

DECISION

Hearing Date:	20 February 2026
Code:	Greyhounds
Stewards:	Andrew Spence (Chairperson) Dan Broxham
Participant:	Steven Scott
Rule:	GAR 141 – Greyhound to be free of prohibited substances (1) The owner, trainer or other person in charge of a greyhound: a. nominated to compete in an Event; Must present the greyhound free of a prohibited substance.
Charge:	As the trainer of Custard's Son, Mr Steven Scott did present that greyhound to compete in race 7 at the Townsville Greyhound Racing Club on 20 May 2025 with a permanently banned prohibited substance in its system, namely Tapentadol.
Plea:	Not Guilty.

Background of Inquiry

- [1] This Stewards' inquiry was convened to address a positive sample collected from the greyhound Custard's Son, trained by Mr Steven Scott. The owner of Custard's Son declined to attend or make submissions to the inquiry panel.
- [2] The sample in question was collected from Custard's Son on 20 May 2025 at Townsville Greyhound Racing Club (GRC), following its win in race 7.
- [3] The Stewards received two certificates of analysis from the Racing Science Centre (RSC) in Queensland and Racing Analytical Services Ltd (RASL) in Victoria. Both certificates confirmed the detection of the prohibited substance Tapentadol. The RASL certificate further indicated that Tapentadol was not detected in the control fluid.
- [4] During the inquiry, the Stewards reviewed several pieces of evidence to assess the circumstances surrounding the positive sample. Treatment records provided by Mr Scott were examined and found to be accurate, reflecting appropriate documentation of his greyhound's care.
- [5] Interviews were conducted with track staff and officials from the relevant race meeting to explore any potential sources of contamination; however, no link to the prohibited substance Tapentadol was identified.

- [6] Expert verbal evidence was also provided by Dr Shawn Stanley, Director of the Racing Science Centre, who offered expert insight into the nature of the substance and confirmed the proper procedures for sample collection.
- [7] Additionally, the Stewards attempted to recover CCTV footage from the Townsville Greyhound Racing Club to assist in the investigation. Unfortunately, no footage was available for the relevant race meeting, though the club has since upgraded its CCTV equipment to improve storage capacity.
- [8] Mr Scott also made verbal submissions, of which he described to the panel he was unable to determine a source for the positive sample.

Charge

- [9] The Stewards determined that Mr Scott had a charge to answer under Greyhounds Australasia Rule 141(1)(a), which states:

The owner, trainer or other person in charge of a greyhound, nominated to compete in an Event, must present the greyhound free of any prohibited substance.

- [10] The specifics of the charge were:

As the trainer of Custard's Son, Mr Steven Scott presented the greyhound to compete in race 9 at the Townsville Greyhound Racing Club on 20 May 2025 with a permanently banned prohibited substance in its system, namely Tapentadol.

- [11] Mr Scott acknowledged his understanding of the rule and the charge, however entered a Not Guilty plea and made further submissions to the Stewards.

Finding of Charge

- [12] In determining the outcome of this matter, the Stewards carefully considered the evidence presented, the submissions made by Mr Scott, and the relevant rules and principles governing greyhound racing. Mr Scott, in entering a plea of Not Guilty to the charge submitted, that he had no knowledge of the presence of the prohibited substance Tapentadol in his greyhound Custard's Son. He further emphasised that there was no intent on his part to administer the substance and that, had he been aware of its presence, he would have immediately scratched the greyhound from the race.
- [13] The Stewards considered the provisions of Greyhounds Australasia Rule 141(3), which states:
- The owner, trainer or person in charge of a greyhound presented contrary to subrule (1) of this rule shall be guilty of an offence.*
- [14] This rule establishes that the responsibility for ensuring a greyhound is presented free of prohibited substances lies with the trainer or person in charge of the greyhound. The rule operates under the principle of strict liability, meaning that the presence of a prohibited substance in a greyhound's system is sufficient to establish a breach, regardless of intent or knowledge.
- [15] The Stewards also relied on Greyhounds Australasia Rule 154(6), which provides that two certificates from approved laboratories are conclusive evidence of the presence of a prohibited substance in a sample. In this case, the certificates of analysis from the Racing Science Centre and Racing Analytical Services Ltd confirmed the presence of Tapentadol in the sample

collected from Custard's Son. The Stewards determined that this evidence was sufficient to establish a breach of GAR 141(1)(a).

- [16] While the Stewards acknowledged Mr Scott's submissions and his efforts to investigate the source of the positive sample, they concluded that the strict liability nature of GAR 141 left no room for discretion in determining guilt. The rule does not require proof of intent or knowledge, and the presence of the prohibited substance in the greyhound's system was sufficient to establish the offence. As such, the Stewards found Mr Scott guilty of presenting Custard's Son to compete in race 9 at the Townsville Greyhound Racing Club on 20 May 2025 with a prohibited substance in its system.
- [17] This finding reflects the Stewards' commitment to maintaining the integrity of greyhound racing and ensuring compliance with the rules that govern the sport. It also underscores the importance of trainers and other responsible persons exercising the highest standards of care and diligence in their handling and management of greyhounds to prevent breaches of the rules.

Penalty Consideration

- [18] Having found Mr Scott guilty of the charge under GAR 141(1)(a), the Stewards turned their attention to determining an appropriate penalty. In doing so, they carefully considered Mr Scott's submissions, his personal and professional circumstances, and the broader implications for the greyhound racing industry.
- [19] The Stewards acknowledged Mr Scott's extensive experience in the greyhound racing industry, spanning almost 30 years, during which he has maintained an exemplary disciplinary record. His cooperation and forthrightness throughout the inquiry were also noted, as he provided detailed responses to all questions and actively engaged in the investigative process. These factors were weighed heavily in his favour during the penalty deliberations.
- [20] Tapentadol, as evidenced by Dr Stanely during the inquiry, is a Schedule 8 substance under the Standard for the Uniform Scheduling of Medicines and Poisons. GAR 139(f) provides for substances listed under this Schedule to be permanently banned in greyhound racing. The presence of such a substance in a racing greyhound undermines the integrity of the sport and the principle of fair competition. The Stewards emphasised the importance of maintaining drug-free racing to uphold public confidence in the sport and ensure a level playing field for all participants.
- [21] The Stewards also considered the broader implications of the penalty on Mr Scott's personal and professional circumstances. As a professional trainer and breeder, greyhound racing is Mr Scott's main source of income. A disqualification or suspension would have significant financial and reputational consequences for him. The Stewards recognised the potential impact of a penalty on Mr Scott's livelihood but emphasised the need to balance this with the overarching purpose of the rules, which is to maintain public confidence in the integrity of greyhound racing and safeguard the welfare of all animals involved in the sport.
- [22] In addition to Mr Scott's submissions, the Stewards reviewed penalty precedents for similar cases involving the prohibited substance Tapentadol. These precedents included penalties imposed on Christine Bourke (QRIC, December 2025), Stuart Kendrick (RAP, November 2025), Darryl Wilson (GWIC, May 2025), Amanda Ginn (GWIC, May 2023), and Debra Cumes (VRT, October 2024). The penalties in these cases ranged from fines, suspensions and disqualifications, with varying degrees of leniency afforded depending on the circumstances of each case. The Stewards also referred to the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission

Greyhound Racing Penalty Guidelines 2023, which classify Tapentadol as a Category 1 substance and provides a framework for determining appropriate penalties.

- [23] In determining the appropriate level of culpability, the Stewards considered the principles articulated in RAP-131 Lindsey Hatch and the authorities referenced therein, including the categorisation of culpability derived from McDonough v Harness Racing Victoria. Those authorities recognise three broad categories of culpability in presentation offences:
1. Cases involving positive culpability, where evidence establishes deliberate administration, intentional misconduct, or conduct amounting to recklessness.
 2. Cases where no explanation is available, and the presence of the substance may have arisen through accidental, inadvertent, or unknown means.
 3. Cases where the trainer provides an explanation that is accepted and demonstrates no personal culpability, supported by evidence of robust systems and preventative measures.
- [24] The Stewards accepted that Mr Scott did not engage in deliberate or reckless conduct, and there was no evidence of intentional administration of Tapentadol. His treatment records were accurate, his cooperation was full and candid, and his husbandry practices were diligent. These matters weigh against any finding of positive culpability.
- [25] However, unlike cases where the source of contamination is identified and corroborated—such as the Stewards’ recent decision involving Christine Bourke, where inadvertent contamination was established through evidence—the present matter does not include a verified explanation for the presence of the substance.
- [26] The Stewards considered whether Mr Scott’s evidence and practices were sufficient to place him closer to the third category. While his submissions demonstrated conscientious management and a willingness to implement further safeguards, the permanently banned nature of Tapentadol, coupled with the absence of a confirmed contamination pathway, prevented the Stewards from concluding that the breach occurred despite all reasonably practicable precautions.
- [27] Accordingly, the Stewards determined that Mr Scott’s culpability falls within the second category, albeit at the lower end. This reflects that:
1. There was no evidence that he contributed to the administration of the substance.
 2. He maintained sound husbandry practices.
 3. He was unable to provide an explanation capable of being accepted as establishing no personal culpability.
- [28] This intermediate position is consistent with the reasoning adopted in RAP-200 Stuart Kendrick and the principles in Wallace v Queensland Racing, where strict liability operates but culpability remains relevant to penalty. The Stewards therefore assessed Mr Scott’s culpability as moderate but mitigated, reflecting both the seriousness of a permanently banned substance and the absence of aggravating features such as intent, systemic negligence, or disregard for the rules.

- [29] The Stewards further considered Mr Scott's human rights under the Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld). While acknowledging that any penalty may limit Mr Scott's rights to property (Section 24), specifically his trainer's licence, the Stewards determined that the penalty was necessary to achieve the purposes of the Racing Integrity Act 2016. These purposes include maintaining public confidence in the sport, ensuring compliance with the rules, and safeguarding animal welfare. The Stewards concluded that a caution or reprimand would not sufficiently enforce compliance or achieve these purposes. However, while the QRIC Greyhound Racing Penalty Guidelines provide for a starting penalty of 12-months disqualification for this type of offending, they also determined that in the circumstances of Mr Scott's case a disqualification would be excessive.
- [30] Ultimately, the Stewards determined that a combination of a suspended suspension and a monetary penalty would serve as an appropriate sanction to both specifically deter Mr Scott from any future similar rule breaches, but more importantly deter the wider greyhound industry. This approach balances the need for deterrence and compliance with the recognition of Mr Scott's contributions to the industry and his personal circumstances. The penalty also reinforces the importance of drug-free racing and promotes adherence to the rules among all participants.

Penalty Decision

- [31] The Stewards have determined the penalty to be a \$3000 fine and additionally a 2-month suspension, which is wholly suspended for a period of 12 months pending no further breaches of a similar rule.
- [32] Additionally, under Greyhounds Australasia Rule 141(4), Custard's Son is disqualified from the relevant race, and any prize money associated with the event must be returned to Racing Queensland.

Right Of Appeal

- [33] Mr Scott was advised that pursuant to Chapter 6 of the Racing Integrity Act 2016 (Qld), the right for a review of a racing decision of a steward is provided, noting any application for review must be made within three (3) business days of this decision.