

Disciplinary Committee Inquiries

The Disciplinary Committee of the GBGB were in attendance at a meeting held on 16 April 2013:-

Mr R Woodworth CBE (in the chair)
Mr A Hunt
Dr E Houghton
Dr AJ Higgins*

(*denotes where Dr Higgins was present in an advisory capacity as Independent Doping & Medication Adviser)

1. *Sittingbourne Stadium – HONEYGAR VICKY – Professional Trainer Mr D Griggs

Professional Trainer David Griggs was found in breach of rules 152 (i), 174 (i)(b) and 217 of the GBGB Rules of Racing in that a urine sample taken from the greyhound HONEYGAR VICKY at Sittingbourne Stadium on 15 January 2013 was analysed by LGC Health Sciences as containing the presence of ephedrine and norephedrine.

Mr Griggs and Mr Packer, racing manager of Sittingbourne Stadium, apologised for their non-attendance. Lorraine Sams, area stipendiary steward, was in attendance.

The Disciplinary Committee received evidence from Dr Higgins, Independent Doping and Medication Adviser, who stated that ephedrine is a bronchodilator, heart stimulant, nasal decongestant, appetite suppressant that also raises blood pressure and stimulates the nervous system increasing alertness. It was said to be widely abused in human sports. Ephedrine tablets are licensed in UK by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate only to treat urinary incontinence caused by urethral sphincter mechanism incompetence in spayed female dogs. It is a Prescription Only Medicine (POM-V). Further Dr Higgins stated that the presence in the positive sample of norephedrine would suggest that it was present as a metabolite of ephedrine.

The Disciplinary Committee considered written evidence from Mr Griggs who suggested that the positive sample could have been caused either by a mix up in the testing laboratory or by cross contamination from the racing kennels at Sittingbourne but the Disciplinary Committee did not believe these explanations to be credible. Mr Griggs stated that HONEYGAR VICKY had experienced long spells of lameness but had not been on any medication.

As some of the GBGB Rules impose strict liability and having considered the circumstances of the case, the Disciplinary Committee found Mr Griggs in breach of rules 152 (i), 174 (i)(b) and 217 and ordered that he be cautioned and fined £500.

2. *Brighton Stadium – SWORDS BRETT – Professional Trainer Mr K Hutton

Professional Trainer Kevin Hutton was found in breach of rules 152 (i), 174 (i)(b), and 217 of the GBGB Rules of Racing in that a urine sample taken from the greyhound SWORDS BRETT at Brighton Stadium on 27 December 2012 was analysed by LGC Health Sciences as containing the presence of atenolol.

Mr Hutton and licensed kennelhand Mr Geoffrey Hutton were in attendance. Lorraine Sams, area stipendiary steward, was also in attendance. Peter Miller, racing manager of Brighton Stadium, apologised for his non-attendance.

The Disciplinary Committee received evidence from Dr Higgins, Independent Doping and Medication Adviser, who stated that atenolol is a cardioselective beta blocker primarily used to slow down heart rate. Atenolol was used in humans principally in the management of hypertension, angina pectoris, cardiac arrhythmias and myocardial infarction. Atenolol is a prescription only medicine (POM) and is not licensed for use in dogs but may be administered under the prescribing cascade on the instruction of a veterinary surgeon after a clinical assessment of the animal concerned to treat certain heart diseases or high blood pressure. Dr Higgins noted that beta blockers are known as “stoppers” as they lower the heart rate and can therefore reduce performance, although the effect would depend on dose and timing. He added that in his view the deliberate use of beta blockers in greyhound racing was a serious animal welfare issue.

The Disciplinary Committee considered written evidence from Mr Hutton who stated that he was at a complete loss to know where the atenolol could have come from. He emphasised that SWORDS BRETT had won the race in question – an Open race at Hove – in very good time which was not consistent with the dog being “stopped”. He suggested however that the atenolol might have come either from the food chain or been administered by a third person as Mr Hutton on the night in question might have left his van unattended and unlocked while he was kennelling. Mr Hutton confirmed that the dog’s owner did not have a Betfair account and that although he did, he did not now use it for betting on greyhounds

Having considered Mr Hutton’s explanation and previous good record, as some of the GBGB Rules impose strict liability, the Disciplinary Committee found Mr Hutton in breach of rules 152 (i), 174 (i)(b) and 217 and ordered that he be cautioned and fined the sum of £500.

3. *Newcastle Stadium – STAY FOR RUBY – Professional Trainer Mr G Gibbinson

Professional Trainer George Gibbinson was found in breach of rule 174 (i)(b) of the GBGB Rules of Racing in that a urine sample taken from the greyhound STAY FOR RUBY at Newcastle Stadium on 5 January 2013 was analysed by LGC Health Sciences as containing the presence of 6 α -hydroxy stanozolol and dihydroxy stanozolol, which are metabolites of stanozolol.

Mr Gibbinson and Paul Twinn, deputy racing manager of Newcastle Stadium, apologised for their non-attendance. Alex McTaggart, area stipendiary steward, was in attendance.

The Disciplinary Committee received evidence from Dr Higgins, Independent Doping and Medication Adviser that stanozolol is an androgenic anabolic steroid with a well-documented history of abuse in sport. It was available in tablet form for daily administration or as an injection for longer acting effects. He said that there was no veterinary licensed formulation of stanozolol in the UK or Ireland.

The Disciplinary Committee considered written evidence from Mr Gibbinson that he had purchased the dog in good faith at the Perry Barr Sales not having previously met or known of the Sales Agent Willie O’Donoghue. On subsequently contacting Mr O’Donoghue he had been assured that he had not administered stanozolol to the dog but admitted that he had only purchased the dog a few days before he brought him over to the Sales. Mr O’Donoghue had promised to write to the GBGB

confirming this but no such letter had been received. While the Disciplinary Committee believed that while it was Mr Gibbinson who had suffered in the Sales transaction he should nevertheless have spoken to the Sales Agent prior to the dog being put on the bench in order to attempt to satisfy himself that the dog was “clean”. They concluded that it was possible that the stanozolol could have been in the dog’s system when the dog raced at Newcastle after an administration in Ireland prior to its sale at Perry Barr.

Having considered Mr Gibbinson’s written explanation together with the circumstances of the case, the Disciplinary Committee found Mr Gibbinson in breach of rule 174 (i)(b) and ordered that he be cautioned.

4. *Shawfield Stadium – MARLFIELD MITCH – Greyhound Trainer Mr I McLelland

Greyhound Trainer Iain McLelland was found in breach of rules 152(i), 174 (i)(b) and 217 of the GBGB Rules of Racing in that a urine sample taken from the greyhound MARLFIELD MITCH at Shawfield Stadium on 18 January 2013 was analysed by LGC Health Sciences as containing the presence of atenolol.

Mr McLelland and Daniel Rankin, racing manger of Shawfield Stadium, apologised for their non-attendance. Alex McTaggart, area stipendiary steward, was in attendance.

The Disciplinary Committee received evidence from Dr Higgins, Independent Doping and Medication Adviser, who stated that atenolol is a cardioselective beta blocker primarily used to slow down heart rate. Atenolol was used in humans principally in the management of hypertension, angina pectoris, cardiac arrhythmias and myocardial infarction. Atenolol is a prescription only medicine (POM) and is not licensed for use in dogs but may be administered under the prescribing cascade on the instruction of a veterinary surgeon after a clinical assessment of the animal concerned to treat certain heart diseases or high blood pressure. Dr Higgins noted that beta blockers are known as “stoppers” as they lower the heart rate and can therefore reduce performance, although the effect would depend on dose and timing. He added that in his view the deliberate use of beta blockers in greyhound racing was a serious animal welfare issue.

The Disciplinary Committee considered written evidence from Mr McLelland who offered no explanation for the presence of atenolol or for his failure to attend the Inquiry. The Disciplinary Committee were concerned that MARLFIELD MITCH having recorded a modest time in the trial in question had then won its handicap race off scratch in a faster time one week later as co-favourite.

Having considered Mr McLelland’s explanation together with the circumstances of the case, the Disciplinary Committee found Mr McLelland in breach of rules 152 (i) and 174 (i)(b) and ordered that he be reprimanded and fined the sum of £750.

5. *Doncaster Stadium – RACETOTHETOP – Professional Trainer Mr A Stevens

Professional Trainer Alan Stevens was found in breach of rules 152(i), 174 (i)(b) and 217 of the GBGB Rules of Racing in that a blood sample taken from the greyhound RACETOTHETOP at Doncaster Stadium on 12 January 2012 was analysed by LGC Health Sciences as containing the presence of meloxicam.

Mr Stevens and Eric Vose, area stipendiary steward, apologised for their non-attendance. Michael Smith, racing manager of Doncaster Stadium, was in attendance.

The Disciplinary Committee received evidence from Dr Higgins, Independent Doping and Medication Adviser, who stated that meloxicam was a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug used for the alleviation of inflammation and pain, often in acute and chronic musculoskeletal disorders. It is available as tablets (e.g. Loxicom), as an oral suspension and in an injectable form. Meloxicam is a Prescription Only Medicine (POM-V).

The Disciplinary Committee considered written evidence from Mr Stevens and from area stipendiary steward Adrian Smith that Mr Stevens had a bottle of Loxicom tablets in his kennels which he uses solely to treat a retired dog but this is kennelled separately. They also heard from Mr Smith, racing manager who spoke of Mr Stevens' integrity. The Disciplinary Committee concluded that this was unlikely to have been a case of deliberate administration.

Having considered Mr Stevens' explanation together with the circumstances of the case and as some of the GBGB Rules impose strict liability the Disciplinary Committee found Mr Stevens in breach of rules 152 (i), 174 (i)(b) and 217 and ordered that he be cautioned and fined the sum of £350.