



GREYHOUND WELFARE & INTEGRITY COMMISSION
DISCIPLINARY ACTION DECISION

Warning: This report contains language which some readers may find offensive.

Date of decision:	7 June 2021
Decision-makers:	A/Senior Legal Officer, Alice Stafford, Chief Inspector, David OShannessy and Senior Steward, Dean Degan
Name of relevant person:	Mr Michael Harris
Track:	Lismore
Date:	24 November 2020
Rule no.:	Rule 86(g); Rule 86(q)
Charge(s):	(1) On 24 November 2020, Mr Harris abused a Steward of the Controlling Body. (2) On 24 November 2020, Mr Harris engaged in conduct that was detrimental to the interest, welfare, image, control and promotion of greyhound racing.
Disciplinary action taken:	Charge 1: 4-and-a-half-month suspension with 3 months suspended for 12-months (conditionally). Charge 2: 3-month suspension (wholly and conditionally suspended).

DECISION:

1. On 24 November 2020, Mr Harris attended the scheduled race meet at Lismore Greyhound racecourse in the capacity of catcher for a greyhound that is owned and trained by another registered participant.
2. Following race 3, and prior to the commencement of race 4 (which was the race in which the greyhound was drawn to compete), there was an electrical storm. Race 4 was delayed due to the storm.
3. Commission Stewards determined that it was safe to recommence racing with the weather conditions safe for racing.
4. During the running of the race, the greyhound for which Mr Harris was engaged to catch was injured and as a result did not complete the race. Mr Harris went to collect the greyhound from the racetrack.

5. A short time later, Mr Harris then moved towards and began yelling at a Commission Steward and said words to the effect of:
“You fucking bastard...fucking bastard.”
“You’ve ruined my fucking dog, you’ve fucking killed my dog.”
“Fuck you.”
6. Mr Harris then placed the greyhound on the ground, moved towards the Steward and continued to yell at the Steward.
7. This incident occurred in front of a crowd of people, including members of the public.
8. After considering the evidence, the Commission charged Mr Harris with breaches of Rules 86(g) and 86(p). These rules respectively read:

Rule 86(g)

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

...

- (g) wilfully assaults, obstructs, impedes, abuses, interferes, threatens or insults the Controlling Body, any member of the Controlling Body, a club, any member of the committee of a club, any Steward or any other official of the Controlling Body or a club in or at any place including in or in the vicinity of the place where the inquiry is to take place, is taking place or has taken place;

Rule 86(q)

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

...

- (q) commits or omits to do any act or engages in conduct which is in any way detrimental or prejudicial to the interest, welfare, image, control or promotion of greyhound racing-

9. Mr Harris admitted the charges, provided written submissions and elected to have the disciplinary proceeding conducted in writing.
10. The Commission found the charges proven and took the following disciplinary action against Mr Harris:

Charge 1 (Rule 86(g)):

To suspend Mr Harris’ attendant registration for a period of 4 and a half months, with 3 months suspended for 12 months on the condition he does not breach Rule 86(g) or any like Rules during that 12-month period; and

Charge 2 (Rule 86(q)):

To suspend Mr Harris' attendant registration for a period of 3 months, wholly suspended for 12 months on the condition he does not breach Rule 83(q) or any like Rules during that 12-month period.

11. In taking this disciplinary action, the Commission considered all evidence, including:

- The length of time Mr Harris has participated in the industry, being from 2003 to 2013 and again from 2019, approximately 12 years;
- Mr Harris has no prior matters in his disciplinary history;
- Mr Harris' admission of the charges at the earliest opportunity;
- NSW greyhound racing precedents; and
- The submissions made by Mr Harris in mitigation of penalty, including his personal circumstances, the particular circumstances leading up to the offending (in particular Mr Harris' emotional situation having just attended to his injured greyhound) and his remorse.

.....End.....