

DECISION

The Rules of Racing of Racing Queensland – Greyhounds Part 8 - Prohibited Substances And Prohibited Methods

Inquiry Number:	G-27-011
Participant:	Austin Dillon
Stewards:	Cameron Ferguson (Chairperson) Brad Tamer
Code:	Greyhounds
Rule:	Greyhounds Australasia Rule 141(1)(a) <i>The owner, trainer or other person in charge of greyhound nominated to compete in an Event must present the greyhound free of a prohibited substance.</i>
Penalty Notice:	PN 013611
Hearing Date:	30 September 2026
Decision Date:	30 September 2026
Charge:	As the trainer of Wicket, Mr Austin Dillon presented the greyhound Wicket to compete in Race 5 at the Queensland Greyhound Racing Club (Q1) on 4 June 2026 with a prohibited substance in its system, namely Heptaminol.
Plea:	Guilty
Penalty:	\$2500

Reasons for Decision

Background

1. This inquiry concerned the presentation of Wicket, trained by Mr Austin Dillon, to compete in Race 5 at the Queensland Greyhound Racing Club on 4 June 2026. A pre-race sample collected from Wicket was found to contain the prohibited substance Heptaminol.
2. The Racing Science Centre detected Heptaminol in the sample. Confirmatory analysis by Racing Analytical Services Ltd also detected Heptaminol and reported that the

substance was not detected in the control fluid. The Stewards also received expert evidence from Dr Shawn Stanley, General Manager of Analytical Services at the Racing Science Centre.

3. The Stewards considered the certificates of analysis, Mr Dillon's evidence and submissions, his treatment records, and the other material relevant to the positive sample. The treatment records were examined and found to be accurate. Mr Dillon subsequently pleaded guilty to a charge under GAR 141(1)(a) of presenting a greyhound to compete with a prohibited substance in its system.

Submissions

4. Mr Dillon put forward to stewards that in his opinion the most likely source of the Heptaminol was through contamination while emptying out his greyhound "Wicket" at the Q racing facilities. He stated that the greyhound likes to lick the grass when the opportunity presents and may have licked the urine of another greyhound in the empty out area.
5. Mr Dillon expressed to Stewards that if a penalty was to be imposed, he hoped that it would take the form of a monetary penalty. As he currently travelling interstate on a regular basis to provide support for an ill relative and his greyhound training business could continue to operate without the need to relocated greyhounds.

Stewards Consideration of Submissions

6. With respect to Mr Dillon's submissions of his opinion as to the source of the positive sample, Dr Stanley stated during the inquiry hearing that this theory of contamination put forward by Mr Dillon was unlikely to be the source or reason for the prohibited substance being detected in the sample due to the nature of the substance and the analytical methods used for detection.
7. The Stewards accept and prefer Dr Stanley's evidence and dismissed Mr Dillon's theory as the source of the positive sample. The Stewards therefore formed the opinion that the source of the positive sample remained unknown.

Findings on Penalty

8. In determining the outcome of this matter, the Stewards carefully considered the evidence presented, the submissions made by Mr Dillon and the relevant rules and principles governing greyhound racing. Mr Dillon's in entering a plea of Guilty to the charges submitted, that he had no knowledge of the presence of the prohibited substance Heptaminol in his greyhound Wicket when it competed.
9. Having found Mr Dillon 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 Dillon's submissions, his personal and professional circumstances, and the broader implications for the greyhound racing industry.
10. The Stewards acknowledged Mr Dillon's extensive experience in the greyhound racing industry, spanning almost 40 years, during which he has maintained an excellent disciplinary record, but not blemish free. His cooperation and forthrightness throughout the inquiry were also noted.
11. Heptaminol being a prohibited substance 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.
12. The Stewards also considered the broader implications of the penalty on Mr Dillon's personal and professional circumstances. As a professional trainer, greyhound racing is Mr Dillon'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 Dillon'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.
13. The Stewards accepted that Mr Dillon did not engage in deliberate or reckless conduct, however, did see the need for an improvement in the future of husbandry practices, Mr Dillon has since changed empty out procedures adopted since obtaining the initial discrepancy.]

14. Stewards reviewed penalty precedents for similar cases involving the prohibited substance Heptaminol precedents included penalties imposed on Gardoll (April 2022 GWIC) where a lesser monetary fine was imposed with Mr Gardoll having a blemish free record. Stewards also considered Jeffries (RWWA Jun 2026) in which case Heptaminol was present in the relevant greyhound in this case it was Mr Jeffries third offence to a prohibited substance. The penalties in these cases ranged between monetary fines and suspensions, 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 Heptaminol as a Category 2 substance and provides a framework for determining appropriate penalties.

Human Rights

15. The Stewards further considered Dillon's human rights under the Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld). While acknowledging that any penalty may limit Mr Dillons 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.
16. The Stewards considered whether a less restrictive outcome, such as a caution or reprimand, or only a monetary fine would adequately address the offending. Having regard to the nature of the breach, the presence of a prohibited substance in a racing greyhound, and the need for both specific and general deterrence, the Stewards determined that a monetary fine would sufficiently reflect the seriousness of the matter and promote future compliance.
17. The Stewards were therefore satisfied that a monetary fine was a proportionate penalty compatible with the Human rights Act 2019 (QLD). It is recognised that Mr Dillon's circumstances while also reinforcing the importance of drug free racing and maintaining confidence in the integrity of the greyhound racing industry.

Penalty Decision

18. The Stewards determined the penalty to be a \$2500 fine.

19. Additionally, under the provisions of GAR 141(4), Wicket is disqualified from the relevant race, and any prize money associated with the event must be returned to Racing Queensland.

Right of Review

20. Participant 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.