

GREYHOUND WELFARE & INTEGRITY COMMISSION
DISCIPLINARY ACTION DECISION

Date of decision:	19 May 2022
Decision-makers:	Director Compliance, Policy & Legal Services, Matthew Tutt, Director Race Day Operations & Integrity, Wade Birch and Legal Officer, Annalese Summerson-Hingston
Name of relevant person:	Mr Aaron Williams
Track:	Wentworth Park
Date:	16 February 2022
Rule no.:	83(2)(a) ¹
Charge(s):	Mr Williams presented the greyhound 'Fergie Pepper' (" Greyhound ") for the purposes of competing in race 3 at the Wentworth Park meeting on 16 February 2022 in circumstances where the Greyhound was not free of any prohibited substance
Prohibited Substance(s):	Cobalt at or in excess of the threshold of 100 nanograms per millilitre
Disciplinary action taken:	To suspend Mr Williams's registrations for a period of ten (10) weeks.

Investigation

Following receipt of a certificate of analysis from Racing Analytical Services Limited dated 28 March 2022, the Commission conducted an investigation into the results of a post-Event urine sample taken from the greyhound, 'Fergie Pepper' ("**Greyhound**") at the Wentworth Park meeting on 16 February 2022.

Further analysis of the sample was conducted by the Racing Chemistry Laboratory, confirming the presence of cobalt at or in excess of the threshold of 100 nanograms per millilitre.

DECISION:

1. Mr Williams is a registered greyhound trainer and the trainer of the Greyhound. The Greyhound competed in race 3 of the Wentworth Park meeting on 16 February 2022. Following the Event, a urine sample was taken from the Greyhound.
2. The post-Event swab revealed the presence of cobalt at or in excess of the threshold of 100 nanograms per millilitre. Cobalt at or in excess of the threshold of 100 nanograms per millilitre is a prohibited substance under Rule 83(10) of the GWIC Greyhound Racing Rules ("**Rules**").

¹ This is the applicable rule in force at the time of the offence. Rule 141(1) of the Greyhound Racing Rules as published 1 May 2022 is the comparative rule.

3. On 20 April 2022 Mr Williams was issued with a notice of charge and proposed disciplinary action (“**Notice**”) in relation to the charge, setting out the proposed disciplinary action to be taken and the grounds in support of that proposed disciplinary action. The Notice also provided a brief of evidence for the charge.

4. In the Notice issued on 20 April 2022 the decision makers charged Mr Williams with the offence under Rule 83(2)(a), which reads:

(2) The owner, trainer or person in charge of a greyhound-

(a) nominated to compete in an Event;

...

shall present the greyhound free of any prohibited substance.

5. The Notice proposed a penalty of a sixteen (16) week suspension and invited Mr Williams to attend a scheduled hearing to enter a plea in relation to the charge and to make submissions in relation to the charge and the proposed penalty.

6. On 17 May 2022 Mr Williams attended the scheduled hearing with the decision makers and entered a plea of guilty. At the hearing Mr Williams made submissions in relation to the proposed penalty.

7. The decision makers found the charge proven and took the following disciplinary action against Mr Williams:

Charge (83(2)(a)): To suspend Mr Williams’s registration for a period of ten (10) weeks.

8. In taking this disciplinary action, the decision makers considered all evidence, including:

- Greyhound racing penalty precedents in NSW;
- The length of time Mr Williams has held a trainer registration, being since 2012, a period of approximately ten (10) years;
- Mr Williams’s disciplinary history – he does not have any like matters on his record;
- Mr Williams’s plea of guilty at the earliest opportunity;
- The low level of the substance detected, being 120 ng/mL in the ‘A’ Sample, and 122 ng/mL in the ‘B’ Sample; and
- Mr William’s forthright evidence in his written submissions and oral submissions at the hearing, including in relation to his personal circumstances, as well as his submissions on the likely cause of the positive result and his review of and amendment to his animal husbandry practices.

9. In addition, the Greyhound was disqualified from race 3 at the Wentworth Park meeting on 16 February 2022 pursuant to Rule 141(4) of the Rules.

.....End.....