

28 August 2024

## DECISION

### GREYHOUND RACING VICTORIA

and

### JULIE BELSHAM

**Date of hearing:** 6 March 2024

**Date of decision:** 6 March 2024

**Panel:** Judge Kathryn Kings (Deputy Chairperson) and Dr June Smith.

**Appearances:** Mr Anthony Pearce appeared on behalf of the Stewards.  
Ms Julie Belsham represented herself.

**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 "Johnny".

3. *“Johnny”* was nominated to compete in Race 1, SPORTSBET GO THE BLUE DOG, Tier 3 – Maiden, conducted by the Warragul Greyhound Racing Club at Warragul on 30 March 2023 (**the Event**).

4. On 30 March 2023, you presented *“Johnny”* at the Event not free of any prohibited substance, given that:

- (a) A post-race sample of urine was taken from *“Johnny”* at the Event (**the Sample**);
- (b) Procaine was detected in the Sample.

**Plea:** Guilty

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## **DECISION**

Ms Julie Belsham is a trainer licensed by Greyhound Racing Victoria and bound by the Greyhounds Australasia Rules. She has been licensed for approximately 13 years. Ms Belsham is the trainer of Johnny.

Johnny was nominated to compete in Race 1 at Warragul on 30 March 2023.

On 30 March 2023, Johnny was presented at the event not free of any prohibited substance, given that a post-race sample of urine was taken from the dog at the event (the sample) and Procaine was detected.

Ms Belsham was charged with a presentation offence under Greyhounds Australasia Rule 141(1), she presented for an event while it was not free of any prohibited substance.

Ms Belsham pleaded guilty to the charge.

The GRV Chief Veterinarian, Dr Steven Karamatic, provided a report dated 26 June 2023. Dr Karamatic confirmed that procaine is a prohibited substance under the Greyhounds Australasia Rules and is placed in the category of “Therapeutic Substances” in GRV’s Penalty Guidelines. There were no products found during kennel inspection that would be liable to contain procaine. Unfit for human consumption meat (beef-knackery meat from Maffra) was a likely explanation for detection of procaine. It had been fed to the greyhound every day, including a lesser amount on the relevant day. Further, Dr Karamatic said that participants in the industry have been alerted to the potential risk through GRV’s publications published in 2016 and July 2020.

Dr Karamatic said that the prohibited substance procaine is capable of affecting the condition or performance of a greyhound by inducing an artificially pain free state. Ms Belsham said that occasionally she fed non knackery meat prior to a race, but not often. We accept the feeding of knackery meat to the greyhound is the likely explanation for the finding of procaine.

Ms Belsham pleaded guilty at an early stage and has cooperated throughout the investigation with the Stewards.

In imposing a penalty, we have taken into account her guilty plea, her cooperation with the Stewards and the importance of specific and, importantly, general deterrence. We also acknowledge the importance of maintaining a level playing field by having a drug free industry. We take into account penalties in like matters. We note that this is Ms Belsham's second offence.

We accept the submissions of the Stewards in relation to penalty. In all the circumstances, we impose a penalty of 3 months suspension, wholly suspended for 24 months, and a fine of \$2,000 with \$1,000 suspended for 24 months.

Johnny is disqualified from Race 1 at Warragul on 30 March 2023 and the finishing order is amended accordingly.

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Mark Howard  
Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal