

DECISION

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

Inquiry Number:	G-27-004
Participant:	Ms Holly Taylor
Stewards:	Wesley Maher (Chairperson) Michael Fernholz (Panel) Rachel Berry (Panel)
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-013354
Hearing Date:	31 July 2026
Decision Date:	31 July 2026
Charge:	As the trainer of Aria Joy, Ms Holly Taylor did present that greyhound to compete in race 1 at the Queensland Greyhound Racing Club (Q2 Parklands) on 19 April 2026 with a prohibited substance in its system, namely Sotalol.
Plea:	Guilty
Penalty:	2-month suspension, wholly suspended for 12 months, and a \$250 fine.

Reasons for Decision

Background

1. This Stewards' inquiry was convened following the detection of a prohibited substance in a post-race urine sample taken from Aria Joy, trained by Ms Holly Taylor, after the greyhound placed first in race 1 at the Queensland Greyhound Racing Club (QGRC) – Q2 Parklands on 19 April 2026.
2. The Stewards received certificates of analysis from the Racing Science Centre (RSC) and Racing Analytical Services Ltd (RASL), both of which confirmed the presence of Sotalol. The RASL certificate also confirmed that Sotalol was not detected in the control solution.

3. During the inquiry, the Stewards reviewed several pieces of evidence to assess the circumstances surrounding the positive sample. An inspection report provided by Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission (GWIC) was examined, reflecting appropriate documentation of Ms Taylor's greyhound practices.
4. Ms Taylor made both verbal and documented submissions regarding the potential source of the positive sample. Furthermore, her documented submissions included a declaration from herself, penalty submissions, and character references.
5. Additionally, the Stewards also heard expert evidence from Dr Stacey Flynn, Chief Veterinary Officer QRIC and Dr Shawn Stanley, General Manager of Analytical Services at Racing Science Centre QRIC.

Charge

6. The Stewards considered all available evidence and determined that Ms Taylor had a charge to answer under the provisions of GAR 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.

7. The specifics of the charge were:

As the trainer of Aria Joy, Ms Holly Taylor presented the greyhound to compete in race 1 at the Queensland Greyhound Racing Club – Q2 Parklands on 19 April 2026 with a prohibited substance in its system, namely Sotalol.

8. Ms Taylor acknowledged her understanding of the rule and the charge and pleaded guilty to the charge.

Penalty Considerations

9. In considering Ms Taylor's guilty plea to the charge under GAR 141(1)(a), the Stewards turned their mind to determining an appropriate penalty. In doing so, they had regard to Ms Taylor's submissions, her professional and personal circumstances, and the broader need to uphold integrity and public confidence in greyhound racing.
10. The Stewards acknowledged Ms Taylor's 8 years of experience and contribution to the greyhound racing industry, approximately 2 of those years being a registered trainer. They also noted her cooperation and forthrightness throughout the inquiry, providing a professional approach to the matter. Furthermore, the Stewards considered that Ms Taylor had no prior offences. Subject to that matter, her disciplinary record and cooperation throughout the inquiry process was treated as very favourable.
11. The Stewards reviewed submissions made both verbally and written. Ms Taylor had provided considerable material and substantial insight to her processes both prior to, and following the notification of the discrepancy. Stewards evaluated the documented declaration from Ms Taylor herself, penalty submissions, and character references. These documents provided substantial clarity on the circumstances of the offence, Ms Taylor's record and commitment to the industry, amendment practices, Ms Taylor's character and penalty considerations.

12. The Stewards considered that Sotalol is a category 2 prohibited substance in the QRIC Greyhound Racing Penalty Guidelines 2023 ('Penalty Guidelines') which provides a starting point for penalty at a 4-month suspension. Sotalol's presence in a racing greyhound undermines the integrity of the sport and the principle of fair competition. Maintaining substance-free racing is essential to public confidence, animal welfare, and a level playing field for all participants.
13. The Stewards also considered the likely personal and professional impact of any penalty on Ms Taylor. As a hobby trainer, greyhound racing provides an additional source of income, and a disqualification or suspension would likely have financial and reputational consequences. Those matters were weighed against the need for penalties to promote compliance, deter similar conduct, and uphold the purposes of the Rules.
14. The Stewards reviewed relevant penalty precedents involving Sotalol, including Risk (GRV, June 2025) where husbandry practices were advanced as the most probable source of the substance, McCallum (GRV, June 2025), and Lyons (GRV, February 2025). The results of those matters involved combinations of monetary fines and wholly suspended suspensions, with the outcome depending on the circumstances of each case.
15. The Stewards accepted that Ms Taylor did not engage in deliberate or reckless conduct and that there was no evidence of intentional administration of Sotalol. They also accepted that her treatment records were accurate and that her cooperation was full and candid. These factors reduced the level of culpability and were treated as mitigating considerations.
16. In determining the appropriate level of culpability, the Stewards considered the three broad categories of culpability in presentation offences accepted based on prior precedents:
 - a) Cases involving positive culpability, where evidence establishes deliberate administration, intentional misconduct, or conduct amounting to recklessness.
 - b) Cases where no explanation is available, and the presence of the substance may have arisen through accidental, inadvertent, or unknown means.
 - c) Cases where the trainer provides an explanation that is accepted and demonstrates no personal culpability, supported by evidence of robust systems and preventative measures.
17. Accordingly, the Stewards determined that Ms Taylor's culpability falls within the second category. This reflects that:
 - a) There was no evidence that she contributed to the administration of the substance.
 - b) She maintained sound husbandry practices.
 - c) She was unable to provide an explanation capable of being accepted as establishing no personal culpability.

Human Rights

18. The Stewards considered Ms Taylor's human rights under the Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld), including any potential limitation on her property interests and her ability to

participate in greyhound racing. The Stewards were satisfied that the imposition of a of a disqualification would be excessive, and that in line with prior precedents as mentioned above, a combination of a suspended suspension and monetary fine was compatible with proportionally limiting Ms Taylor's human rights, as that is directed towards the legitimate purposes of the Racing Integrity Act 2016, including maintaining public confidence in racing, promoting compliance with the Rules, and safeguarding animal welfare.

19. 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 caution or reprimand or only a monetary fine would not sufficiently reflect the seriousness of the matter or promote future compliance.
20. The imposing of a suspended suspension in addition to a fine serve both as a personal deterrent to Ms Taylor and provides her an opportunity to demonstrate her improved practices during an operative period of 12 months, and also a general deterrent encouraging all participants to comply with the rules of racing and promote substance free racing.

Penalty Decision

21. The Stewards determined that a reduction was warranted from the starting point as provided for in the Penalty Guidelines for Ms Taylor's guilty plea taking from a 4-month suspension to a 3-month suspension. Further considering the frank and proper cooperation with the inquiry process and established improvements in kennel practices, and character references, the Stewards determined to further afford reduction to a 2-month suspension to be wholly suspended.
22. The final penalty determined by the Stewards is a 2-month suspension, which is wholly suspended for a period of 12 months pending no further breaches of a similar rule, and additionally, a \$250 fine.
23. Additionally, under Greyhounds Australasia Rule 141(4), Aria Joy is disqualified from the relevant race, and any prize money associated with the event must be returned to Racing Queensland.

Right of Review

24. Ms Taylor 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.