

Disciplinary Committee Inquiries

The Disciplinary Committee of the GBGB were in attendance at a meeting held on 19 May 2011:

Mr J Akerman (in the chair)

Dr E Houghton

Mr K Salmon

Dr A Higgins

(*denotes where Dr Higgins was present as Chair of DMAP)

1. *Yarmouth Stadium – DIGITAL FLASH – Greyhound Trainer Mr P Debenham

Greyhound Trainer Mr Peter Debenham was found in breach of rules 152 (i), 174 (i)(a), 214, 216 and 217 in that a urine sample taken from the greyhound DIGITAL FLASH at Yarmouth Stadium on 16 December 2010 was analysed by LGC Ltd. as containing the presence of theobromine; and that he allowed a substance to be administered that could affect the performance and/or well being of the greyhound.

Mr Debenham was in attendance and accompanied by his wife. Mr William Johnson, Racing Manager of Yarmouth Stadium, apologised for his non-attendance.

The Disciplinary Committee heard evidence as to the feeding regime of the greyhound DIGITAL TARA and that of DIGITAL FLASH. Having listened to the evidence given by Mr Debenham and kennel hand Mrs Debenham, the Committee accepted that the account given was credible, but concluded that the evidence indicated a casual approach to the feeding of the greyhounds. Mr Debenham stated that he no longer uses his own feed mixture and this would prevent a reoccurrence.

Having considered his explanation together with the circumstances of the case, the Disciplinary Committee ordered that Mr Debenham be severely reprimanded and fined £400. The fine reflected his assurance that he had taken steps to change his feeding regime. The Disciplinary Committee commented that they would be disappointed if there were any further breaches of this kind.

The Committee also reminded Mr Debenham of the need to maintain his Greyhound Treatment and Kennel Books with the appropriate level of detail with immediate effect.

2. *Doncaster Stadium – TRASNA HILL – Greyhound Trainer Mr D Smith

Professional Trainer Mr Douglas Smith was found in breach of rules 152 (i) and (ii), 174 (i)(a), 214 and 217 in that a urine sample taken from the greyhound TRASNA HILL at Doncaster Stadium on 23 December 2010 was analysed by LGC Ltd. as containing the presence of caffeine, theophylline and paraxanthine ;

and the administration of any substance that could affect the performance and/or well being of the greyhound.

Mr Smith apologised for his non-attendance. Mr Michael Smith, Racing Manager of Doncaster Stadium, was in attendance.

The Disciplinary Committee considered the improved performance of the greyhound TRASNA HILL on 23 December, and the possible sequence of events put forward by Greyhound Trainer Mr D Smith in his written submission. The Committee concluded that there was no credible explanation for an inadvertent administration of a prohibited substance.

Having considered his written explanation together with the circumstances of the case, the Disciplinary Committee ordered that Mr D Smith be severely reprimanded and fined £750 and, under rule 175, ordered that the greyhound TRASNA HILL be disqualified from the race in question and accordingly rule 94 should be applied in respect of the repayment of prize monies for 23 December 2010.

3. *Wimbledon Stadium – WEE PARIS – Former Greyhound Trainer Mr S Lloyd

Former Greyhound Trainer Mr Steven Lloyd was found in breach of rules 152 (i), 174 (i)(a), 214 and 217 in that a urine sample taken from the greyhound WEE PARIS at Wimbledon Stadium on 26 October 2010 was analysed by LGC Ltd. as containing the presence of theobromine; and the administration of any substance that could affect the performance and/or well being of the greyhound.

Mr Lloyd and Mr Gary Matthews, Racing Manager of Wimbledon Stadium, apologised for their non-attendance.

The Disciplinary Committee noted Mr Lloyd's written explanation, that WEE PARIS was a poor eater and needed encouragement to eat its food. However, the trainer is responsible under Rule 214 to ensure that all food fed to greyhounds in their charge is free from any prohibited substance. This Committee noted that this had been widely publicised on more than one occasion in the GBGB Calendar.

Having considered his written explanation together with the circumstances of the case, the Disciplinary Committee ordered that Mr Lloyd be reprimanded and fined £400.

4. Hall Green Stadium – WIGGIES BOY – Professional Trainer Mr M Barlow

Professional Trainer Mr Mark Barlow was found in breach of rules 49 (iv), 152 (i) and (ii) and 174 (i) (a) following the administration of substances that could affect the performance and/or well being of the greyhound WIGGIES BOY; and its performance at Hall Green Stadium on 8 February 2011.

Mr Barlow was in attendance. Mr R Coulthard, racing manager of Hall Green Stadium, apologised for his non-attendance.

The Disciplinary Committee considered the circumstances of the Greyhound WIGGIES BOY vomiting 0.83 kg of partially undigested food after it had run at Hall Green Stadium on 8 February 2011. WIGGIES BOY started at 8/1. It finished last in the race, beaten 7¾ lengths, after being slowly away and bumped at the first bend.

The Committee heard evidence that Professional Trainer Mr Barlow was solely responsible for feeding WIGGIES BOY on 8 February, and that Mr Barlow had travelled alone with the greyhound to Hall Green Stadium. The Committee received evidence from Mr Barlow together with the Assistant Racing Manager and the track Veterinary Surgeon, regarding the post-race condition of the greyhound, and noted some inconsistencies in the testimony provided.

The track Veterinary Surgeon stated that she did not find the greyhound off colour after racing, and found it to be clinically well, with no painful abdomen.

It was however the judgement of the track Veterinary Surgeon, after the race, and on the strength of the clinical history obtained from Mr Barlow, that WIGGIES BOY could be incubating a virus or bacteria, and the greyhound was given a course of treatment as a precaution.

Mr Barlow stated that he had reported to the Hall Green Racing Office, on 7 February that a number of his greyhounds were off colour. He also stated that eleven greyhounds had gone down with sickness and diarrhoea since 7 February 2011, some of which were on the racing strength. The Hall Green Racing Office was unable to confirm this version of events, and had only noted one greyhound from Mr Barlow's kennel being off colour around that time.

The Committee received veterinary advice on the digestive process in a greyhound, in particular the 'Gastric Emptying Rate', which is the speed with which substances leave the stomach after ingestion. The Committee was advised that a dog's stomach is normally 75% empty four hours after a meal.

The Committee noted that the previous day's main feed for WIGGIE'S BOY (approximately 1kg) was given more than 30 hours prior to the race on 8 February. On the race day his feed would normally be restricted to the normal morning meal followed by a small meat-based meal (approximately 0.2kg) several hours before the race.

The veterinary advice indicated that it was inconceivable, given any greyhound's gastric emptying rate, for the quantity of vomitus produced by WIGGIES BOY in the racing kennels post-race (0.83kg) to have resulted from normal feeding in the run up to the race on 8 February. The evidence clearly pointed to WIGGIES BOY having been fed a substantial meal closer to the race than advisable, for which Mr Barlow was unable to provide any explanation.

Taking into account the circumstances of the case, the Committee concluded, on the balance of probabilities, that WIGGIES BOY did not run on his merits on 8 February. The Committee was particularly concerned for the welfare of the greyhound, and the impact of this case on the integrity of the sport, and ordered that Mr Barlow's licence be withdrawn for 6 months with effect from 1 June 2011. Taking into account Mr Barlow's statement of mitigation, no fine was imposed.

5. FORMER KENNELHAND MR S TRAYNOR – SUPPLY OF VETERINARY PRODUCTS

Former Kennelhand Mr S Traynor was found in breach of rules 152 (i) and (ii) and 174 (v) and (xii)(a) in that he supplied an unlicensed brand of veterinary product when not qualified to do so between January 2010 and January 2011.

Mr Traynor was in attendance and legally represented by Mr Julian Lee.

The Disciplinary Committee heard evidence that former kennelhand Mr S Traynor had supplied 'Global Britannic' - unlicensed brand of testosterone esters, to a number of Professional Trainers attached to Nottingham Stadium and possibly elsewhere.

Durateston is a medicine manufactured by Intervet Schering-Plough and permitted by GBGB for oestrus suppression. It is licensed by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD). The Committee heard that, for a product to be licensed for use in the UK, specific information has to be registered with the VMD. Any other unlicensed product cannot be legally used. Durateston falls in the category of 'POM-V'. This means that it is a prescription only medication, which can only be prescribed by a fully qualified Veterinary Surgeon. The purpose of only allowing veterinary medicines which are authorised by the VMD is to ensure the integrity of the product and to ensure that animal welfare is maintained.

The Committee was particularly concerned that the welfare of numerous greyhounds could have been jeopardised by the illicit supply, by Mr Traynor, of an unlicensed drug for use in bitches as an oestrus suppressant, the origin of which was not known in advance. The Committee was also concerned that Mr Traynor appeared to be using his bona fide business, and access to licensed Trainers and premises, to conduct illicit business.

Mr Traynor's representative stated that Mr Traynor now realised the seriousness of his actions, but he was acting in good faith, he did not realise that the drug was a prescription only medicine, and the trainers had not advised him of this fact. He had also produced letters of support from within the Greyhound Industry.

The Committee considered the serious nature of the breaches, in particular the risk to the reputation of the sport and the welfare of the greyhounds. The Committee took into account that Mr Traynor had now admitted the breaches, and that some Trainers had been complicit in his actions. However the Committee wished to send out a message in the strongest terms, that the unlawful supply of drugs within the sport will not be tolerated.

The Committee, having considered the facts of the case and the mitigation presented, ordered that with immediate effect Mr Traynor be warned off GBGB Licensed Premises for six months, in accordance with Rule 178.

It was noted that the Greyhound Trainers who had received the unlicensed product had received a strongly worded letter of caution from the Director of Regulation but were not to be the subject of further action as they had co-operated in the inquiry. The trainers concerned had been warned that any further breaches of this nature would render them liable to disciplinary proceedings.

The Committee also noted that the GBGB Calendar had included a notice, on 11 February 2011, on the use of medication. This reiterated that 'Prescription only Medicines' that had not been obtained via prescription from a veterinary surgeon were likely to be illegal.

The Committee requested the Director of Regulation to contact the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons to advise them of the existence of this unlicensed product. The Director of Regulation was also recommended to report the case to the Veterinary Medicines Directorate.