

9 May 2024

DECISION

GREYHOUND RACING VICTORIA

and

LAURIE ROUNDS

Date of hearing: 30 April 2024

Date of decision: 30 April 2024

Panel: Judge John Bowman (Chairperson), Ms Heidi Keighran and Mr Robert Abrahams.

Appearances: Mr Anthony Peace appeared on behalf of the Stewards.
Mr Laurie Rounds did not attend the hearing.

Charges and particulars: **Charge No. 1 of 2**

Greyhounds Australasia Rule **156 (f) (ii)**, reads as follows:

156 General Offences

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:

(ii) constitutes misconduct or is negligent or improper

Particulars of the Charge being:

1. You were, at all relevant times, a trainer registered with Greyhound Racing Victoria (**GRV**) (Member No. 19787) and a person bound by the Greyhounds Australasia Rules and Local Racing Rules.
2. On 7th of June 2023, you attended a Victorian Racing Tribunal hearing.
3. Throughout the hearing you demonstrated inappropriate behaviour, which included referring to the VRT Deputy Chairperson as a "Dickhead".

4. You have done something in relation to greyhound racing, which in the opinion of the Stewards, constitutes misconduct or is improper.

Charge No. 2 of 2

Greyhounds Australasia Rule **164 (b)** reads as follows:

164 Offences in relation to investigations and inquiries

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

(b) refuses or fails to attend or to give evidence at an inquiry (or at any other disciplinary process, hearing or appeal proceeding) or produce a document or other thing in relation to an investigation, examination, test or inquiry (or other disciplinary process, hearing or appeal proceeding) pursuant to the Rules when directed by a Controlling Body, the Stewards, or another authorised person.

Particulars of the Charge being

1. You were, at all relevant times, a trainer registered with Greyhound Racing Victoria (**GRV**) (Member No. 19787) and a person bound by the Greyhounds Australasia Rules and Local Racing Rules.
2. On 9 October 2023, a Notice of Inquiry from Investigative Stewards of Greyhound Racing Victoria (GRV) was personally served on you via Australia Post for you to attend at an inquiry to be held at Level 1, 46-50 Chetwynd St, West Melbourne on the Wednesday 11th of October 2023 at 1 PM.
3. You failed to attend the inquiry as required at the appointed time.
4. GRV Investigative Stewards phoned you at 1.10pm on the 11th of October 2023 to ascertain your whereabouts and give you the opportunity to participate in the inquiry. You did not respond.

Plea: Not Guilty

DECISION

Mr Laurie Rounds has been charged with two offences. One offence is a breach of GAR 156(f)(ii), which could be summarised as having engaged in misconduct or behaviour that is improper. It arises out of his behaviour before this Tribunal at a hearing chaired by Deputy Chairman the Honourable Shane Marshall on 7 June 2023.

The second charge is a breach of GAR 164(b), which involves Mr Rounds failure to attend an inquiry conducted by Greyhound Racing Victoria on 11 October 2023.

Mr Rounds has made it clear that he has no wish to attend the hearing scheduled for this day. He has been difficult to contact at times. When contacted, he has made it clear that he would not be participating in any hearing. Indeed, the Registrar was able to contact him the morning of this hearing on 30 April 2024. The Registrar spoke to him on the telephone. Mr Rounds effectively repeated that he would be taking no part at all in any hearing. His firm negative responses to all enquires left no room for any doubt, if that ever existed, concerning his refusal to participate in any way.

We say at the outset that we accept the detailed evidence put forward by the Stewards, including audio coverage of the hearing of 7 June 2023 and the like. We accept that evidence, which is clear and convincing. We are comfortably satisfied that each charge has been made out.

In relation to Charge 1, the behaviour of Mr Rounds in the hearing of 7 June 2023 was simply deplorable. He openly referred to the Chair, the Honourable Shane Marshall, as, quote “a dickhead”, advised him to get a job, and the like. That was only part of his general behaviour.

We agree with the Stewards that this simply cannot be tolerated. It is misconduct or improper behaviour of a high order. We accept the submissions of Mr Pearce on behalf of the Stewards that the appropriate penalty is a period of disqualification for two years.

Mr Rounds behaviour did indeed display a complete contempt for the Deputy Chairperson and for the Tribunal and continued in the face of warnings and reprimands.

Mr Pearce has sought a penalty of disqualification for two years and we consider that to be totally appropriate. The offence is an insult to both the Deputy Chairman and to this Tribunal as a whole.

The second offence, being failure to attend at the Steward inquiry on 11 October 2023, is also very serious. Mr Rounds was given ample notification to attend this inquiry, which in essence was related to his conduct the subject of Charge 1. A number of Notifications in relation to the inquiry were forwarded to him by registered mail, text messages, email and the like. Mr Rounds failed to attend the inquiry.

This showed a complete lack of respect for the Stewards and also effectively repeated his general approach towards the Tribunal as set out in Charge 1.

In our opinion, this Charge also attracts a penalty of disqualification for two years. The penalty for this is to be cumulative upon the penalty for Charge 1. Thus, there is a total period of disqualification of four years. This is the penalty sought by the Stewards and it impresses us as being fair and appropriate.

As a result of the hearing on 7 June 2023, Mr Rounds was disqualified until 22 July 2025. The disqualification for four years imposed today shall commence as at that date, when the current disqualification imposed ceases. Thus, the disqualification imposed today shall be from 22 July 2025 until 22 July 2029.

Mark Howard
Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal