entering greyhound racing premises

68.1. Unless the Controlling Body or Stewards direct otherwise, in addition to the consequences set out in GAR 178(2), a person who is suspended must not, during the period of suspension:

68.1.2. enter the premises of a club on a day when a meeting, qualifying trial, satisfactory trial, other trial, Event or greyhound training of any type is occurring or would reasonably be expected to occur regardless of whether the meeting, qualifying trial, satisfactory trial, other trial, Event or training is actually occurring at that time;

Particulars of the Charge being:

1. You were, at all relevant times, a trainer registered with Greyhound Racing Victoria (**GRV**) (Member No. 3701) and a person bound by the Greyhounds Australasia Rules and Local Racing Rules.
2. On 18 July 2023, you received an effective 2 month suspension from the Victorian Racing Tribunal.
3. The period of suspension commenced on 18 July 2023 and was to cease at 11.59pm on 17 September 2023.
4. On 22 August 2023, whilst a suspended person, you entered the premises of the Bendigo Greyhound Racing Club for the purposes of trialling a greyhound.

Charge No. 4 of 4

Greyhounds Australasia Rule (GAR) **164 (a)**, which reads as follows:

GAR 164 Offences in relation to investigations and inquiries

An offence is committed if a person (including an official):

(a) makes a false or misleading statement in relation to or during an investigation, inspection, examination, test or inquiry (or at any other disciplinary process, hearing or appeal proceeding) or makes or causes to be made a falsification in a document in connection with greyhound racing or the registration of a greyhound;

Particulars of the Charge being:

1. You were, at all relevant times, a trainer registered with Greyhound Racing Victoria (**GRV**) (Member No. 3701) and a person bound by the Greyhounds Australasia Rules and Local Racing Rules.
2. On 13 September 2023, you attended an inquiry with GRV Investigative Stewards where;

- a. You denied entering the premises of the Bendigo Greyhound Racing Club on 22 August 2023 for the purposes of trialling a greyhound whilst a suspended person;
 - b. You produced a Medical Certificate of Attendance from the Northern Hospital dated 22 August 2023.
3. You have provided the above information knowing it to be false or misleading as you did attend the Bendigo Greyhound Racing Club on 22 August 2023 for the purposes of trialling a greyhound.

Pleas: Guilty to all charges

DECISION

Mr Gregory Schofield, you are pleading guilty to four Charges. Charges 1 and 2 can be grouped, in that they both deal with happenings at a proposed visit by the Stewards to the registered address of your kennels on 20 July 2023. Effectively you refused entry to them and made the service of any documents extremely difficult.

Charge 3 concerns your entry into the Bendigo track on 22 August 2023 for the purpose of trialling a greyhound, this being whilst you were a suspended person.

Charge 4 concerns your making a false or misleading statement during an inquiry on 13 September 2023. The false statement was in essence a denial of the facts alleged in Charge 3, but has the added factor of your producing a false or misleading medical certificate concerning your whereabouts on the day of Charge 3 – that is, on 22 August 2023. The misleading certificate quite falsely stated that you had attended the Northern Hospital at Epping on that day and effectively at a time when it would have been impossible for you to be at the Bendigo Greyhound Track as charged. You also denied repeatedly that you were the person shown on the relevant footage.

We say two things at the start. Firstly, these are serious charges warranting disqualification. Secondly, we take into account your guilty plea to all charges.

You are 64 years of age. You have been licenced as a public trainer since August 2018, but do have a longer history in the industry as an Owner Trainer. Currently, you have only two greyhounds. Both dogs are close to retirement age.

You have had health problems. Your only source of income is from Centrelink. We appreciate that greyhounds have played a significant role in your life. However, it must also be said that you do not have a good record.

In 2017, you were disqualified for 12 months, with 6 months in turn suspended, for an amphetamine offence.

On 18 July 2023, you were suspended for three months, with one month in turn suspended, this being for a presentation offence on 23 August 2022.

The offences committed by you in the present case strike at the heart of the work of the Stewards, the maintenance of integrity, and the importance and compliance with penalties. We do take into account the pleas of guilty.

In our opinion, bearing in mind all of the above, the following penalties are appropriate.

On Charge 1, you are disqualified for a period of 8 months.

On Charge 2, you are disqualified for a period of 8 months, wholly concurrent with the penalty for Charge 1.

On Charge 3, you are disqualified for a period of 5 months, cumulative upon the penalty for Charge 1.

On Charge 4, you are disqualified for a period of 7 months, cumulative upon the penalties for Charges 1 and 3.

Thus, the total effective period of disqualification is 20 months. We shall leave the issue of the starting date of these penalties to the parties. The matters can always be brought back before us should some clarification or further order be required.

Mark Howard
Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal