

Analysis of greyhound racing injuries

1 January – 31 March 2024



Foreword

The NSW Greyhound Welfare & Integrity Commission has published data since 2018 about injuries sustained by greyhounds while racing in NSW.

Reports are published:

- Quarterly, providing timely updates
- Annually, providing analysis of long-term trends

The Commission adopted a nationally agreed convention for classifying injuries in 2022 which can be viewed [here](#).

Together, these reports contribute to a growing body of evidence which can assist the industry in making evidence-based decisions with the aim of reducing the incidence and severity of greyhound racing injuries.

In keeping with this, in February 2023, the Commission convened a Summit comprising all key greyhound racing industry stakeholders to develop strategies for reducing serious racing injuries.

As a result of the Summit, the NSW Greyhound racing industry has committed itself to piloting a range of race injury reduction strategies. Those strategies and the timeframes for implementation are set out within the industry's Race Injury Reduction Action Plan. A copy of the Plan can be found at: <https://www.gwic.nsw.gov.au/welfare/race-injury-reduction-action-plan>

The Commission will publish the statistical results of the pilots conducted.

** This report has been republished with Table 2 updated to include one additional 'euthanasia by private veterinarian after sustaining injury at race meeting,' which was identified after further auditing of data.*

Key comments

- This quarter's injury total of 1154 is 3% higher than October – December 2023's total of 1121. The recent rise in category C and D injuries, despite a decrease in Categories A, B and E, has brought the rate of injury from 43.8 per 1000 starts to 46.5.
- Category E injuries have dropped from the previous quarter's relatively high rate of 0.3 per 1000 starts to 0.2. With this, FY2024 maintains the lowest quarterly rates of on-track deaths on record.
- Of this quarter's 108 serious injuries, the Race Injury Review Panel identified that 80%, occurred on turns, while 45% of the total resulted from greyhound factors.
- GWIC will explore potential reasons for the observed increase in injury over the last 18 months.

Key data this quarter

Injuries sustained at race meetings.

Table 1: Races and injuries this quarter					
REPORTING PERIOD		1 January – 31 March 2024			
Race meetings		311			
Races		3441			
Starts (times a greyhound has started a race)		24812			
Individual greyhounds raced		4492			
Average starts per greyhound		5.5			
Injury category	Incapacitation period (days)	Number of injuries	% injured per injury category	Cumulative total of injury category	Injuries per 1,000 starts
Category A	none	125	10.8%	10.8%	5.0
Category B	3-10	398	34.5%	45.3%	16.0
Category C	11 - 27	370	32.1%	77.4%	14.9
Category D	28 - 90	256	22.2%	99.6%	10.3
Category E	Euthanased/died	5	0.4%	100.0%	0.2
Total		1154			46.5
Category F	*	108	9.4%		4.3
Category G	+	1046	90.6%		42.2

* Category F includes all Category E incidents as well as those within Category D that are deemed to be of a particularly serious nature. These rarely involve muscle injuries, and always exclude physical complications that result from factors other than racing, such as tick paralysis. Please refer to [this link](#) for further information.

+ Category G Includes any injury in Categories A to C and those in Category D that do not fit the definition of a Serious injury (i.e. Category F).

Track-related mortality not as part of race meeting

GWIC veterinarians follow up with trainers about the outcomes for greyhounds which have suffered a 60–90-day Category D race injury.

Instances of euthanasia by a private veterinarian or sudden death away from the racetrack, after sustaining injury at a race meeting, are counted as Category D injuries in the table above and included in Table 2 below.

More information on greyhounds medically euthanased away from the racetrack can be found in the Commission's quarterly Greyhound Life Cycle Report, which is available on the Commission's website.

Table 2: Track related mortality not as part of race meeting

Reporting Period 1 January – 31 March 2024	
Reported euthanased by private veterinarian after sustaining injury at race meeting	4
Reported euthanased or sudden death after sustaining injury in unofficial trial at racetrack	0
Reported euthanased or sudden death after sustaining injury in official trial at racetrack	0

Trends

Controlled for seasonal variation.

Injury rates are correlated with season, with hotter quarters 1 and 4 in each year usually having higher injury rates than cooler quarters 2 and 3. Comparing this quarter's data with the same quarter in previous years reduces the influence of season and provides a more accurate picture of long-term trends in injury rates.

Note: reporting prior to Q3 2018 was by GRNSW and is not directly comparable due to differences in data definitions and recording.

Figure 1: Injury trends for same quarter - Categories A to E and total

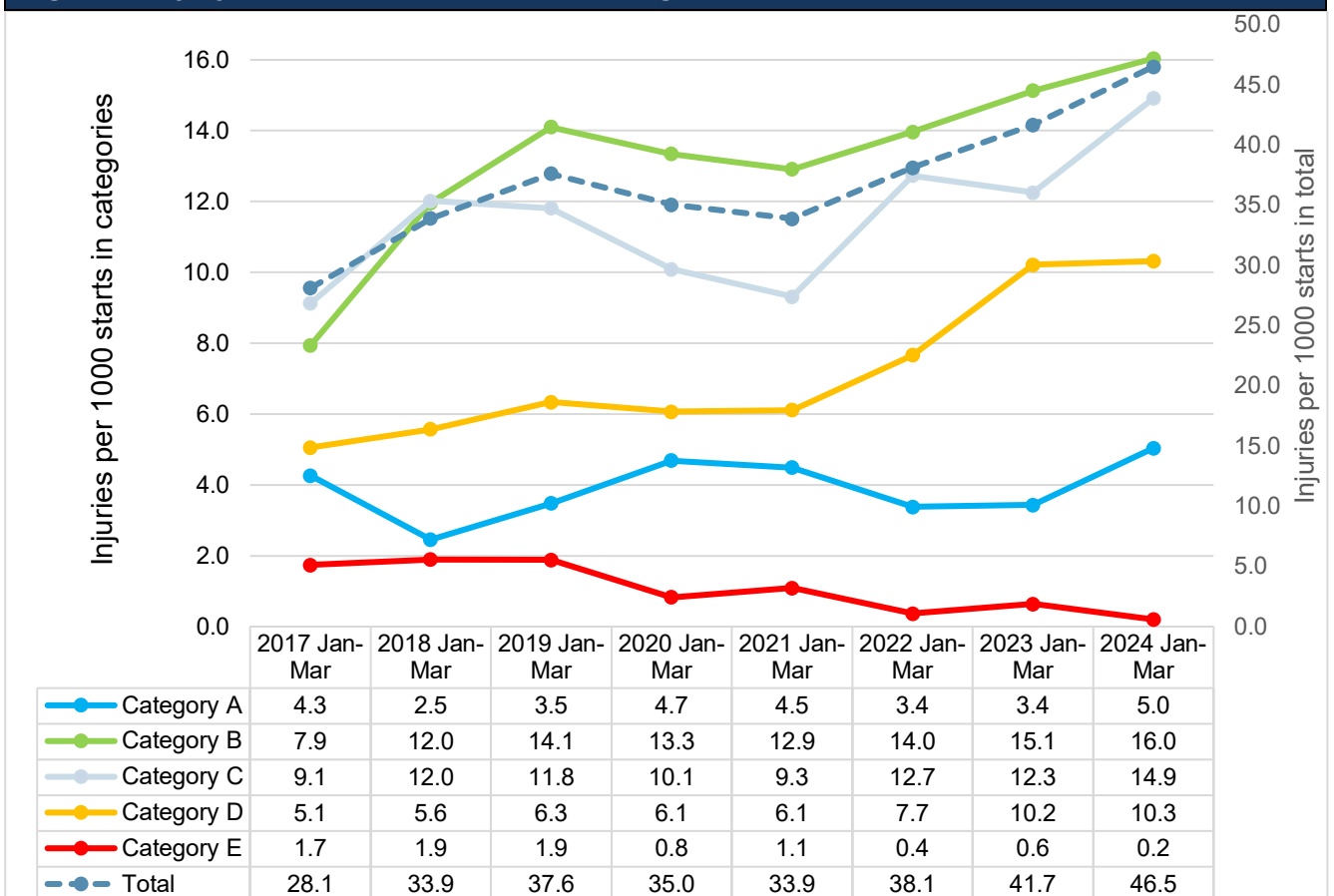


Figure 2: Injury trends for same quarter – Categories F and G

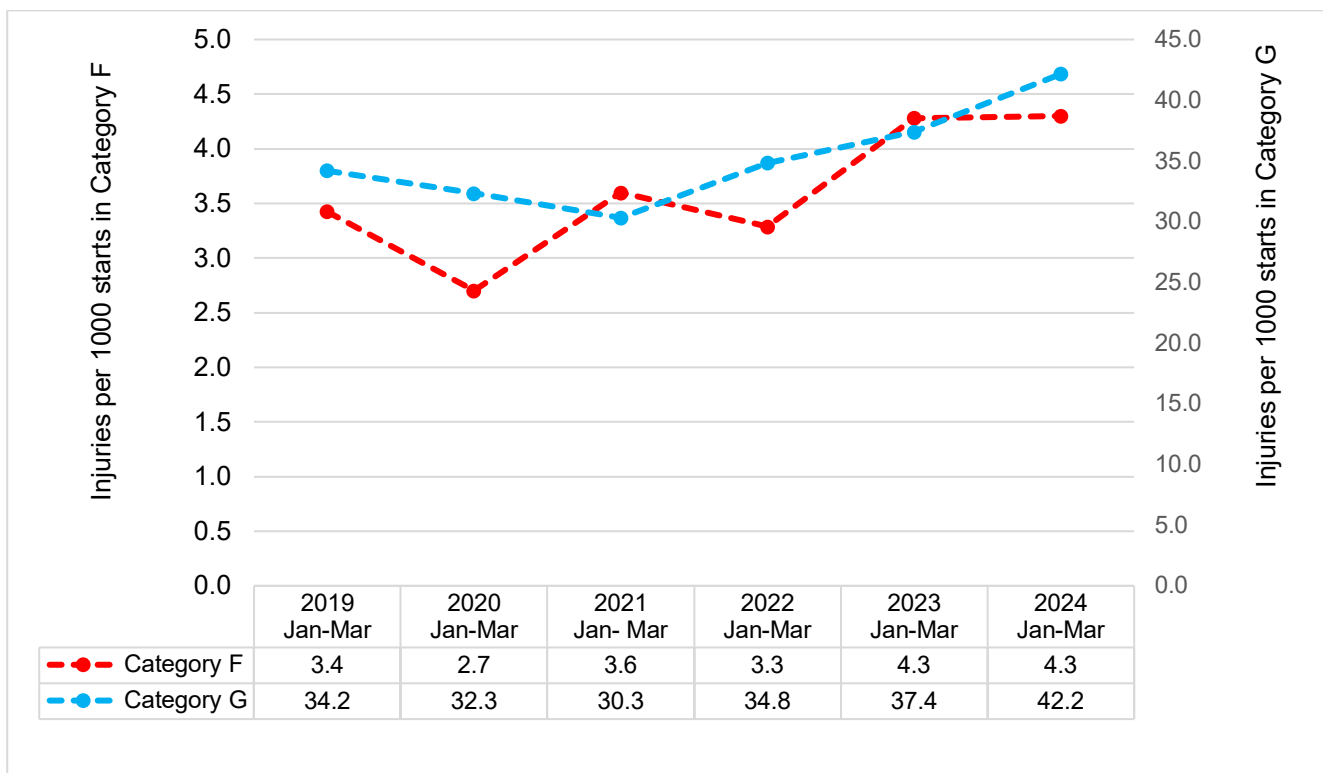


Table 3: This quarter compared to the same quarter in previous years	
Injury type	This quarter compared to same quarter in previous years
Category A	Sharply increased after the 2022-2023 period of stability
Category B	Maintained the linear ascension since 2021
Category C	Steeply rose to counter the decline between 2022 and 2023
Category D	Tapered off to end the growth that followed 2021
Category E	Heavily dropped consistent with FY2024's exceptionally low rates
Total	Continued to grow for the highest rate on record.
Category F	Equal to 2023's rate of 4.3, forming a plateau after a gradual increase since 2020.
Category G	Highest on record, with a rising rate of increase since 2022.
Comment	
GWIC is exploring potential reasons for the observed increases in injury rates.	

Long-term trends

To control seasonal variation in injury data, long-term injury trends are presented as 12-month running averages.

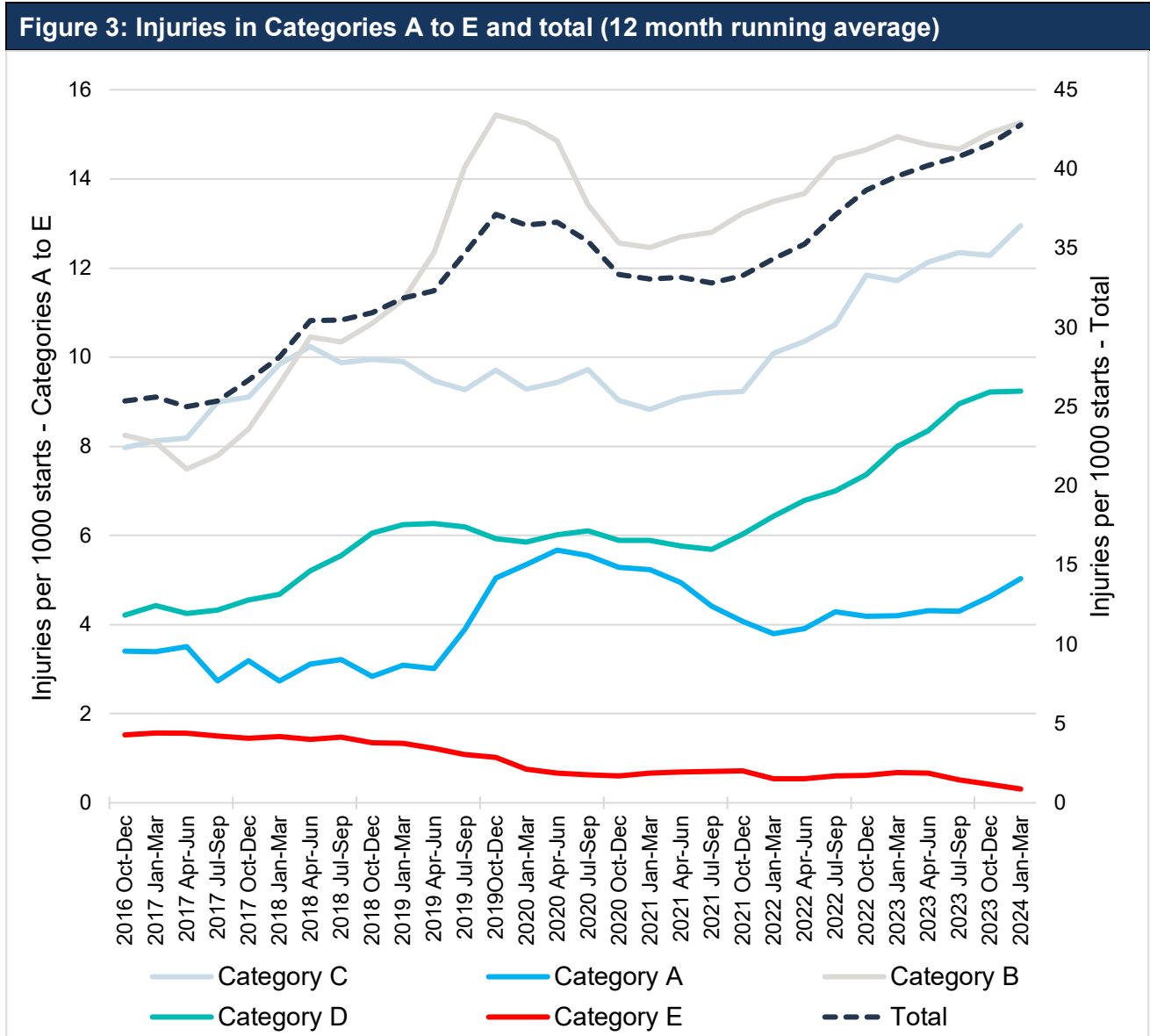


Figure 4: Injuries in Categories F and G (12 month running average)

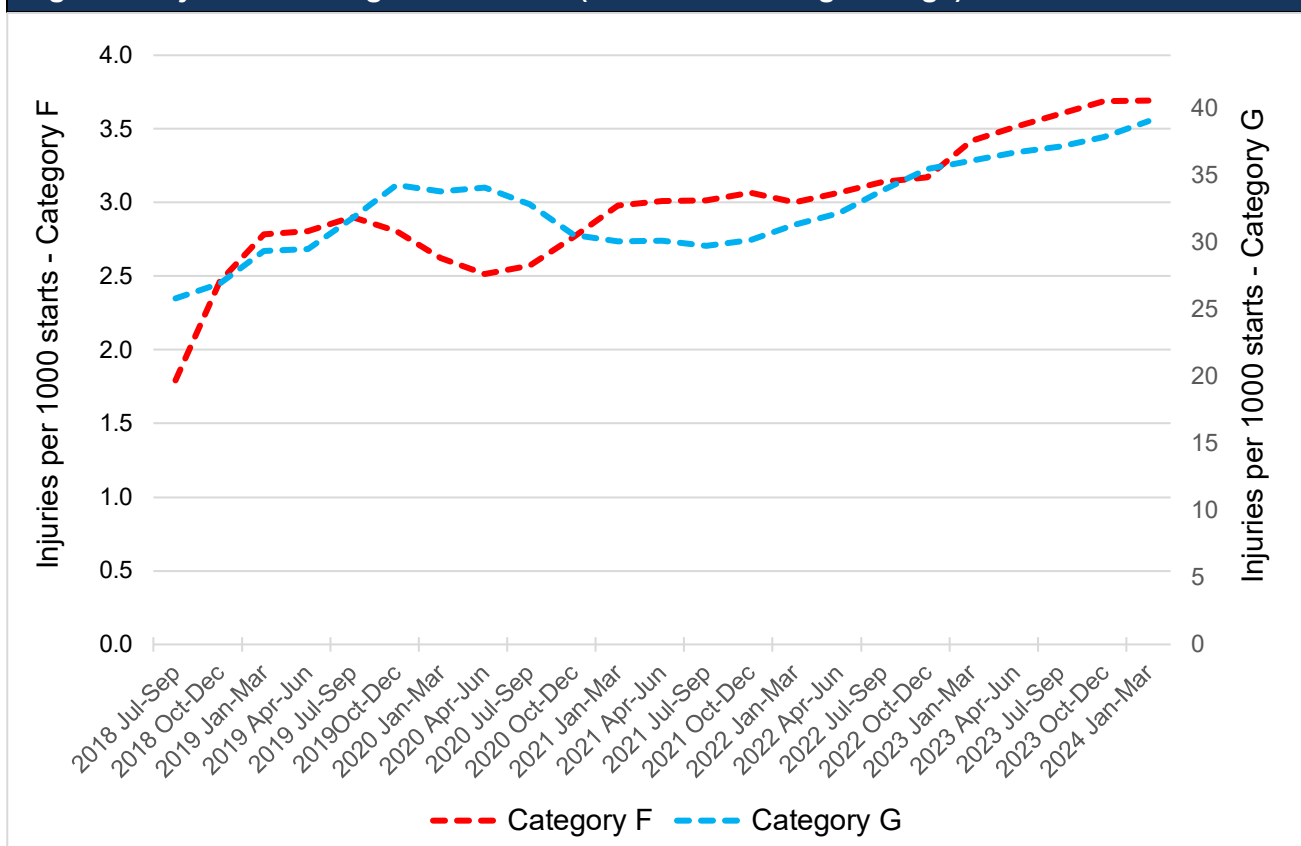


Table 4: Long term trends (based on 12 months running average)

Category A	Inclined since the beginning of FY2024 after two relatively steady years
Category B	Closely follows the overall injury-rate increase since early 2021
Category C	Growing at erratic rates after 2020
Category D	Plateaued to end the consistent rise that began in late 2021
Category E	Much lower rates in FY2024 than ever before
Total	Increased since 2021 for the highest rate on record
Category F	Experienced its first quarterly decline since Jan-Mar 2022
Category G	Highest on record, with a more recent growing rate of increase
Comment	
GWIC is exploring potential reasons for the observed increase in injury in the last 18 months.	

Race Injury Review Panel Analysis

There are many causes of injuries in racing greyhounds and the relative importance and interactions of causative factors vary. Causative factors can be divided into:

1. **Greyhound factors:** genetics, nutrition, physical growth and development, fitness, race preparation, racing form and previous injury history.
2. **Track factors:** design and surface characteristics; environmental influences.
3. **Race factors:** race distance, racing incidents (collisions) and number of greyhounds in a race.

Category E and F injuries which occurred during this quarter were reviewed by the Race Injury Review Panel, continuing work begun in February 2019. The Panel assesses factors that may have contributed to each injury and where possible attributes it to greyhound, track, or race factors. Over time, the data collected will assist in informing prevention strategies and regulatory steps aimed at minimising the incidence of racing injuries.

Table 5 summarises the results of Panel deliberations and data for this quarter. In some instances, more than one factor may contribute to an injury, such as track and race factors. Where insufficient evidence is available (such as in trials or races where no video footage is available) the possible contributions to the injury are not considered by the Panel, but those greyhounds may be included in counts of the gender, age, distance, location, and race history of injured greyhounds.

Table 5: Review of Category E and F injuries this quarter			
	Category E	Category F minus Category E	Category F
Race Injury Review Panel assessment of contributing factors to injuries*			
Greyhound factors	1	48	49
Race factors	4	54	58
Track factors	0	0	0
Factors not assessed	0	1	1
Gender of injured greyhound			
Female	1	39	40
Male	4	64	68
Age of injured greyhound to nearest 6 months			
1.5 years	0	2	2
2 years	1	18	19
2.5 years	3	21	24
3 years	1	38	39
3.5 years	0	12	12
4 years	0	9	9
4.5 years	0	3	3
> 5 years	0	0	0
Distance of race in which greyhound was injured			
Under 300m	0	6	6
300-399m	3	57	60
400-499m	0	17	17
500-600m	2	21	23
Over 600m	0	2	2
Location on track at which injury appears to have occurred			
Soon after start	0	5	5
Straight	0	10	10
Turn	4	82	86
After finish but before catching pen	1	1	2
Catching pen	0	4	4
Other	0	1	1
Race history of injured greyhounds			
Average and range of starts in last 30 days	3.0, 2-3	2.0, 0-5	2.5, 0-5
Average and range of starts in last 60 days	5.5, 4-7	4.0, 0-11	5.0, 0-11
Average and range of career starts	20.0, 8-31	31.5, 1-163	26.0, 1-163