

26 April 2024

## **DECISION**

### **GREYHOUND RACING VICTORIA**

**and**

### **MARGARET SALVATORE**

- Date of hearing:** 20 March 2024
- Panel:** Judge Marilyn Harbison (Deputy Chairperson) and Dr June Smith.
- Appearances:** Mr Timothy Brook appeared on behalf of the Stewards.  
Ms Margaret Salvatore represented herself.
- Charges:** 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.
- GAR 148(1) states:  
(1) A person must not, without the express permission of the Stewards, possess any prohibited substance, exempted substance or other substance (including any other medication, medicine, injectable substance, supplement, herbal product or therapeutic good) that:  
(a) is not registered by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA).
- Particulars:** **Charge 1: GAR 141(1)**
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 "Devine Sal".

3. Devine Sal was nominated to compete in Race 9, GREYHOUND CLUBS VICTORIA, Tier 3 – Grade 6, conducted by the Healesville Greyhound Racing Association at Healesville on 2 June 2023 (the Event).

4. On 2 June 2023, you presented Devine Sal at the Event not free of any prohibited substance, given that:

(a) A post-race sample of urine was taken from Devine Sal at the Event (the Sample);

(b) Dexamethasone was detected in the Sample.

**Charge 2: GAR 148(1)**

1. You are, and were at all relevant times, a trainer licensed by Greyhound Racing Victoria and a person bound by the Greyhound Australasia Rules.

2. On 5 July 2023, a kennel inspection was conducted by GRV Stewards at your registered greyhound kennel address in Plenty (the Premises);

3. During the course of the kennel inspection, Stewards located the injectable substance "Tone \* - Ian Mackay Bio Products" (the Substance) on the Premises;

4. The Substance is not registered with the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA).

5. You did not have permission from the Stewards to possess the Substance.

6. The Substance was in your possession.

**Charge 3: GAR 148(1)**

1. You are, and were at all relevant times, a trainer licensed by Greyhound Racing Victoria and a person bound by the Greyhound Australasia Rules.
2. On 5 July 2023, a kennel inspection was conducted by GRV Stewards at your registered greyhound kennel address in Plenty (the Premises);
3. During the course of the kennel inspection, Stewards located the injectable substance "Power k9 Oral Formula - Ian Mackay Bio Products" (the Substance) on the Premises;
4. The Substance is not registered with the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA).
5. You did not have permission from the Stewards to possess the Substance.
6. The Substance was in your possession.

**Pleas:** Guilty

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**DECISION**

1. Ms Margaret Salvatore has been a greyhound trainer for approximately 12 years. On 2 June 2023 she entered the greyhound "Devine Sal" in a Race 9 at Healesville. Ms Salvatore was the owner and trainer of the dog. The greyhound won the race. Following the race, the greyhound was swabbed and was ultimately found to have dexamethasone present in its system at the time of the race.
2. As a result of this, Ms Salvatore has been charged with presenting the greyhound to race whilst not free of a prohibited substance, namely dexamethasone.
3. The Stewards attended at her premises on 5 July 2023 to inform her of the result of the swab. At the same time, they also inspected her kennels. In the kennels they found two separate injectable substances. The first was called "Tone \* - Ian Mackay Bio Products". The second was called "Power k9 Oral Formula - Ian Mackay Bio Products". Neither of those substances are approved for use in greyhounds and the packaging of them did not disclose what the product contained. The packaging on both products looked very old. The packaging did not comply with commonwealth legislation.

4. In the light of the discovery of these two products, Ms Salvatore has been charged with two further offences, being Charges 2 and 3. Each is that she possessed a product which was not approved for use in greyhounds. I stress that she is not charged with having injected any of her greyhounds with either of these products, but simply that she brought or allowed the products to be brought into her kennels.
5. Dexamethasone is a corticosteroid. It is classified as a therapeutic substance under the Rules. There are 13 veterinary medicines which contain the substance and 15 human medicines. It is anti-inflammatory and inhibits pain sensation in greyhounds. It therefore has the potential to have a positive effect on the performance of a dog, as it induces an artificially pain-free state.
6. At the time of the kennel inspection, nothing was found by the Stewards which contained dexamethasone. When she spoke to the Stewards at the time of the kennel inspection and later at the preliminary inquiry, Ms Salvatore said that she was not familiar with this substance and had no idea how it could have been ingested by the greyhound. However, it appears that for some months immediately prior to the offences she was feeding knackery meat to her greyhounds. In particular, she recalls having given all of her greyhounds puppy mince, which was a product of the Seymour knackery, as well as regular meat from the same source.
7. Knackery meat is a well-known potential source of contamination with therapeutic chemicals. We were told that, at this approximate time, Greyhound Racing Victoria ("GRV") had become aware of particular problems in this regard with the Seymour knackery. Ms Salvatore told the Stewards that she had changed to knackery meat because of the rising cost of meat for human consumption. The knackery meat was approximately half the price of the human consumption meat that she had previously been buying. Having been told by the Stewards of the potential dangers of knackery meat, she has now changed back to human consumption meat.
8. In this respect we note that there have been many warnings to the industry regarding the use of knackery meat. Cheaper it may well be, but those using knackery meat run the real risk of appearing before this Tribunal because of the potential presence of contaminants in such meat.
9. Ms Salvatore also told the Stewards that she never used any injectable substances on her dogs and did not know why the two bottles of injectable substance were present at the kennels. The substances were not tested by GRV, but were described as containing sporting supplements marketed for racing dogs. The bottles were unopened, unused, and past their use by date.

10. Ms Salvatore has pleaded guilty to all charges. She has also provided this Tribunal with a character reference signed by eight other trainers and other industry participants. In that reference, those trainers describe Ms Salvatore as a warm, friendly and fair trainer, who has done much for espousing the values of this great sport. They have told us that they have never seen her harm her greyhounds or do any act detrimental to the integrity of the sport. We have taken the contents of this reference into account in coming to our decision today.
11. Ms Salvatore has no relevant prior history.
12. Our main focus in setting penalty is the need for general deterrence, both in respect of the presentation offence, which addresses the real danger to the reputation of this sport arising from the unwitting ingestion of drugs in racing, and of the possession offence, which underscores the need for vigilance in ensuring greyhounds are not exposed to inappropriate substances in their kennels.
13. In all the circumstances, the penalty which we have decided to impose is as follows:  
  
Charge 1: \$1,500 fine.  
  
Charge 2: \$1,000 fine with \$750 suspended for 24 months.  
  
Charge 3: \$1,000 fine with \$750 suspended for 24 months.
14. We order that the penalties imposed on Charges 2 and 3 be served concurrently, given that they arise out of similar facts.
15. This makes a total effective penalty of a fine of \$1,750.
16. In addition, Devine Sal is disqualified from Race 9 at Healesville on 2 June 2023 and the finishing order is amended accordingly.

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Kathleen Scully  
Assistant Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal