

22 July 2024

DECISION

GREYHOUND RACING VICTORIA

and

MICHAEL KATSIRIS

- Date of hearing:** 3 July 2024
- Date of decision:** 3 July 2024
- Panel:** Judge Kathryn Kings (Deputy Chairperson) and Dr June Smith.
- Appearances:** Mr Anthony Pearce appeared on behalf of the Stewards.
Mr Michael Katsiris 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 “Gracious Gift”.
 3. Gracious Gift was nominated to compete in Race 11, HOUDINI BOY @ STUD, Grade 5 T3, conducted by The Meadows Greyhound Racing Association at The Meadows on 22 November 2023 (the Event).

4. On 22 November 2023, you presented Gracious Gift at the Event not free of any prohibited substance, given that:

(a) A pre-race sample of urine was taken from Gracious Gift at the Event (the Sample);

(b) Heptaminol was detected in the Sample.

Plea: Guilty

DECISION

Mr Michael Katsiris is a trainer licensed by Greyhound Racing Victoria (“GRV”) and a person bound by the Greyhounds Australasia Rules (“GAR”). Mr Katsiris has been in the industry for approximately three years.

At all relevant times Mr Katsanis was the trainer of the greyhound, “Gracious Gift”. Gracious Gift was nominated to compete in Race 11 at The Meadows on 22 November 2023. Mr Katsanis presented Gracious Gift not free of a prohibited substance, in that a pre-race urine sample detected the presence of heptaminol.

In his report dated 15 March 2024, Dr Steven Karamatic, the Chief Veterinarian at GRV, confirmed that heptaminol is a prohibited substance and capable of affecting the cardiovascular and musculo-skeletal system. It is placed in the category of stimulants depressants and other prohibited substances of the GRV Penalty Guidelines. Dr Karamatic said that, although unlikely compared to other substances, for example procaine, heptaminol if administered to horses, may end up in knackery meat. If a greyhound consumed knackery meat, it could result in a positive sample. During an interview with the Stewards, Mr Katsiris admitted that the greyhound had been fed knackery meat the day before the race. Dr Karamatic referred to Notices to the Industry, published online and forwarded to participants, warning them of the likely contamination from feeding knackery meat. He said heptaminol can affect the condition and performance of a greyhound and any effect on performance is more likely to be positive, such as through its fatigue producing properties.

Mr Katsiris informed the Tribunal that he now feeds his greyhounds fit for human consumption meat. He lives with his father and racing greyhounds is important for their mental health. Greyhound racing is the only source of Mr Katsiris’ income.

In imposing a penalty, we take into account his guilty plea, 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 also take into account his prior history in the industry. Mr Katsiris has a prior conviction of a similar nature. The previous offence was on 18 March 2022 and related to the prohibited substance caffeine and its metabolites theophylline, paraxanthine and theobromine.

In all the circumstances, the Tribunal imposes a suspension of 12 months with 10 months suspended for 24 months pending no further relevant offences in that time. The effective two month suspension is to commence immediately.

In addition, Gracious Gift is disqualified from Race 11 at the Meadows on 22 November 2023 and the finishing order is amended accordingly.

Kathleen Scully
Assistant Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal