

Disciplinary Committee Inquiries

The Disciplinary Committee of the GBGB were in attendance at a meeting held on 18 October 2011:

Mr R Woodworth (in the chair)

Dr E Houghton

Mr K Salmon

Dr A J Higgins

(*denotes where Dr Higgins was present in an advisory capacity as Chair of DMAP)

1. *Sittingbourne Stadium – HEDSOR SPUR – Professional Trainer Mrs M Cumner

Professional Trainer Marilyn Cumner was found in breach of rules 152 (i), 174 (i)(b), 214 and 217 in that a urine sample taken from the greyhound HEDSOR SPUR at Sittingbourne Stadium on 2 June 2011 was analysed by LGC Ltd. as containing the presence of flunixin.

Mrs Cumner was in attendance and accompanied by her husband Mr Jim Cumner. Mr Jess Packer, racing manager of Sittingbourne Stadium, apologised for his non-attendance.

Mrs Cumner was at a loss to explain how the presence of flunixin (a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory prescription only veterinary medicine for horses and cattle) could be accounted for in HEDSOR SPUR. Although the dog had suffered a sprained hock some months earlier it had been rested and not treated with any medicines. After a bitch had given a positive test for flunixin 11 years ago, Mrs Cumner described herself as "paranoiac" in terms of the treatment of her dogs.

The Committee took evidence from Duncan Gibson (in his earlier GBGB role as area stipendiary steward) that conversations with Mrs Cumner's meat suppliers did not suggest that their meat could have been contaminated by flunixin but Mr Cumner suggested that at times when the meat was delivered it was suggested "that it might contain some horsemeat" – The Committee also took evidence from Dr Higgins (DMAP - Chair) who stated that with current rigorous regulations concerning the operation of Defra-approved abattoirs it was possible - but in his view unlikely - that some of the meat from a beast which had been officially slaughtered might contain flunixin.

The Committee noted there was some doubt in the scientific evidence but pointed out that the GBGB Rules of Racing impose strict liability on the trainer. Having considered the circumstances of the case and the presence of a banned substance in the dog's urine, the Committee ordered that Mrs Cumner be reprimanded and fined the sum of £300.

The Committee pointed out that the imposition of a reprimand under the newly introduced Penalty Guidelines, Appendix VI of the Rules of Racing, should be considered to be of equal importance to the imposition of a fine. Further breaches could lead to a severe reprimand or loss of licence.

2. *Sittingbourne Stadium – FLAMING VENTURE – Professional Trainer Mrs M Cumner

Professional Trainer Marilyn Cumner was found in breach of rules 152 (i), 174 (i)(b) and 217 in that a urine sample taken from the greyhound FLAMING VENTURE at Sittingbourne Stadium on 25 June 2011 was analysed by LGC Ltd. as containing the presence of prednisolone.

Mrs Cumner was in attendance and accompanied by her husband Mr Jim Cumner. Mr Jess Packer, racing manager of Sittingbourne Stadium, apologised for his non-attendance.

The origin of the prednisolone was not in dispute. It was the active ingredient in eye drops (Pred Forte - a corticosteroid) prescribed for FLAMING VENTURE in January 2011 for the treatment of a chronic condition of the eye called pannus. There was however conflicting evidence in terms of whether the prescribing veterinary surgeon had in fact told Mr Cumner that the eye drops "would not show" in a urine test. In written evidence, the veterinary surgeon vigorously stated that he would never give such a qualification. It was confirmed that the administration of Pred Forte had been entered into the treatment book at the time treatment commenced on the advice of Mr Duncan Gibson who had a recollection of a conversation with Mrs Cumner at this time. Also, the racing manager had been informed. Accordingly the bitch had remained on treatment and been raced between January and June 2011 when the positive test had emerged. The bitch has now been retired. The Committee accepted that confusion had arisen as other eye drops did not contain a prohibited substance and would not have tested positive.

The Committee once again pointed out that the GBGB Rules of Racing impose strict liability on the trainer however in view of the particular circumstances of the case the Committee decided to take no further action.