

16 January 2024

DECISION

GREYHOUND RACING VICTORIA

and

KENNETH HOWAT

- Date of hearing:** 9 January 2024
- Panel:** Judge Kathryn Kings (Deputy Chairperson) and Ms Amanda Dickens.
- Appearances:** Ms Yana Podolskaya appeared on behalf of the Stewards.
Mr Kenneth Howat 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:**
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 “Go Gizmo Go”.
 3. Go Gizmo Go was nominated to compete in Race 2, SPORTSBET GO THE BLUE DOG (250+RANK), Maiden, conducted by the Geelong Greyhound Racing Club at Geelong on 28 March 2023 (the Event).
 4. On 28 March 2023, you presented Go Gizmo Go at the Event not free of any prohibited substance, given that:

(a) A post-race sample of blood was taken from Go Gizmo Go at the Event (the Sample);

(b) Meloxicam was detected in the Sample.

Plea: Guilty

DECISION

Mr Kenneth Howat is a trainer licensed by Greyhound Racing Victoria (“GRV”) and bound by the Greyhounds Australasia Rules (“GARs”). He is the licensed trainer of the greyhound, “Go Gizmo Go”. Go Gizmo Go was nominated to compete in Race 2, conducted by the Geelong Greyhound Racing Club on 28 March 2023. Go Gizmo Go was presented not free of any prohibited substance.

On 4 May 2023, Racing Analytical Services Ltd (“RASL”) reported that a post-race blood sample taken at the event detected meloxicam. A referral analysis performed by Australian Racing Forensic Laboratory (“ARFL”) confirmed the presence of meloxicam.

Mr Howat was charged with a presentation offence under GAR 141(1), on account of presenting Go Gizmo Go for an event while not free of a prohibited substance.

The GRV Chief Veterinarian, Dr Steven Karamatic, provided a report dated 26 June 2023. He said that meloxicam is a prohibited substance as defined by the GARs. There were no products listed in the Swab Irregularity Inspection Report found during the kennel inspection that would contain meloxicam. The veterinary records did not disclose the use of meloxicam. Meloxicam is capable of affecting the condition or performance of a greyhound, and any effect on performance is more likely to be positive, such as producing an artificial pain free state.

Dr Karamatic said that the likely cause of the positive result was the feeding of knackery meat to the dog prior to the race. Mr Howat conceded that the greyhound was fed knackery meat.

Since the positive finding, Mr Howat now feeds chicken, kibble and kangaroo meat three to four days prior to a race. He still uses knackery meat, but now purchases the food from a different supplier. He is aware of the warnings issued by GRV about the use of knackery meat.

Mr Howat pleaded guilty to the offence at the earliest opportunity and has co-operated throughout the investigation with the Stewards. He has been licensed for 15 years. He has no relevant prior offences and is a pensioner.

In imposing a penalty, we have taken into account his guilty plea, his cooperation with the Stewards and the importance of specific and 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.

In all the circumstances, we impose a fine of \$1,500, of which \$1,000 be suspended for a period of 24 months, pending no further breach of the Rules of greyhound racing relative to prohibited substances.

In addition, Go Gizmo Go is disqualified from Race 2 at Geelong on 28 March 2023 and the finishing order is amended accordingly.

Kathleen Scully
Acting Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal