

Disciplinary Committee Inquiries

The Disciplinary Committee of the GBGB were in attendance at a meeting held on 17 December 2013:-

Mr R Woodworth CBE (in the chair)
Mr A Hunt
Mr K Salmon
Dr AJ Higgins*

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

1. *Perry Barr Stadium – MIDNIGHT BOSS – Professional Trainer Mr D Freeman

Professional Trainer David Freeman was found in breach of rules 152 (i) & (ii), 174 (i) (a) and 217 of the GBGB Rules of Racing in that a urine sample taken from the greyhound MIDNIGHT BOSS at Perry Barr Stadium on 9 September 2013 was analysed by LGC Health Sciences as containing the presence of timolol; and that he allowed a substance to be administered that could affect the performance and/or well being of the greyhound.

Mr Freeman was in attendance. Martin Seal, racing manager of Perry Barr Stadium, Martin Fennings, General Manager of Perry Barr Stadium, Jack Robinson, Stipendiary Steward, and Clive Carr, investigating officer, were also in attendance.

Jack Robinson, area stipendiary steward attended the trial session at Perry Barr Stadium on 9 September 2013 and took random samples. A urine sample taken from the greyhound MIDNIGHT BOSS was analysed by LGC Health Sciences as containing the presence of timolol.

The Disciplinary Committee noted the opinion of Dr Andrew Higgins (Independent Doping & Medication Adviser) that timolol was a beta-adrenoceptor antagonist (beta-blocker) which is used in humans to treat amongst other things high blood pressure and glaucoma. Beta blockers are sometimes known as 'stoppers' as they lower heart rate and can reduce performance. Their effect on racing greyhounds would be to limit their intake of oxygen especially at the beginning and end of a race which could at the very least cause significant distress.

The Disciplinary Committee noted that Mr Freeman had received MIDNIGHT BOSS into his kennels on 1 July 2013. The greyhound had been purchased at the Thurles Sales by one of his owners, known to him only as "Terry" (identified as Terry Lovett) whom he knew to be a gambler. It was suggested that it had been purchased by Mr Lovett in order to return a favour to Mr Freeman's kennelhand Ben Roberts on the basis that when the greyhound was "fancied" he would back it himself and also have a £100 bet for Ben Roberts. MIDNIGHT BOSS had been inconsistent in its trails but had won its trial on 9 September 2013 in 29.64 (484 mtrs). On 14 September 2013 it had its first race at Perry Barr and the first intimation that there was heavy betting on the greyhound to win came when a representative of William Hill contacted the racing manager Martin Seal before the race. The

greyhound won the Grade A5 race in 29.31 starting as 6/4 f and won its next race in 28.90 and followed with a sprint open win.

The advice of Dr Higgins to the Disciplinary Committee was that the timolol found in MIDNIGHT BOSS's urine at the time of its final trial on the 9 September 2013 indicated that timolol had been administered to the greyhound and this could have adversely affected its performance in the trial. The evidence from Mr Freeman concerning the administration of timolol was inconsistent. He alleged that it took the form of a proprietary medicine for glaucoma which took the form of ophthalmic drops containing both timolol and dorzolamide which had been used by his father in the period before his death in July 2013. He had kept this and other medicines of his father which he said he now realized he had been reckless to use on his greyhounds. Dr Higgins said that timolol administered to the eye is rapidly absorbed into the bloodstream and in his opinion it was possible that an ophthalmic preparation could have been the source of the timolol in this greyhound. However, the Committee heard from Mr Freeman that his father had not formally been diagnosed as suffering from glaucoma and the particular medicine seemed a most unlikely one for a patient with COPD, contrary to the instructions accompanying the medicine. Further the packaging for the eye drops had had the patient's name removed. At the Local Inquiry Trainer Freeman stated that he had administered the eye drops to the greyhound "as it had a runny eye" but then in the Hearing stated that in fact one of his kennel hands (whom he was reluctant to name to the Committee) had in fact administered them. The Committee considered on the balance of probabilities that Trainer Freeman had himself administered the eye drops (or some other medicine containing timolol) or had allowed or caused one of his kennel hands to administer the drug within the terms of rule 174 (i) (a) of the GBGB Rules of Racing.

While Mr Freeman stated that he had not bet the greyhound the Committee received evidence that both Terry Lovett and Royston Welshman (one of the Trainer's kennel hands) had substantial bets on MIDNIGHT BOSS and the Committee assumed that Ben Roberts also had although it had not been possible to make contact with him despite several attempts by Clive Carr.

Two references were supplied by Trainer Mr Freeman and the Committee took account of the disturbance caused to him by his father's death. However they considered this to be a serious case of a greyhound being "stopped" during a trial in order to facilitate a subsequent gamble. Accordingly the Disciplinary Committee ordered that Mr Freeman's licence be withdrawn for 1 year during which period he would not be allowed to apply for a new licence. In addition he was also fined the sum of £1,500.

2. *Pelaw Grange Stadium – OLYMPIC HONCHO – Greyhound Trainer Mr M Daniels

Greyhound Trainer Malcolm Daniels was found in breach of rules 152 (i), 174 (i)(b), 214, 215 and 217 of the GBGB Rules of Racing in that a urine sample taken from the greyhound OLYMPIC HONCHO at Pelaw Grange Stadium on 2 August 2013 was analysed by LGC Health Sciences as containing the presence of morphine.

Mr Daniels was in attendance as was Eric Vose, stipendiary steward. David Gray, racing manager of Pelaw Grange Stadium, apologised for his non-attendance.

The Disciplinary Committee noted the opinion of Dr Andrew Higgins (Independent Doping and Medication Adviser) that morphine is a Schedule 2 controlled drug as defined in the Misuse of Drugs Regulations (MDR) 2001 and a Prescription Only Medicine. The opioid is available in a variety of formulations. They also heard from Dr Higgins (confirming a report from Simon Hudson of LGC Health Sciences) that there were also small traces of codeine in the urine sample which would be consistent with an administration of codeine or with feeding brown bread containing poppy seeds.

The Committee heard evidence from Mr Daniels that he bought sacks of bread largely to feed to his pups and that while he checked them for poppy seeds he had not realised that the seeds were contained throughout the bread and not merely on the surface. He regretted his error and said that he would now only feed a proprietary feed to his racing greyhounds. The Committee reviewed the evidence of the race in question when OLYMPIC HONCHO had given the positive sample including the statement of David Gray, the racing manager and were satisfied that the greyhound had not been the subject of a gamble. They therefore concluded on the balance of probabilities that this had been an accidental feeding of bread containing poppy seeds by Mr Daniels. Nevertheless the advice in the GBGB Calendar (leading to rule 215) was quite unequivocal and a reminder had been published in August 2012. Further he had been found in breach of the rules in April 2009 for feeding brown bread containing poppy seeds to his greyhound and the Committee emphasised that they would in these circumstances have expected him to take particular care with his feeding.

As some of the GBGB Rules of Racing impose strict liability on the trainer or registered sales agent the Disciplinary Committee ordered that Mr Daniels be severely reprimanded and fined £750.