

22 January 2024

## DECISION

### GREYHOUND RACING VICTORIA

and

### TROY DORRINGTON

- Date of hearing:** 8 January 2024
- Panel:** Judge Marilyn Harbison (Deputy Chairperson) and Mr Des Gleeson.
- Appearances:** Mr Anthony Pearce appeared on behalf of the Stewards.  
Mr Troy Dorrington 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:** **Charge 1**
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 "Crown Ella".
  3. Crown Ella was nominated to compete in Race 12, PUP TO TRACK DAMSELS DASH, Grade 5, conducted by the Geelong Greyhound Racing Club at Geelong on 3 February 2023 (the Event).

4. On 3 February 2023, you presented Crown Ella at the Event not free of any prohibited substance, given that:

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

(b) Dexamethasone was detected in the Sample.

**Charge 2**

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 Crown Ella.

3. Crown Ella was nominated to compete in Race 12, PUP TO TRACK DAMSELS DASH, Grade 5, conducted by the Geelong Greyhound Racing Club at Geelong on 3 February 2023 (the Event).

4. On 3 February 2023, you presented Crown Ella at the Event not free of any prohibited substance, given that:

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

(b) Gamma-hydroxyphenylbutazone was detected in the Sample.

**Pleas:** Guilty

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**DECISION**

1. Mr Troy Dorrington is a registered greyhound trainer and the trainer of the greyhound "Crown Ella". Mr Dorrington faces two charges under Greyhounds Australasia Rule ("GAR") 141(1), regarding the presentation of this greyhound for an event as described in the particulars above while not free of a prohibited substance.

2. The first charge relates to the substance dexamethazone. The second charge relates to the substance gamma-hydroxyphenylbutazone, which is known in the industry as “bute”.
3. Mr Dorrington has pleaded guilty to each of the offences. The greyhound was entered by Mr Dorrington in a race at Geelong on the 3 February 2023. A sample was taken of urine before the race. The sample contained two substances. The first was dexamethasone. The second was bute.
4. The first charge relates to the presence of dexamethasone in the urine. The second charge relates to the presence of bute. Each of the charges relate to the same race, the same sample, and thus essentially the same set of facts.
5. Dexamethasone is a prohibited substance under the GARs. There are 13 registered medications that contain this drug and eight are registered for use in dogs. The drug is an anti-inflammatory steroid and is used commonly in veterinary medicine for providing pain relief. Thus, it has the capacity to inhibit the sensation of pain and increase the fatigue threshold of the dog.
6. Bute is also a prohibited substance. There are sixteen prescription drugs containing this substance and four of them are registered for use in dogs. It is also an anti-inflammatory drug used commonly in veterinary medicine for post operative pain relief. It is also used for conditions such as osteoarthritis.
7. There are no products that contain both these drugs. It is not likely that a steroid would be prescribed for use together with a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug. There would be no medical reason to do so.
8. Both are classified as therapeutic substances under the Rules. Both, by inhibiting pain, would be likely to have a positive effect on the performance of a racing greyhound.
9. Mr Dorrington was interviewed by the Stewards on the 10 March 2023. He could not identify any treatments or medications that he had used which contained either substance, although he said that he did take a number of personal medications. He said that he had no idea how either substance could have been introduced into the dog and he would review all his personal medication to see if any contained these substances.
10. Mr Dorrington was interviewed by the Stewards again on the 13 June 2023. He said at that time that he had realised that he was using a Dimethyl sulfoxide ointment for a sore tendon on the greyhound and that he had rubbed it into her front leg up until about four days before the race. It was prescribed by his local vet.

11. However, Mr Dorrington told us at the hearing that he had since ruled out this ointment as being a potential contaminant. He thought it was more likely that the contamination had arisen from some chicken mince that he had bought from a local pet shop. It had been his understanding that chicken mince was clear of contaminants, but he had now spoken to the pet shop owner who had conceded that the chicken meat may have been contaminated from beef mince that was also sold at the shop.
12. This pet shop was also the source of some beef mince which Mr Dorrington had purchased in early 2022. At a race meeting in about June 2022, another of his greyhounds had tested positive to a therapeutic substance, phenobarbitone, and Mr Dorrington was subsequently fined \$1,000 on that occasion.
13. This conviction is not strictly speaking a prior conviction. However, it is relevant to our sentencing today, because from early July 2022, Mr Dorrington was put on notice by being charged that there was a problem with meat purchased from that shop. His explanation to us was that he had thought that the problem related only to beef mince, but clearly the chicken mince from that shop was also contaminated. Not surprisingly, he has now ceased purchasing pet shop mince and now feeds only human grade meat to his dogs.
14. Mr Dorrington has been an owner of greyhounds since 2004 and a public trainer since 2019.
15. We accept that, since this offending came to his attention, he has changed his dog feeding regime. He has accepted full responsibility for his actions by closely examining the possibility of contamination of the meats he was using.
16. Mr Dorrington works as a tip truck driver, but has no work at the moment because the building industry is not operating over Christmas. He submitted that he should be suspended rather than fined because he presently has no income.
17. Our view is that, given the previous relevant offence, and given the seriousness of the charges, a substantial fine is the most appropriate disposition.
18. In setting penalties, we take into account general and specific deterrence and the importance of keeping a level playing field by aiming for a drug free industry. We also note the many warnings given to the industry in relation to buying meat from a knackery or that is otherwise suspect. We also take into account the guilty pleas and Mr Dorrington's total cooperation with Stewards.
19. In all the circumstances, we impose the following penalties:

Charge 1: \$2,000 fine.

Charge 2: \$2,000 fine to be concurrent with the penalty imposed on Charge 1.

20. The penalty on Charge 2 is concurrent with Charge 1 as both charges arise out of the same set of facts. This makes an effective penalty of \$2,000 in total.
21. In addition, Crown Ella is disqualified from Race 12 at the Geelong Greyhound Racing Club on 3 February 2023 and the finishing order is amended accordingly.

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Kathleen Scully  
Acting Registrar, Victorian Racing Tribunal