



INQUIRY INTO THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING REGISTERED TRAINER MR. MICHAEL HOOPER'S ATTENDANCE AT THE DAPTO GREYHOUND CLUB ON 15 JULY 2021 WHILST SUSPENDED.

By Video Conference

Stewards: Mr. W. Birch (Chairman)

Mr. M. Tutt

24 September 2021

Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission (GWIC) Stewards today conducted a hearing to determine charges issued against Mr. Michael Hooper in relation to his attendance at the Dapto Greyhound Club on 15 July 2021 whilst under suspension.

The following charges were issued at the hearing:

Charge 1 – GAR 86(o) Offences – (particulars amended)

Mr. Michael Hooper :

- (i) was a registered trainer and a person bound by the Greyhound Racing Rules;
- (ii) On or about 25 June 2021 he was served with a Notice of Disciplinary Action suspending your registration;
- (iii) On 15 July 2021, whilst under a suspension and therefore subject to the impositions of a suspended person, did attend the Dapto Greyhound Club and permit to trial, the greyhound Cawbourne Taco of which, he was the trainer; and
- (iv) By permitting this greyhound to trial, whilst being a suspended person, is in the opinion of the stewards or Controlling Body, improper and constitutes misconduct.

Plea – Not Guilty

Found Guilty

Charge 2 - GAR 86(f)(iii) Offences

That on 15 July 2021, Mr. Michael Hooper did engage in contemptuous behaviour towards the Controlling Body, or a member of the Controlling Body when participating in an interview with GWIC Stewards Mr. Jason Hodder and Mr. Nathan Meyn.

Plea – Not Guilty

Found Guilty

Penalty

In determining penalty Stewards considered Mr. Hooper's disciplinary history, personal circumstances, and forthright evidence. Having done so, Stewards believed the below penalties to be appropriate.

Charge 1 – 3 months suspension.

The greyhound 'Cawbourne Taco' was registered to Mr Hooper as trainer when he attended the Dapto Greyhound Club. As a suspended person, Mr Hooper was under the restrictions of Rule 99(2)(b) which provides that a person who was suspended shall not permit a greyhound of which that person is the trainer, to compete in an Event. An Event includes a trial. The conduct was considered sufficiently serious to warrant a suspension, particularly as the Regulator needs to ensure that the penalties that it imposes are given effect. In the circumstances, and noting Mr Hooper pleaded not guilty, it was determined that an appropriate penalty was that of a suspension for a period of 3 months.

Charge 2 – \$1000 fine, with \$500 suspended.

It was determined to issue a fine in the sum of \$1,000 with \$500 suspended for a period of 12 months, conditional on Mr Hooper not breaching this, or a similar rule, in that period.

Additionally, consideration was given to a current suspended penalty, imposed on Mr Hooper on 25 June 2021 under the same Rule. The penalty, which included a wholly suspended period of suspension, was not activated on this occasion, as regard was had to the circumstances of the present conduct, and that of the conduct to which the penalty of 25 June 2021 was imposed. The penalty under Rule 86(f)(iii) imposed on 25 June 2021 related to Mr Hooper's conduct when using social media. In the present matter, the conduct involved contemptuous behaviour during an interview with Commission Stewards and as a result, the decision makers felt that the suspended penalty from 25 June 2021 could be distinguished from the present matters and determined not to activate the suspended portion of the suspension from 25 June 2021.

Relevant Rules

Rule 86, Greyhound Racing Rules

A person (including an official) shall be guilty of an offence if the person –

(o) has, in relation to a greyhound, or greyhound racing, done a thing, or omitted to do a thing, which in the opinion of the Stewards, or Controlling Body, as the case may be, is negligent, dishonest, corrupt, fraudulent or improper, or constitutes misconduct.

Rule 86, Greyhound Racing Rules

A person (including an official) shall be guilty of an offence if the person-

(f) engages in, publishes or causes to be published, broadcasts or causes to be broadcast, the use of any contemptuous, unseemly, improper, insulting, or offensive language, conduct or behaviour in any manner towards, or in relation to –

(iii) the Controlling Body, or a member of the Controlling Body.