

## **CALENDAR NOTICE (to be published 9 October 2015)**

### **Disciplinary Committee Inquiries**

The Disciplinary Committee of the GBGB were in attendance at a meeting held on 29 September 2015:-

Mr H Starte (in the chair)

Mr A Hunt

Mr M Elks

#### **1. Sittingbourne Stadium – GLENVALE GINNY - Professional Trainer Mr D Brabon**

Professional Trainer Daniel Brabon was found in breach of rules 174 (i) (a), 216, 217 and rule 152 (i) & (ii) of the GBGB Rules of Racing in that a blood sample taken from the greyhound GLENVALE GINNY at Sittingbourne Stadium on 14 March 2015 was analysed by LGC Health Sciences as containing the presence of the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory meloxicam.

Mr Brabon did not attend. There was no representative of Sittingbourne Stadium in attendance. Ms Lorraine Sams (Area Stipendiary Steward) and Professor Tim Morris (Independent Scientific Adviser) attended.

The Director of Regulation informed the Committee that Mr Brabon had spoken with him that morning to say he would not be attending because he had been let down for cover at his kennels. He had asked that the hearing be adjourned. He had said he wished to attend to address the Committee, particularly so that he could produce receipts for meat purchases showing that he had bought Category 3 ABP meat at the time when, as he had told the local inquiry, he had been feeding his greyhounds only Category 3 meat; and so that he could tell the Committee that he had changed his meat supplier 6 weeks before the positive blood sample had been taken from GLENVALE GINNY. The Director of Regulation told the Committee the GBGB would not dispute that Mr Brabon had been feeding only Category 3 meat. The Committee agreed it would accept this was the case. In the circumstances the Committee decided not to adjourn the hearing.

The Committee heard evidence from Professor Morris that meloxicam is a prescription Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drug (NSAID) very commonly used in veterinary medicine available from numerous companies in tablet and liquid form for oral administration and in injectable forms. Like all NSAIDs it had the potential to cause adverse effects, most commonly vomiting. Some effects could be life-threatening, most commonly gastrointestinal ulceration. Professor Morris knew of no studies showing meloxicam would directly affect a greyhound's performance. However, it could have an indirect effect by alleviating symptoms and so mitigating adverse effects of pain or inflammation. In Professor Morris's opinion it was a substance which by its nature could affect the performance or prejudice the wellbeing of a greyhound.

The Committee heard that Mr Brabon had told the local inquiry held by Area Stipendiary Steward Ms L Sams on 11 May 2015, with Sittingbourne Stadium Racing Manager Mr J Packer in attendance, that he knew of no treatments given to GLENVALE GINNY that could be the source of the meloxicam. Nor did he know of any treatments being given to or substances being used by anyone in contact with the greyhound that could be the source. Mr Brabon had told the local inquiry he believed his kennels were secure and that he was happy with security at Sittingbourne Stadium kennels. He had said he believed the meloxicam must have come from the meat fed to the greyhound. He said he fed chicken and beef, always cooked. The only ABP meat he fed was Category 3 meat.

In evidence to the Committee, Professor Morris said LGC Health Sciences had estimated the quantity of meloxicam found in the blood sample as being around 0.5 to 2 mg/ml. This corresponded to the greyhound being administered a clinical dose of meloxicam (as indicated on the packaging) at least 96 hours before the sample was taken. It was equally consistent with the smaller quantity of meloxicam that could have come from contaminated meat fed nearer the time the sample was taken. However, it was unlikely that the source of the meloxicam was meat if only Category 3 meat was being fed. Professor Morris also observed that a supplier would be likely to be very careful not to supply Category 2 meat or Category 3 meat contaminated with Category 2 meat: if he did, he would be at great risk of losing the DEFRA licence he had to have to trade.

The Committee found there were only two realistic causes for the blood sample testing positive for the presence of meloxicam: the feeding of meat contaminated with the NSAID; or the NSAID being administered to the greyhound. Mr Brabon only suggested it was from meat he had fed to the greyhound, but that was unlikely if, as Mr Brabon insisted and the Committee accepted, he only fed Category 3 meat. The Committee found that on the balance of probabilities that the cause was the administration of meloxicam to GLENVALE GINNY. On Mr Brabon's evidence to the local inquiry, the Committee concluded this would only have happened at his kennels and with his knowledge.

The Committee accordingly found Mr Brabon in breach of rule 174 (i) (a) in that he had administered or caused to be administered a substance, meloxicam, that may have affected the performance of GLENVALE GINNY or prejudiced the greyhound's wellbeing. Mr Brabon was in breach of rule 216 by failing to maintain his GBGB Greyhound Treatment Book by recording the administration of meloxicam to the greyhound. He was in breach of rule 217 by racing GLENVALE GINNY when she was not free of a substance that could affect her performance or wellbeing. Mr Brabon was in breach of rule 152 (i) & (ii) by this conduct, which was prejudicial to the integrity, proper conduct and good reputation of Greyhound racing.

The Committee heard that Mr Brabon had been found in breach of rule 174 (i) (b) in June 2012 when minoxidil had accidentally been administered to a greyhound in his charge. The matter under consideration was a first breach by deliberate administration of a substance. However, it was a serious matter. The Committee ordered that Mr Brabon receive a severe reprimand and be fined £500.

## **2. Peterborough Stadium – OASIS BLAZE – Professional Trainer Ms S Saberton**

Professional Trainer Sharon Saberton was found in breach of rules 174 (i) (b), 214, 217 and rule 152 (i) of the GBGB Rules of Racing in that a blood sample taken from the greyhound OASIS BLAZE at Peterborough Stadium on 21 March 2015 was analysed by LGC Health Sciences as containing the presence of the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory meloxicam.

Professional Trainer Ms Saberton attended with the Director of Racing at Peterborough, Mr Con Baker. Also in attendance were Mr Adrian Smith (Area Stipendiary Steward) and Professor Tim Morris (Independent Scientific Adviser).

The Committee hear that a blood sample was taken from OASIS BLAZE as part of a preliminary investigation into time finding after the greyhound won a 435m B6 race at Peterborough Stadium on 21 March 2015 with a time of 26.40 at normal going allowance, finding 0.74 spots on her best recent time. The blood sample had been analysed by LGC Health Sciences as containing the presence of meloxicam.

The Committee heard evidence from Professor Morris that meloxicam is a prescription NSAID very commonly used in veterinary medicine, available from numerous companies in tablet and liquid form for oral administration and in injectable forms. Like all NSAIDs it had the potential to cause adverse effects, most commonly vomiting. Some effects could be life-threatening, the most common of these being gastrointestinal ulceration. Professor Morris knew of no studies showing meloxicam would directly affect a greyhound's performance. However, it could have an indirect effect by alleviating symptoms and so mitigating adverse effects of pain or inflammation. In Professor Morris's opinion it was a substance which by its nature could affect the performance or prejudice the wellbeing of a greyhound.

Ms Saberton told the local inquiry and confirmed in evidence to the Committee that OASIS BLAZE had not received any treatment since coming into her charge on 1 February 2015. The only medical treatments being used by anyone at her kennels in contact with the greyhound were one kennelhand taking Thyroxine and another taking Tramadol. She was satisfied that her kennels and the kennels at Peterborough Stadium were secure. She said the only supplements she gave her greyhounds was White-E vitamin supplement and cod liver oil, although only cod liver oil would have been given to OASIS BLAZE. The only explanation Ms Saberton could offer for the presence of meloxicam was that it came from the greyhound's feed. She told the local inquiry she had been feeding a main meal Monday to Friday of Odds-On meal, meat and vegetables, the meat being 75% beef and 25 % chicken. On Saturday the meat she fed had been 100% liver and on Sunday 100% tripe. Ms

Saberton produced to the Committee receipts from her supplier which showed the meat supplied had all been Category 2 ABP meat. Ms Saberton admitted that prior to the sample taken from OASIS BLAZE testing positive, all meat fed to her greyhounds had been Category 2 meat.

Professor Morris gave evidence that LGC Health Sciences had estimated the quantity of meloxicam found in the blood sample from OASIS BLAZE as being around 10 ng/ml. This corresponded to the greyhound being administered a clinical dose of meloxicam at least 96 hours before the sample was taken. The vitamin supplement White-E would not have been a source of meloxicam. Nor would the medications said to have been taken by kennelhands. It was possible that the source of the meloxicam was Category 2 meat. Professor Morris referred to the GBGB "Advice for trainers: Feeding Red Meat" published in the Calendar of 30 November 2012 and 21 November 2014 that Category 2 ABP meat was classified under EC regulations as being of high risk to public and animal health, that it may contain drug residues and that trainers should only use Category 3 ABP meat. The advice published in 2014 warned that feeding Category 2 meat would be considered an aggravating factor in any enquiry relating to greyhounds testing positive for medicines that might originate from feeding meat. Professor Morris told the committee it was not unusual to find proscribed substances in Category 2 meat and particularly it would not be unusual to find traces of the commonly used NSAID meloxicam.

In her evidence to the Committee Ms Saberton admitted she had fed Category 2 meat to her greyhounds for very many years and had carried on doing so despite being aware of the GBGB advice published in the Calendar in 2012 and 2014. She said that because she had never had a greyhound test positive she had become complacent, thinking it would never happen to her.

Ms Saberton told the Committee she now bought Category 2 meat and Category 3 meat, which was stored separately and cooked separately in cleaned pots. She fed only Category 3 meat to greyhounds for 4 days before they raced.

Regarding the time finding inquiry, Ms Saberton told the local inquiry and repeated to the Committee that OASIS BLAZE had been bought on 10 January 2015 in the expectation she would be B4/B3. There had been a virus in the kennel which may have affected the greyhound. She had trialled disappointingly on 17 and 24 February and 3 March. On 7 March the trainer in Ireland the greyhound had come from had told her the greyhound was genuine and a bargain, but that she ran better at night than in daylight and that she had been in season in December. Ms Saberton said the greyhound had been entered to race each week but railers found it difficult to get on the card regularly and OASIS BLAZE had not raced for 2½ weeks after trialling. Ms Saberton believed the greyhound had not come into season at the end of December, as the friends she had bought her from would have noticed bleeding. She had had only one disappointing performance since the race on 21 March, when she ran in an early race on 15 April, since when Ms Saberton had asked for late races

for the greyhound. She believed OASIS BLAZE did run better under artificial lighting. The virus, improving on coming out of season and running under artificial lighting could all have contributed to the greyhound's improved performance in the 2½ weeks between the trial and the race.

Area Stipendiary Steward Adrian Smith told the Committee that the greyhound's performance was likely to improve as she came out of season. He believed that, if OASIS BLAZE had been in season in December, that could explain the improvement in her performance in the period over which she had been trialled and then raced on 21 March.

In his closing statement to the Committee, the Director of Regulation said that in the light of the evidence on time finding, the GBGB withdrew the allegation of breach of Rule 49 (iv). It also withdrew the allegation of breach of Rule 216: it accepted that the source of meloxicam in this case had been from feeding Category 2 meat.

The Committee found Ms Saberton in breach of 174 (i) (b) in that she had had in her charge a greyhound, OASIS BLAZE, which showed the presence of a substance, meloxicam, which by its nature could affect the performance of the greyhound or could prejudice its wellbeing. Ms Saberton was in breach of rule 214 by failing to ensure that the greyhound was free from a substance that may affect or influence its performance or prejudice its welfare. Ms Saberton was in breach of rule 217 by racing OASIS BLAZE when the greyhound was not free of a substance that could affect her performance or wellbeing. By this conduct Ms Saberton was in breach of rule 152 (i), being responsible for actions forbidden by the GBGB Rules of Racing and for failing to take action she was required to take under the GBGB Rules of Racing.

Mr Con Baker, Director of Racing at Peterborough, spoke for Ms Saberton, commending her honesty and her service over many years to greyhound racing at Peterborough and particularly her dedicated work on the re-homing of greyhounds. Area Stipendiary Steward Adrian Smith also commended her impressive record for re-homing.

The Committee took into account Mr Baker's and Mr Smith's commendations. Nevertheless, the Committee agreed with the view of the GBGB that Ms Saberton had been reckless in her conscious disregard for the advice repeatedly given to trainers by the GBGB only to feed Category 3 ABP meat. That advice was given because feeding Category 2 meat represented a potential risk to animal health and carried a high risk of containing substances banned under the Rules of Racing. Ms Saberton had carried on feeding Category 2 meat to racing dogs, hoping she would continue to get away with what was a neglect of her duties as a trainer. The Committee ordered that Ms Saberton be reprimanded and pay a fine of £200.