

## Stewards' Report

<b>Date:</b>	Wednesday, 29 March 2023
<b>Panel:</b>	Mr D Broxham (Chairperson), Mr D Aurisch, Ms B McErlean, Ms R Pedersen
<b>Person:</b>	Mr Gregory Stella
<b>Rule:</b>	GAR 141(1)(a)
<b>Charges:</b>	Mr Gregory Stella presented the greyhound Our Opals to compete in Race 2 at the Ipswich Greyhound Racing Club on 19 December 2022 when it was not free of a prohibited substance
<b>Substance:</b>	Cobalt
<b>Penalty:</b>	Twelve (12) month licence suspension with nine (9) months wholly suspended for twenty-four (24) months

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On 29 March 2023, the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission Stewards conducted an inquiry into analysts' findings that the prohibited substance Cobalt was detected in a post-race urine sample collected from the greyhound Our Opals when it competed in, and won, Race 2 at the Ipswich Greyhound Racing Club on 19 December 2022.

Submissions were made by Mr Gregory Stella during the inquiry as the licensed trainer of Our Opals at the relevant time.

After considering all of the evidence, Stewards issued a charge pursuant to Greyhounds Australasia Rule 141(1)(a), which provides:

*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.*

The specifics of the charge were as follows:

That Mr Gregory Stella, as the trainer of the greyhound Our Opals, did present that greyhound to compete in Race 2 at the Ipswich Greyhound Racing Club on 19 December 2022 with a prohibited substance in its system, namely Cobalt as detected by the Racing Science Centre and confirmed by Racing Analytical Services Limited at a level in excess of the mass concentration limit of 100 nanograms per millilitre in the post-race urine sample collected from the greyhound on 19 December 2022.

Mr Stella entered a plea of guilty to the charge and made further submissions in respect of penalty.

In determining the matter of penalty, Stewards considered the following:

- Mr Stella's plea of guilty to the charge at the earliest available opportunity;
- Mr Stella's time in the greyhound racing industry being approximately forty-six (46) years;
- Mr Stella's forthright evidence and cooperation throughout the inquiry;
- Mr Stella's immediate review of, and amendment to, his animal husbandry practices and his feeding regime upon being notified of the positive swab;

- the number of greyhounds currently in Mr Stella's care and custody, being approximately fourteen (14) greyhounds;
- the nature of the prohibited substance, being Cobalt, and the various industry notices issued to racing participants regarding products containing Cobalt;
- the need to maintain the integrity of greyhound racing and to ensure a level playing field for all participants
- the need for both specific deterrence to Mr Stella and general deterrence to the wider industry; and
- relevant penalty precedents.

Accordingly, Stewards determined that the appropriate penalty was a 12 month licence suspension with Stewards electing under Greyhound Australasia Rule 174(3) to wholly suspend 9 months for a period of 24 months conditional upon no further breach of a similar nature.

Acting under Greyhounds Australasia Rules 174(5), Stewards deferred the commencement of the penalty to 2 April 2023.

Further, Stewards permitted Mr Stella 14 days from 2 April 2023 to transfer all greyhounds from his care and custody, with Stewards permission being required for each transfer.

Acting under the provisions of Greyhounds Australasia Rule 141(4), Stewards directed that Our Opals be disqualified from Race 2 at the Ipswich Greyhound Racing Club on 19 December 2022 (1<sup>st</sup> place) and further acting under the provisions of Greyhounds Australasia Rule 141(5), Stewards directed that Our Opals be disqualified from Race 3 at the Ipswich Greyhound Racing Club on 26 December 2022 (1<sup>st</sup> place), being a further event of the series in which Our Opals had competed in after the prohibited substance Cobalt was detected at a level in excess of the mass concentration limit of 100 nanograms per millilitre in the post-race sample collected from the greyhound on 19 December 2022.

Stewards ordered that the placings be amended accordingly, and Mr Stella was advised that all prizemoney associated with this event must be returned to Racing Queensland.

Mr Stella was advised of his right to an Internal Review.