

CALENDAR NOTICE (to be published 9 May 2014)

Disciplinary Committee Inquiries

The Disciplinary Committee of the GBGB were in attendance at a meeting held on 15 April 2014:-

Mr K Salmon (in the chair)

Mr R Coughlan

Mr A Hunt

1. CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS – Messrs RA Hall & TJ Hall

On 7 November 2013 Robert Anthony Hall and Thomas James Hall pleaded guilty to various drugs related conspiracy charges at Teesside Crown Court.

Robert Anthony Hall was sentenced to 13 years imprisonment. Thomas James Hall was sentenced to 6 years imprisonment.

In passing sentence, The Recorder, Mr Michael Slater said: "I am satisfied this was a well organised, extensive and expertly put together drugs operation supplying cannabis and cocaine to the North East and beyond".

The conspiracy involved drugs with a street value of £1m.

These men are both listed as registered owners and currently have one active greyhound running in their joint names along with that of another man. Historically, they have been involved in the ownership of four other greyhounds over the past 5 years.

The Disciplinary Committee agreed with The Recorder's assessment of these offences. This was a well organised and determined conspiracy to supply class A and B drugs.

Persons convicted of such offences have no place in greyhound racing and their continued involvement could only damage the reputation and possibly the integrity of the sport. In those circumstances, the Disciplinary Committee had no hesitation in warning off both men for an indefinite period.

2. Kinsley Stadium – TOSELLI SERENADE - Professional Trainer Mr MJ Siddall & Head Kennelhand Mr TJ Siddall

Professional Trainer Mark Siddall and head kennelhand Tommy Siddall were found in breach of rules 174 (i)(b) and 217 of the GBGB Rules of Racing in that a blood sample taken from the greyhound TOSELLI SERENADE at Kinsley Stadium on 14 December 2013 was analysed by LGC Health Sciences as containing the presence of naproxen.

Mark Siddall was in attendance. Eric Vose, area stipendiary steward, and Professor Tim Morris, independent scientific adviser, were also in attendance. Tommy Siddall apologised for his non-attendance as did Andrew Mascarenhas, racing manager of Kinsley Stadium.

The Disciplinary Committee heard evidence from Professor Morris to the effect that naproxen is a medical drug not licensed for use in dogs and is chemically in the class of drugs described as Non Steroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDS). NSAIDS relieve pain, reduce fever and reduce inflammation. In the opinion of Professor Morris, naproxen is a substance which by its nature could affect the performance or prejudice the wellbeing of a greyhound.

Mr Donnelly, on behalf of the GRB, put his case on the basis that on the evidence, the Disciplinary Committee should accept Mark Siddall's and Tommy Siddall's explanation that this positive test was caused by naproxen gel, which Tommy used to treat a serious and well documented medical condition, being transferred from Tommy to the greyhound TOSELLI SERENADE. The Committee agreed with that approach and accordingly found breaches of rules 174 (i) (b) and 217.

Mark Siddall accepted that he should have realised that such cross-contamination was possible but did not. To that extent the Committee found that the contamination was inadvertent. Accordingly, they did not find that either Mark Siddall or Tommy Siddall had the necessary knowledge properly to say that they "took" (or) "failed to take" any action under rule 152 (i). Mr Donnelly did not invite the Committee to find a breach of rule 152 (ii) and they did not do so.

Similarly, the Committee did not find that Mark or Tommy Siddall "treated, caused, or permitted" the greyhound TOSELLI SERENADE in such a manner as was likely to cause unnecessary suffering. Each of those words implies a degree of knowledge as to the effect of their actions which was lacking in this case.

These were very serious breaches in that there was clear medical evidence that naproxen had the potential to prejudice the welfare of the greyhound TOSELLI SERENADE.

However, the Committee noted that neither Mark nor Tommy Siddall had any previous breaches of the rules of racing recorded against them. They also took into account the references written on their behalf. Mark Siddall accepted that he should have realised that there was a possibility of cross-contamination. He accepted full responsibility of these breaches and urged the Committee to accept that Tommy's part in this was accidental. In those circumstances, the Disciplinary Committee ordered that Mark Siddall be severely reprimanded and fined the sum of £350.

In Tommy Siddall's case the Disciplinary Committee adopted the approach suggested by Mark Siddall. They were completely satisfied upon all the evidence they had seen that Tommy was devoted to the care and welfare of greyhounds and would do nothing deliberately to compromise their welfare. The Committee was told and accepted that he was very upset by these events. They also noted the extensive work he does towards the rehabilitation and rehoming of greyhounds. In those circumstances, the Disciplinary Committee ordered that he be reprimanded.

3. Shawfield Stadium – WINTERVILLE – Professional Trainer Mr G Kennedy & Kennelhand Mr T Stewart

Professional Trainer George Kennedy was found in breach of rules 174 (i)(b), 216 and 217 and kennelhand Thomas Stewart was found in breach of rules 152 (i), 174 (i)(a), 174 (xi) and 217 of the

GBGB Rules of Racing in that a urine sample taken from the greyhound WINTERVILLE at Shawfield Stadium on 24 January 2014 was analysed by LGC Health Sciences as containing the presence of piroxicam and that Mr Stewart allowed a substance to be administered that could affect the performance and/or well being of the greyhound.

Mr Kennedy and Mr Stewart apologised for their non-attendance as did Daniel Rankin, racing manager of Shawfield Stadium. Alex McTaggart, area stipendiary steward, and Professor Tim Morris, independent scientific adviser, were in attendance.

On 24 January 2014 a urine sample was taken from the greyhound WINTERVILLE which subsequently tested positive for piroxicam, a Non Steroidal Anti-inflammatory used in the treatment in humans of rheumatoid arthritis and similar conditions. Piroxicam used at clinical doses in dogs has shown to lead to gastrotestinal ulceration and bleeding and kidney damage. The packaging and product information relating to piroxicam make the nature of the drug clear to anyone using it.

The greyhound WINTERVILLE suffered a serious tendon injury in August 2013. It was trialled on 1 November 2013 but came off with the same sore tendon. The greyhound was then rested until 24 January 2014 when the sample was taken.

Kennelhand Thomas Stewart stated that he had been prescribed piroxicam for tennis elbow, although the only evidence the Disciplinary Committee had seen related to a prescription on 21 February 2014 over a month after the sample was taken.

Mr Stewart stated that as he was lifting WINTERVILLE onto a table at about 1.00 pm he felt a pain in his arm, applied the piroxicam and then massaged the greyhound without washing his hands. He also admitted using the gel on previous occasions in the kennel if he felt pain. The Committee found that given the clear labelling of piroxicam and the fact that its effects were well known to Mr Stewart, it was not credible that he did not know he had to wash his hands. Mr Stewart did not attend to give evidence and the Committee did not therefore have his explanations regarding this, which might have been of considerable assistance. They found that at the very least he turned a blind eye to the need to wash his hands in the hopes that piroxicam might benefit WINTERVILLE's tendon injury, and was therefore reckless in its administration. The Disciplinary Committee therefore found him in breach of rules 152 (i), 174 (i) (a), 174 (xi) and 217.

Mr Kennedy stated that he knew nothing of these events till they had happened and there was no evidence to contradict that. The Disciplinary Committee therefore found him in breach of rules 174 (i) (b) and 217. They noted that he did not record the tendon injury or its treatment with hot and cold compresses in his treatment book. He was therefore also in breach of rule 216.

These were very serious breaches in that the welfare of WINTERVILLE was potentially compromised by the administration of piroxicam.

However, there were no previous breaches recorded against either Mr Kennedy or Mr Stewart, and the Committee noted Mr Kennedy had taken steps to regulate the presence of prescription medicines in his kennel.

In Mr Kennedy's case he was ultimately responsible for the care of this greyhound and he had a responsibility to keep his treatment book properly. The Disciplinary Committee therefore ordered that he be reprimanded and fined £250.

In Mr Stewart's case the Disciplinary Committee found that he was at the very least reckless in the administration of piroxicam. They took into account his good record and the fact that he was a pensioner of limited means. The least penalty they could impose was a severe reprimand and a fine of £500.