

# Analysis of greyhound racing injuries

1 July – 30 September 2023



## 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,' and one extra event for 'euthanased or sudden death after sustaining injury in unofficial trial at racetrack.' These were identified after further auditing of data.*

## Key comments

- An increase in Categories A, B, C and D injuries has contributed to a slight rise in the total rate of injury (40.4 per 1000 starts) compared with the previous quarter (Apr – June 2023 at 40.2 per 1000 starts).
- The rate of Category E injuries (0.2 per 1000 starts) has significantly declined from the previous quarter's relatively high rate of 0.6 per 1000 starts.
- GWIC will explore potential reasons for the observed increase in injury over the last 6 months, including the very high rainfall across much of the state.
- Of the serious injuries reviewed by the Race Injury Review Panel, 65% occurred on turns, while 63% of the total were attributed to race events such as collisions.

# Key data this quarter

## Injuries sustained at race meetings

Table 1: Races and injuries this quarter					
REPORTING PERIOD		1 July – 30 September 2023			
Race meetings		314			
Races		3577			
Starts (times a greyhound has started a race)		26394			
Individual greyhounds raced		4759			
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	134	12.6%	12.6%	5.1
Category B	3-10	381	35.7%	48.3%	14.4
Category C	11 - 27	315	29.5%	77.9%	11.9
Category D	28 - 90	232	21.8%	99.6%	8.8
Category E	Euthanased/died	4	0.4%	100.0%	0.2
<b>Total</b>		1066			40.4
Category F	*	93	8.7%		3.5
Category G	+	973	91.3%		36.9

\* 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 serious Category D injury in a race.

Instances of euthanasia by a private veterinarian, away from the racetrack, after sustaining injury at a race meeting are counted as Category D injuries in the table above as the greyhound was not euthanased on track.

Instances of euthanasia or sudden death after sustaining injury in a trial at a racetrack are not included in the table above but 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**

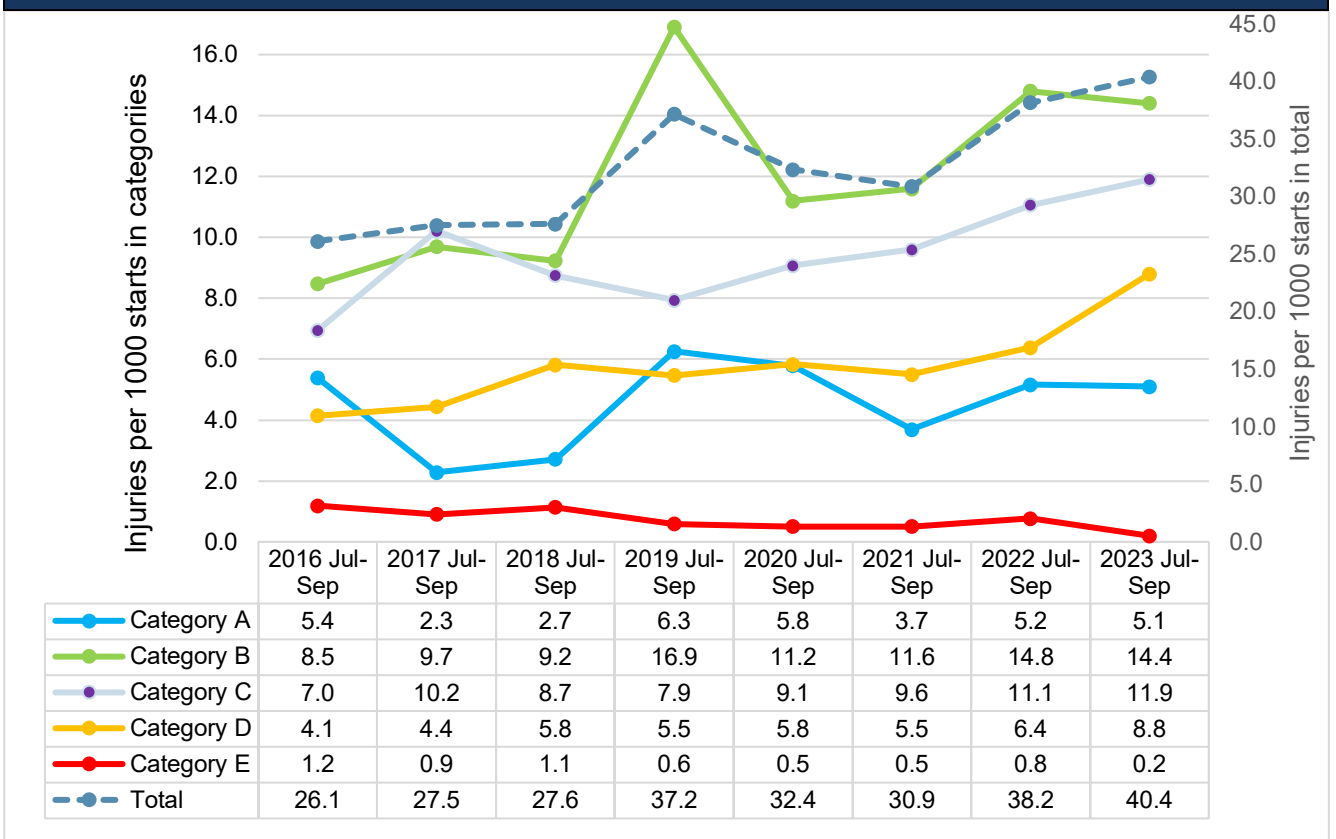
Reporting Period		1 July – 30 September 2023
Reported euthanased by private veterinarian after sustaining injury at race meeting		4
Reported euthanased or sudden death after sustaining injury in unofficial trial at racetrack		2
Reported euthanased or sudden death after sustaining injury in official trial at racetrack		0

## Trends

### Controlled for seasonal variation

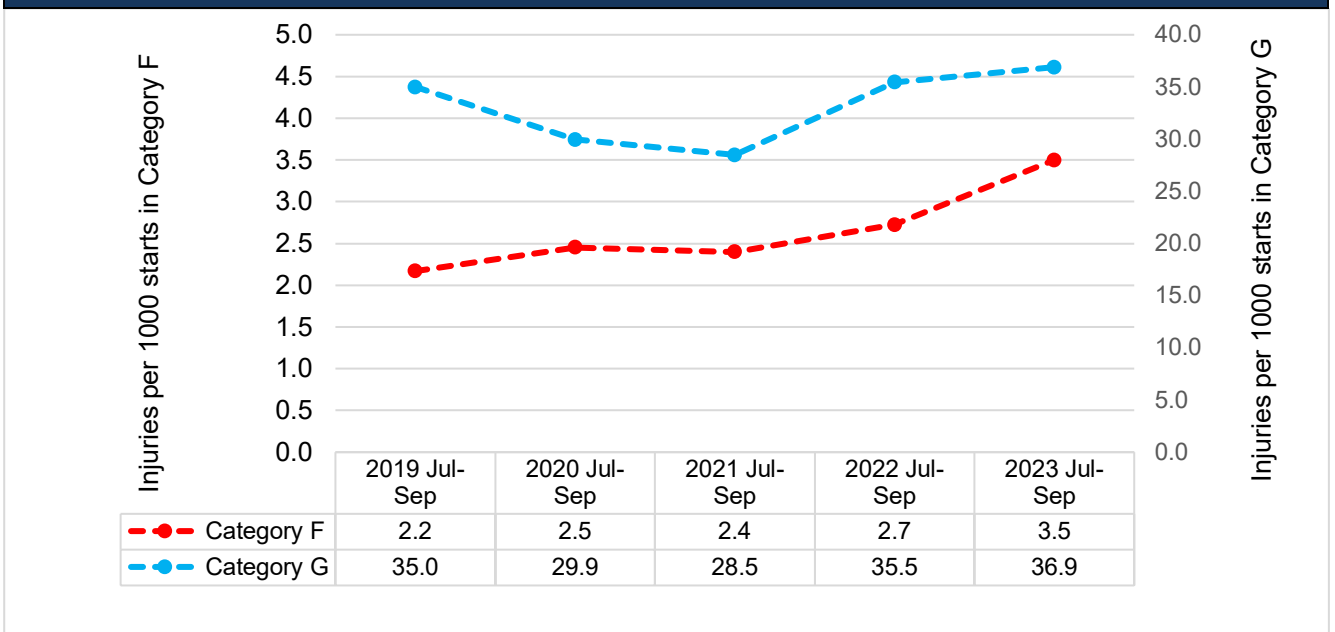
Injury rates are correlated with season, with hotter quarters 1 and 4 in each year usually having higher injury rates than cooler quarters 2 and 3. Comparing this quarter's data with the same quarter in previous years reduces the influence of season and provides a more accurate picture of long-term trends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

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



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

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

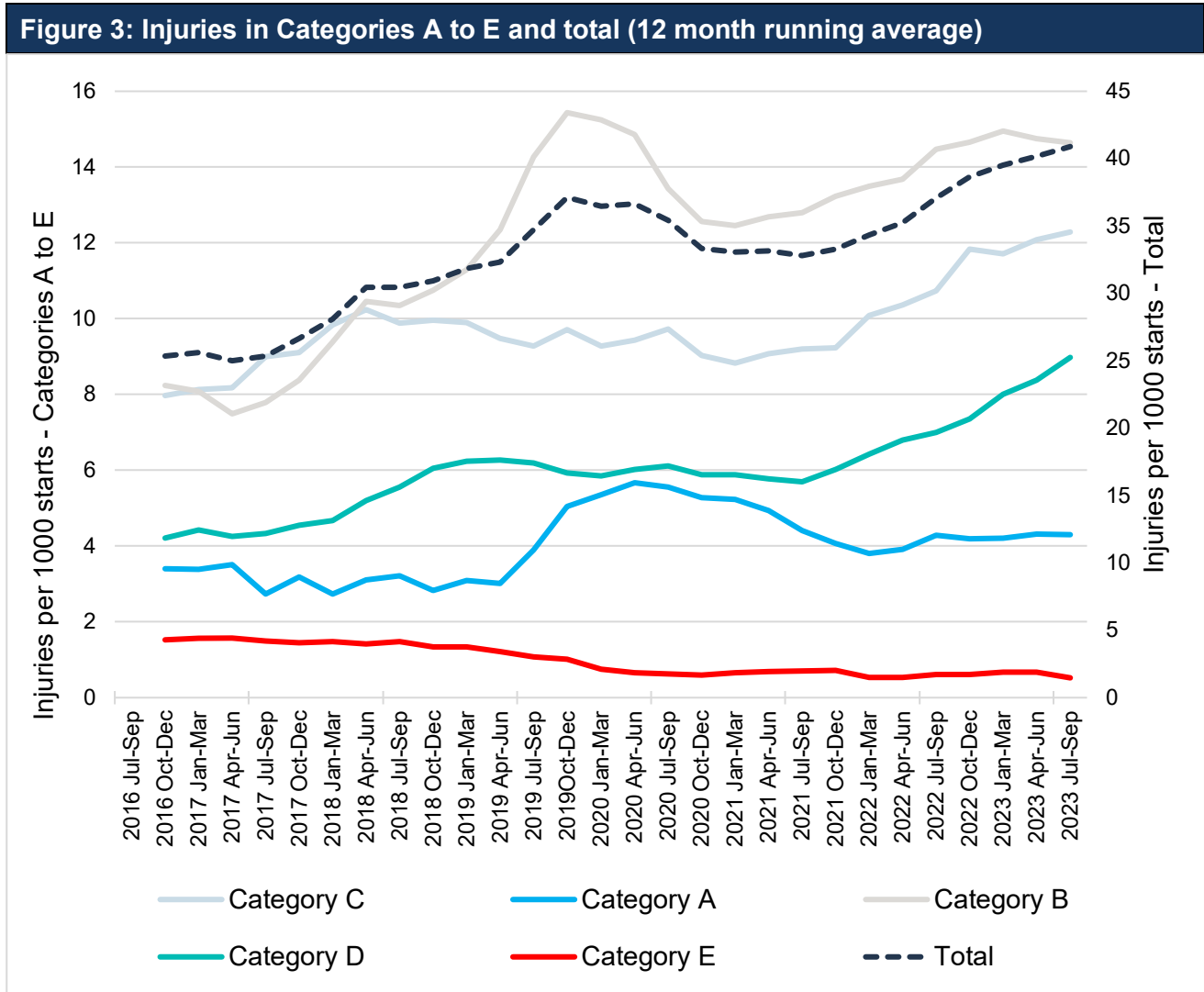


**Table 3: This quarter compared to the same quarter in previous years**

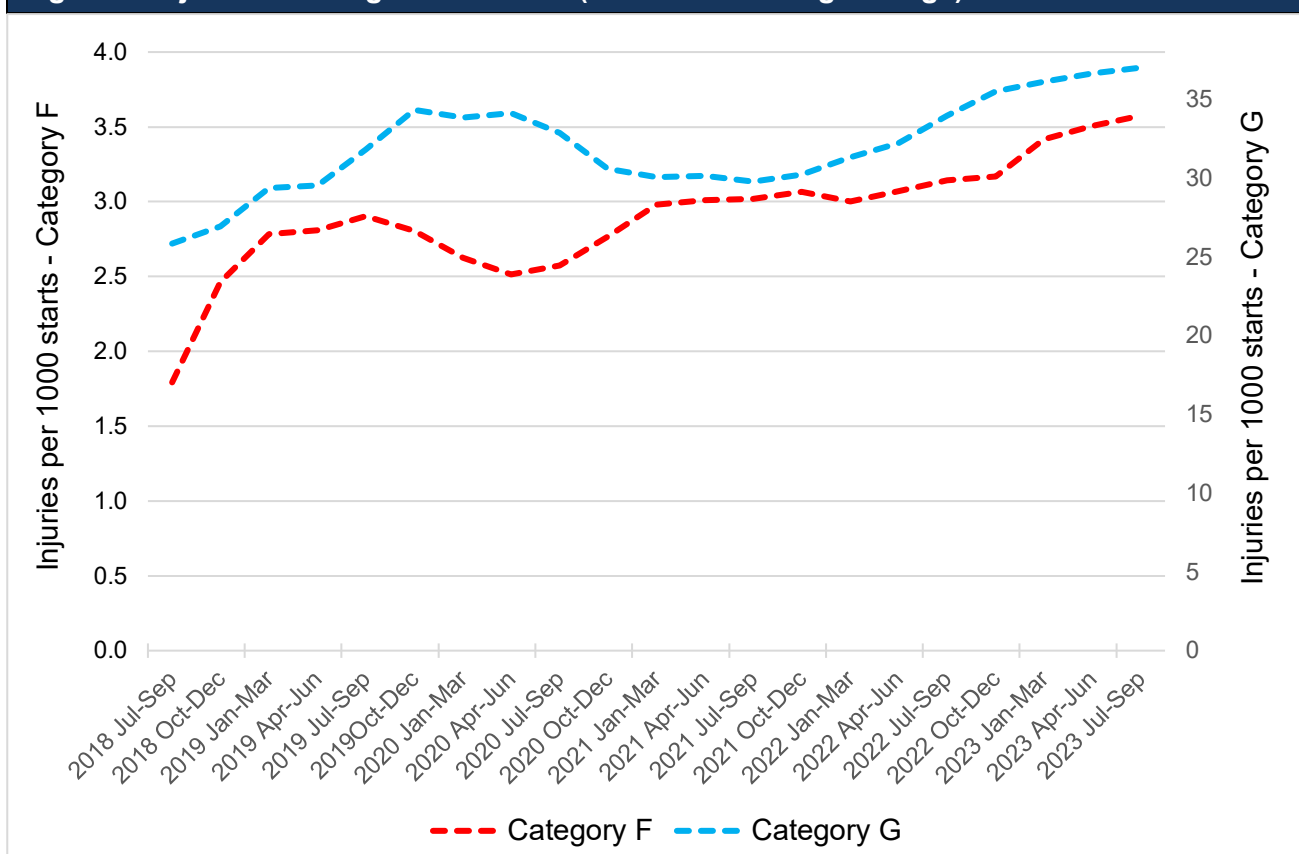
Injury type	This quarter compared to same quarter in previous years
Category A	Steady since 2022.
Category B	Decreased since 2022, despite an increase from 2020 to 2022.
Category C	Continued increase since 2019 for the highest rate on record.
Category D	Significant increase for the highest rate on record.
Category E	Significant decrease for the lowest rate on record.
Total	Increased, highest on record.
Category F	Highest on record, with a rising rate of increase since 2021
Category G	Highest on record, with a declining rate of increase since 2021
<b>Comment</b>	
	GWIC is exploring potential reasons for the observed increases in injury rates.

### Long-term trends

To control for 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 month running average)**

Category A	Stable in the last 12 months after a significant decline.
Category B	Decrease in 2023 after a 2-year increase.
Category C	Continued increase since early 2021, forming a notably high rate.
Category D	Increased in last 2 years after several years of stability.
Category E	Declined after a steady 12 months.
Total	Increase in last 18 months.
Category F	Slowing rate of increase in 2023 calendar year.
Category G	Slowing rate of increase since early 2022.
<b>Comment</b>	
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.

<b>Table 5: Review of Category E and F injuries this quarter</b>			
	<b>Category E</b>	<b>Category F minus Category E</b>	<b>Category F</b>
<b>Race Injury Review Panel assessment of contributing factors to injuries*</b>			
Greyhound factors	2	28	30
Race factors	2	48	50
Track factors	0	0	0
Factors not assessed	0	0	0
<b>Gender of injured greyhound</b>			
Female	2	36	38
Male	2	40	42
<b>Age of injured greyhound to nearest 6 months</b>			
1.5 years	0	2	2
2 years	2	15	17
2.5 years	1	21	22
3 years	1	14	15
3.5 years	0	17	17
4 years	0	3	3
4.5 years	0	3	3
> 5 years	0	1	1
<b>Distance of race in which greyhound was injured</b>			
Under 300m	0	0	0
300-399m	3	34	37
400-499m	1	31	32
500-600m	0	11	11
Over 600m	0	0	0
<b>Location on track at which injury appears to have occurred</b>			
Soon after start	1	7	8
Straight	0	8	8
Turn	1	51	52
After finish but before catching pen	0	2	2
Catching pen	1	4	5
Other	1	4	5
<b>Race history of injured greyhounds</b>			
Average and range of starts in last 30 days	2, 0-3	2, 0-6	2, 0-6
Average and range of starts in last 60 days	4.5, 1-8	4, 0-10	4, 0-10
Average and range of career starts	22, 3-43	29, 1-93	26, 1-93