

CALENDAR NOTICE (to be published 20 October 2017)

Disciplinary Committee Inquiries

The Disciplinary Committee of the GBGB were in attendance at a meeting held on 3 October 2017:-

Mr K Salmon (in the chair)

Mr A Hunt

Mr H Starte

1. Perry Barr Stadium – MONBEG ROBIN – Professional Trainer Mr JH Smith

Professional Trainer John Henry Smith 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 MONBEG ROBIN at Perry Barr Stadium on 12 March 2017 was analysed by LGC Health Sciences as containing the presence of ketoprofen.

Mr Smith was in attendance and accompanied by his kennelhand Tim Fisher. Martin Seal, racing manager of Perry Barr Stadium, apologised for his non-attendance. Paula Clare, stipendiary steward and Professor Tim Morris, independent scientific adviser were in attendance.

On 12 March 2017, a pre-race urine sample was taken from MONBEG ROBIN at Perry Barr Stadium. An analysis undertaken by LGC identified the presence of ketoprofen.

On 12 September 2016, a point of registration sample had been taken from MONBEG ROBIN. An analysis undertaken by LGC also identified the presence of ketoprofen.

Mr Smith had purchased MONBEG ROBIN on 11 September 2016 at Doncaster Greyhound Sales. A urine sample had been taken from MONBEG ROBIN on 11 September 2016 prior to the sales. Upon analysis that sample was negative.

The Disciplinary Committee heard evidence from Professor Tim Morris, independent scientific adviser, that ketoprofen chemically is in the class of drugs described as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. All NSAID's have the potential to induce adverse reactions in dogs including vomiting and gastrointestinal ulceration. In the opinion of Professor Morris, ketoprofen is a substance which by its nature could affect the performance or prejudice the welfare of the greyhound.

In Professor Morris's opinion the potential sources of the ketoprofen are a food (meat) source, a veterinary or a medical drug.

Mr Smith gave evidence. The Disciplinary Committee found him to be an honest witness doing his best to assist the Committee. He was quite clear that he had not administered either veterinary or medical ketoprofen. The Disciplinary Committee accepted that evidence.

It appeared, therefore, that the likely explanation was contaminated food. Mr Smith had told the Committee that at the time he fed Gain 28, Arkwrights and mince from Lidl. They accepted that evidence, and in those circumstances, could not identify the source of the ketoprofen, although the Committee noted that Mr Smith gave his dogs bones, not necessarily from animals fit for human consumption, which may be a potential source of ketoprofen.

In those circumstances, the Disciplinary Committee was satisfied that there was no sufficient evidence to establish a breach of rule 174 (i)(a). However, some of the GBGB Rules of Racing impose strict liability on the trainer or registered sales agent. The Disciplinary Committee therefore found Mr Smith in breach of rules 152 (i), 174(i)(b) and 217 of the GBGB Rules of Racing.

The Disciplinary Committee noted that as the result of this positive test, Mr Smith had changed his feeding regime. He will further review his feeding regime in light of the evidence heard before the Disciplinary Committee. In those circumstances, the Disciplinary Committee ordered that Mr Smith be cautioned.

2. Towcester Stadium – THERES THE BELL – International Trainer Mr B Matthews

International Trainer Brendan Matthews was found in breach of rules 152 (i), 174 (i)(a), 214 and 217 of the GBGB Rules of Racing in that a urine sample taken from the greyhound THERES THE BELL at Towcester Stadium on 2 June 2017 was analysed by LGC Health Sciences as containing the presence of theophylline and caffeine; and that he allowed a substance to be administered that could affect the performance and/or wellbeing of the greyhound.

Mr Matthews was unable to attend in person but participated by means of telephone conference. Chris Page, racing manager of Towcester Stadium, apologised for his non-attendance. Paula Clare, stipendiary steward and Professor Tim Morris, independent scientific adviser were in attendance.

On 2 June 2017 a pre-race urine sample was taken from THERES THE BELL at Towcester Stadion prior to a first round Derby heat which upon analysis by LGC identified the presence of theophylline and caffeine.

The Disciplinary Committee heard evidence from Professor Morris, independent scientific adviser, to the effect that theophylline and caffeine affect dogs by stimulating the brain, and heart, and opening up the airways. In his opinion, caffeine and theophylline as mental and cardiac stimulants and bronchodilators are both substances which could affect the performance or prejudice the wellbeing of a greyhound.

Mr Matthews admitted the breaches. He stated that it had been his practice for many years to give his dogs tea as part of their diet. He stated he had never had a positive test and felt that this was an acceptable practice in Ireland. He further stated that he had not realised that it might result in a breach of the GBGB Rules of Racing.

He explained to the Disciplinary Committee that THERES THE BELL had been given tea at 9.00 am on the morning of 2 June 2017. Professor Morris confirmed that the scientific evidence was consistent with that explanation.

Mr Matthews stated that the positive test had come as a great shock. He described these events as a “learning curve” and assured the Committee that he condemned the use of drugs and during his more than 50 years as a greyhound trainer he always abides by the rules. He further assured the Committee that there would be no repetition of this breach.

The Disciplinary Committee noted his assurances and also that there were no previous breaches recorded against him. However, this positive sample occurred prior to a first round Derby heat and so was a serious matter. In all the circumstances, the Disciplinary Committee ordered that Mr Matthews be reprimanded.

Professor Morris pointed out that the testing for prohibited substances had changed out of recognition in the time Mr Matthews had been training, and that the testing regime in Ireland was significantly different to that across the UK. The Disciplinary Committee would urge all international trainers to ensure that they were fully aware of the requirements of the GBGB Rules of Racing when they run dogs in the UK.

3. Henlow Stadium – URASTAR– Registered Sales Agent Mr M Ryan

Registered Sales Agent Matthew Ryan was found in breach of rules 152 (i), 174 (i)(b), 214 and 217 of the GBGB Rules of Racing in that a urine sample taken from the greyhound URASTAR at Henlow Stadium on 12 May 2017 was analysed by LGC Health Sciences as containing the presence of ampyrone and 4-methylaminoantipyrene.

Mr Ryan apologised for his absence as did Paul Mellor, racing manager of Henlow Stadium. Paul Illingworth, senior stipendiary steward and Professor Tim Morris, independent scientific adviser were in attendance.

On 12 May 2017 a pre-trial urine sample was taken from URASTAR prior to a two-dog sales trial at Henlow Stadium, which upon analysis by LGC identified the presence of ampyrone and 4-methylaminoantipyrene.

The Disciplinary Committee heard evidence from Professor Morris, independent scientific adviser, to the effect ampyrone and 4-methylaminoantipyrene are metabolites of dipyrone, which is a constituent of a veterinary medicine, Buscopan Compositum®, with pain killing and anti-inflammatory properties. As such they are substances which could affect the performance or prejudice the wellbeing of a greyhound.

Professor Morris gave evidence that Buscopan Compositum® is licensed for use in cattle, horses and dogs, and was the most probable source of ampyrone and 4-methylaminoantipyrene found in the urine of URASTAR.

Mr Ryan, in reply to the GBGB Q & A questions put to him by Hayley Huntley, stipendiary steward on 13 June 2017, stated that he had been treating URASTAR for kennel cough by administering Disprin® twice a day. He had no explanation for the presence of the metabolite of dipyrone other than that “it could have been in the meat”. He admitted feeding category 2 meat. He stated that he

stopped giving Disprin® on the morning before the sales and that the kennel cough was “cleared up” for the sales.

Professor Morris stated that the scientific evidence did not preclude Mr Ryan’s accounts of using Disprin® from being true. He said that such a treatment would have been “better than nothing” but questioned the advisability of transporting a dog internationally which might be contagious.

He further stated that the ingestion of contaminated category 2 meat where that animal had been treated with Buscopan Compositum® was one of two possible sources of ampyrone and 4-methylaminoantipyrine, the other being veterinary treatment with Buscopan Compositum®.

There was no evidence of medical treatment with Buscopan Compositum®, therefore the Disciplinary Committee considered the feeding of contaminated meat to be the likeliest source.

Accordingly, the Disciplinary Committee found Mr Ryan in breach of 152 (i), 174 (i)(b), 214 and 217 of the GBGB Rules of Racing and ordered that he be reprimanded and fined £400.

4. Mr W O’Donoghue

On 19 September 2013 Mr William O’Donoghue was disqualified indefinitely for a breach of rules 152 (i) & (ii), 174 (i)(b) and 174 (xiv)(b) of the GBGB Rules of Racing. He now appeared before the Disciplinary Committee to have that disqualification lifted.

The background to Mr O’Donoghue’s application is that he was first disqualified in 2007. On 16 June 2011 he successfully applied to the Disciplinary Committee to have that disqualification lifted, on condition that he sold only his own greyhounds and that he took all reasonable steps to ensure that his greyhounds were free from prohibited substances.

On 18 October 2012 he received a further 12 months disqualification suspended for 12 months.

On 19 September 2013 he appeared before the Disciplinary Committee for breaches of the GBGB Rules of Racing arising on 15 October 2012 when he sold a greyhound called STAY FOR RUBY at Perry Barr Sales Trials, which subsequently tested positive for stanozolol. He did not own that greyhound but was acting as agent for Mr John Mulcahy. The Disciplinary Committee found that the only step he took to ensure that STAY FOR RUBY was free of prohibited substances was to trust the word of Mr Mulcahy.

The Disciplinary Committee did not consider that this amounted to “taking all reasonable steps” and considered that Mr O’Donoghue had therefore breached a fundamental condition of the lifting of his disqualification. He accepted that selling a greyhound that he did not own was also a breach of those conditions.

Mr O’Donoghue had an appalling record, having appeared before the Disciplinary Committee on several occasions for drugs related breaches, including five breaches of rule 174 (i)(a) (or its NGRC equivalent) for administering prohibited substances.

Mr O'Donoghue put his application on the basis that if he were granted a licence, he would only deal with a small number of dogs and that he would have those dogs in his charge for a minimum of 21 days before selling them. He attributed his previous breaches to having a turnover of several hundred dogs a year combined with an extremely lax testing routine in Ireland.

In order to allow this application, the Disciplinary Committee would have to be confident that Mr O'Donoghue would not in future breach the GBGB Rules of Racing. The Committee had no such confidence. In the past, he had shown himself willing flagrantly to breach the conditions upon which his licence was restored, wilfully and for his own ends. Nothing he said to the Committee convinced them that his attitude had changed. He refused to acknowledge that he had administered prohibited substances notwithstanding the five breaches of rule 174 (i)(a), and came close to saying that his previous breaches were inevitable and/or bad luck. There was no change in his circumstances which convinced the Committee that if it suited his purposes he would not breach the GBGB Rules of Racing once more.

Accordingly, the Disciplinary Committee dismissed his application.