

7 March 2024

## **DECISION**

### **GREYHOUND RACING VICTORIA**

**and**

### **ROBERT CAMILLERI**

- Date of hearing:** 28 February 2024
- Panel:** Judge Kathryn Kings (Deputy Chairperson) and Dr Andrew Gould.
- Appearances:** Mr Anthony Pearce appeared on behalf of the Stewards.  
Mr Robert Camilleri 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 “Edi Bale”.
  3. Edi Bale was nominated to compete in Race 4, HAPPY 21ST CALEB GILLOW, Grade 5, conducted by The Meadows Greyhound Racing Association at The Meadows on 5 August 2023 (the Event).
  4. On 5 August 2023, you presented Edi Bale at the Event not free of any prohibited substance, given that:

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

(b) Codeine was detected in the Sample.

**Plea:** Guilty

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## **DECISION**

Mr Robert Camilleri is the trainer of the greyhound “Edi Bale”. Edi Bale was nominated to compete in Race 4 at The Meadows on 5 August 2023. A pre-race sample of urine was taken from the greyhound and codeine was detected in the sample.

Mr Camilleri has been charged with a presentation offence pursuant to Greyhounds Australasia Rule (“GAR”) 141(1). He has pleaded guilty to the charge.

In a report dated 5 October 2023, the Greyhound Racing Victoria (“GRV”) Chief Veterinarian, Dr Steven Karamatic, provided a report. He reported that codeine is not easily placed in a category in the GRV Penalty Guidelines and could fit in any category. However, in his opinion, it is best suited to the category “therapeutic substances”. He confirmed that codeine is a prohibited substance under the GARs and is capable of affecting the condition or performance of a greyhound in a dose dependent way, such as through inducing an artificially pain free state. Participants in the industry have been warned about personal medications in August 2016 and in July 2020. Dr Karamatic was aware that a product found during the kennel inspection, Comfarol Forte, contains 30 mg of codeine per tablet. The evidence is that Mr Camilleri has been prescribed the medication for his back pain.

Mr Camilleri feeds his dogs before he takes his personal medication. He uses a cement mixer for his food preparation, as it is all done in bulk. He mixes kangaroo and chicken meat, which he buys in bulk. When mixing the ingredients, he demonstrated slicing one end of the meat bags and squeezing from the opposite end into the mixer. At no time do his hands touch the meat. He described mixing in wholemeal bread and would normally use his hands, without any gloves. It is the only time he has physical contact with the food. He scoops out the mixture directly into the greyhounds’ feed bowls. Mr Camilleri does not feed the dogs at night, as this is done by his wife.

Mr Camilleri said that he tried not to attend the race meetings in order to reduce the exposure and/or risk. If he attends a race meeting, he would have his personal medication after he returns home in order to reduce the exposure/risk of contamination. Mr Camilleri’s only explanation for the sample irregularity was contamination from his personal medication

through the dogs' feed or when handling, despite his routines and practices to limit the risks. Mr Camilleri said that he will now consider wearing gloves in order to minimise the risk of contamination.

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. We take into account Mr Camilleri's prior offences.

In all the circumstances, we impose a penalty of a three months suspension, wholly suspended for 24 months and impose a \$1,500 fine.

In addition, Edi Bale is disqualified from Race 4 at The Meadows on 23 August 2023 and the finishing order is amended accordingly.

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Kathleen Scully  
Assistant Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal