

2 July 2024

DECISION

GREYHOUND RACING VICTORIA

and

MAX ZAMMIT

- Date of hearing:** 12 June 2024
- Date of decision:** 12 June 2024
- Panel:** Judge Kathryn Kings (Deputy Chairperson) and Mr Des Gleeson.
- Appearances:** Mr Anthony Pearce appeared on behalf of the Stewards.
Mr Max Zammit 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 “Lady Arandt”.
 3. Lady Arandt was nominated to compete in Race 2, SJC CONCRETING, Tier 3 – Grade 7, conducted by the Ballarat Greyhound Racing Club at Ballarat on 28 August 2023 (the Event).

4. On 28 August 2023, you presented Lady Arandt at the Event not free of any prohibited substance, given that:

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

(b) Meloxicam was detected in the Sample.

Plea: Guilty

DECISION

Mr Max Zammit is a trainer licensed by Greyhound Racing Victoria (“GRV”) and a person bound by the Greyhound Australasia Rules (“GAR”). Mr Zammit has been licensed for 25 years.

At all relevant times Mr Zammit was the trainer of the greyhound, “Lady Arandt”. Lady Arandt was nominated to compete in Race 2 at Ballarat on 28 August 2023. Mr Zammit presented the greyhound to the event whilst not free of a prohibited. A post-race urine sample detected the presence of the prohibited substance, meloxicam.

In a report dated 3 November 2023, Chief Veterinarian at GRV, Dr Steven Karamatic, confirmed that meloxicam is a prohibited substance and is capable of affecting the nervous, digestive, musculo skeletal and the urinary system. Meloxicam is placed in the category of therapeutic substances in GRV’s Penalty Guidelines.

A product, “Loxicom”, was listed in on the Swab Irregularity Report found during the kennel inspection. This product contained meloxicam. However, it had expired in 2021 and Mr Zammit informed the Stewards that it had not been used for two years. Dr Karamatic said that unfit for human consumption meat is a potential source of a meloxicam detection in a sample if fed to greyhounds close to racing. It was claimed that human consumption meat was fed to the greyhound in the two days prior to racing. Dr Karamatic said feeding human consumption meat two days prior to the race would reduce, but not eliminate, the risk of detecting meloxicam in a sample. However, based on the statement of the Steward, Ms Lee Fahry, it is unclear whether the practice of feeding human consumption meat occurred prior to the collection of this sample, given there was no human consumption meat at the kennels. Dr Karamatic said that where residues of meloxicam are in meat fed to a greyhound, a positive swab could occur for around five days after feeding that meat. Accumulation could occur when there is repeat feeding of meat containing meloxicam.

Meloxicam can be ingested and is commonly used in veterinary medicine, including in the treatment of sick or lame cattle and therefore the feeding of knackery meat is a risk of inadvertent exposure. Notices to the industry have been communicated online and have been forwarded to users. Dr Karamatic said that meloxicam is capable of affecting the condition and performance of a greyhound and any effect on performance is more likely to be positive, such as by producing an artificially pain free state.

The Tribunal accepts that the feeding of knackery meat is the likely source of contamination. Mr Zammit has pleaded guilty and co-operated with the Stewards. Mr Zammit informed the Tribunal that he no longer feeds his greyhounds knackery meat. He now feeds his greyhounds human consumption meat and kangaroo meat.

In imposing a penalty, we take into account Mr Zammit's plea of guilty, his co-operation 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 his long history in the industry and that he has no prior convictions of a similar nature. We take into account the submissions of the Stewards in relation to penalty.

In all the circumstances, we impose a penalty of a fine of \$1,500, with \$1,000 suspended for 24 months pending no further breach of the relevant Rules.

In addition, Lady Arandt is disqualified from Race 2 at Ballarat on 28 August 2023 and the finishing order is amended accordingly.

Kathleen Scully
Assistant Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal