

23 April 2024

## **DECISION**

### **GREYHOUND RACING VICTORIA**

**and**

### **SHARLENE WHITFORD**

- Date of hearing:** 28 March 2024
- Panel:** The Hon. Shane Marshall AM (Deputy Chairperson) and Ms Judy Bourke.
- Appearances:** Mr Anthony Pearce appeared on behalf of the Stewards.  
Mr Trevor Whitford represented Ms Sharlene Whitford.
- Charge:** Greyhounds Australasia Rule (“GAR”) 141(1)(a) states:  
(1) The owner, trainer or other person in charge of a greyhound:  
(a) nominated to compete in an Event;  
must present the greyhound free of any prohibited substance.
- Particulars:**
1. You were, at all relevant times, a trainer registered with Greyhound Racing Victoria (GRV) (Member No. 307000) and a person bound by the Greyhounds Australasia Rules and Local Racing Rules.
  2. You were, at all relevant times, the trainer of greyhound “Mt View Ginger” (VIJOB).
  3. Mt View Ginger (VIJOB) was nominated to compete in Race 12, WHISKEY RIOT @ STUD (250+ RANK), Grade 5, conducted by the Shepparton Greyhound Racing Club at Shepparton on 29 September 2022.
  4. On 29 September 2022, you presented Mt View Ginger (VIJOB) at the event not free of any prohibited substance, given that:

(a) A pre-race sample of urine was taken from Mt View Ginger at the event (the Sample);

(b) Nandrolone was detected in the Sample.

**Plea:** Guilty

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## **DECISION**

1. Ms Sharlene Whitford is a registered greyhound trainer. At all material times, she was the trainer of the greyhound, "Mt View Ginger". Mt View Ginger competed in Race 12 at Shepparton on 29 September 2022. The greyhound fell during the race and failed to finish.
2. On arrival at the track, a pre-race sample was taken from the greyhound. It showed the presence of the permanently banned prohibited substance, nandrolone.
3. On 5 December 2022, the greyhound was presented for an out of competition test by urine and by hair. No prohibited substance was detected.
4. At a kennel inspection on 14 December 2022, Ms Whitford told Investigative Stewards from Greyhound Racing Victoria ("GRV") that the likely cause of the positive swab on 29 September 2022 was the drug called "Orabolin", which was dispensed by Dr Michael Bell and last given to the greyhound on 15 October 2022.
5. Nandrolone is an anabolic androgenic steroid. GRV industry veterinarian Dr Steven Karamatic found that nandrolone was not contained in Orabolin tablets and that the tablets were not the source of the positive swab. Orabolin is commonly used to regulate oestrus in female greyhounds. Nandrolone can stimulate red blood cells and has been used to improve performance. Anabolic steroids are performance enhancing. They increase muscle mass, endurance and alter the behaviour of the greyhound. In this case, the source of the positive swab remains a mystery.
6. Dr Karamatic noted that in the 10 years he has been industry veterinarian, this is the first positive swab to nandrolone. He said that if the greyhound did produce nandrolone naturally, she was the first greyhound to do so and was no longer producing nandrolone by 5 December 2022, when there were negative results after testing of blood and hair samples.
7. Ms Whitford at all material times trained in co-operation with her husband, Mr Trevor Whiteford, and still does so. At the material time, she worked full time as a registered

nurse and Mr Whitford was responsible for feeding the greyhounds and providing them with any required medications. However, as the registered trainer, she is responsible under the Rules of Racing for the consequences of presenting a greyhound for an event while not free of a prohibited substance.

8. Stewards of Greyhound Racing Victoria (“GRV”) have charged Ms Whitford under Greyhounds Australasia Rule (“GAR”) 141(1)(a) with presenting a greyhound for an event while not free of a prohibited substance. Ms Whitford has pleaded guilty to the offence.
9. In setting a penalty, we take into account the issue of general deterrence and the importance of keeping performance enhancing anabolic steroids out of greyhound racing. We also take into account the significance of maintaining a level playing field in the industry by excluding prohibited substances, especially permanently banned prohibited substances. We also take into account the significance of the offending involving a permanently prohibited substance.
10. We additionally take into account Ms Whitford’s excellent, unblemished record in her 10 years of racing and her good character, as well as the guilty plea and the efforts made on her behalf to seek to establish the cause of the positive swab, notwithstanding that they have been discounted by expert evidence.
11. In all the circumstances, we impose a penalty of 12 months disqualification, with six months suspended for 24 months pending no further relevant offending during that time. The suspended portion of the penalty takes into account the guilty plea, as well as the efforts taken on behalf of Ms Whitford to find the source of the positive swab. The sentence shall not commence to operate until 19 April 2024.
12. In addition, Mt View Ginger is disqualified from race 12 at Shepparton on 29 September 2022 and the finishing order is amended accordingly.

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Kathleen Scully  
Assistant Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal