

28 August 2024

DECISION

GREYHOUND RACING VICTORIA

and

ROSS BOAG

- Date of hearing:** 8 February 2024
- Date of decision:** 8 February 2024
- Panel:** Judge Kathryn Kings (Deputy Chairperson) and Mr Des Gleeson.
- Appearances:** Mr Anthony Pearce appeared on behalf of the Stewards.
Mr Shaun Boag represented Mr Ross Boag.
- 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 “Zambora Topaz”.
 3. Zambora Topaz was nominated to compete in Race 6, GREYHOUND CLUBS VICTORIA, Mixed 4/5, conducted by the Ballarat Greyhound Racing Club at Ballarat on 14 June 2023 (the Event).

4. On 14 June 2023, you presented Zambora Topaz at the Event not free of any prohibited substance, given that:

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

(b) Theobromine was detected in the Sample.

Plea: Guilty

DECISION

Mr Ross Boag is a trainer licensed by Greyhound Racing Victoria (“GRV”) and bound by the Greyhound Australasia Rules (“GAR”). He is a pensioner and had been licensed for less than 12 months at the time of this offence, although the evidence is that he has assisted his son, Mr Shaun Boag, in the industry for approximately 20 years.

Mr Ross Boag is the trainer of the greyhound, “Zambora Topaz”. Zambora Topaz was nominated to compete in Race 6 at Ballarat on 14 June 2023. The greyhound was presented at the event not free of any prohibited substance given that a pre-race sample of urine detected the prohibited substance, theobromine. Thus, Mr Boag has been charged with a presentation offence pursuant to GAR 141(1) and he has pleaded guilty to the Charge.

Dr Steven Karamatic, Chief Veterinarian at GRV, provided a report dated 4 September 2023. Dr Karamatic confirmed that theobromine is a prohibited substance under the GRV Penalty Guidelines and is a metabolite of caffeine. Caffeine is a stimulant which produces wakefulness and increases mental activity. It has been used in greyhounds in the education phase to encourage the chasing desire. It is known to improve the performance of greyhounds. Dr Karamatic said that there are zero Australian Pesticides and Veterinarian Medical Authority (“APVM”) registered products that contain theobromine, although products that contain caffeine could produce it as a metabolite. Chocolate and cocoa contain theobromine. There were no products found during the kennel inspection containing theobromine, as listed in the Swab Irregularity Report.

Participants in the industry have been alerted to the potential risk of inadvertent exposure to prohibited substances through publication in 2016 of Greyhounds Victoria’s Feeding Medication & Supplements Guidelines and the July 2020 Greyhound Monthly Victoria which was emailed to participants and published online.

Mr Boag denied feeding the greyhound chocolate. We accept that there is no real explanation for the finding of theobromine.

In imposing a penalty, we have taken into account Mr Boag's 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. This is Mr Boag's first offence.

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

In addition, Zambora Topaz is disqualified from Race 6 at Ballarat on 14 June 2023 and the finishing order is amended accordingly.

Kathleen Scully
Assistant Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal