



GREYHOUND WELFARE & INTEGRITY COMMISSION
DISCIPLINARY ACTION DECISION

Date of decision: 11 June 2021

Decision-makers: A/Senior Legal Officer, Alice Stafford, Chief Inspector, David OShannessy, Senior Steward, Dean Degan

Name of relevant person: Mr Mark Craig

Date: 19 February 2021, 25 February 2021

Rule no.: Rule 86(o) (x2)

Charges:

(1) Mr Craig acted dishonestly and improperly by nominating a greyhound on 19 February 2021 in circumstances when he knew the greyhound was not going to compete in the race.

(2) Mr Craig acted dishonestly and improperly by failing to withdraw a greyhound on 25 February 2021 in circumstances when he knew the greyhound was no longer in his possession nor able to compete in the race it was nominated for.

Disciplinary action taken: Served cumulatively:

Charge 1: 6-months disqualification, with a further 3 months conditionally suspended for a period of 12 months;

Charge 2: 6-months disqualification, with a further 3 months conditionally suspended for a period of 12 months.

DECISION:

1. From 10 August 2020 Mr Craig was the registered trainer of the greyhounds 'Urana Fernando' ("**first Greyhound**") and 'Jabeni' ("**second Greyhound**").
2. On 14 February 2021, the first Greyhound was sold by the owner of the greyhound to a Victorian participant. Mr Craig was aware of this sale.
3. Arrangements were made for the first Greyhound to be transported to the Victorian participant. The date the greyhound was to be transported was Saturday, 20 February 2021. Mr Craig was aware of this fact.

4. On 19 February 2021 Mr Craig nominated both the first and second Greyhound to race at Gunnedah, the following week at the meeting on 25 February 2021 for the same race class and distance, being a provincial class race over 527 metres.
5. On 20 February 2021 the first Greyhound was transported to the Victorian participant.
6. On Monday 22 February 2021 both the first and second Greyhound were drawn in the same race at Gunnedah, being Race 4 over 527 metres. 'Urana Fernando', the first greyhound, was drawn to compete in this race under the new trainer's name and not under Mr Craig's name.
7. The first Greyhound was ultimately scratched on 22 February 2021 when the Victorian participant contacted GRNSW to advise them that he had taken possession of the first Greyhound.
8. The Stewards at the Gunnedah races on 25 February 2021 scratched the second Greyhound which was still trained by Mr Craig and immediately opened an inquiry into the nomination and scratching of the first Greyhound.
9. As a result of this conduct the Commission charged Mr Craig with two (2) offences under Rule 86(o), which reads:

Rule 86(o)

A person (including an official) shall be guilty of an offence if the person-

...

(o) has, in relation to a greyhound or greyhound racing, done a thing, or omitted to do a thing, which, in the opinion of the Stewards or the Controlling Body, as the case may be, is negligent, dishonest, corrupt, fraudulent or improper, or constitutes misconduct

10. The first charge related to Mr Craig nominating the first Greyhound to compete in the race at Gunnedah on 25 February when he knew the first Greyhound was not going to compete in the event as it had been sold and was to be transported to the new trainer in Victoria.
11. The second charge related to Mr Craig failing to withdraw the nomination of the first Greyhound when he knew the first Greyhound was no longer in his custody as it had been sold and was transported to the new trainer in Victoria and was not going to compete in the event.
12. Mr Craig was notified of the charges in writing. Mr Craig provided written submissions and elected to have the disciplinary proceeding conducted in writing.
13. The Commission, after considering all available material, found the charges proven and took the following disciplinary action against Mr Craig:

Charge 1 (19 February 2021):	To disqualify Mr Craig for a period of 6 months, with a further period of 3 months conditionally suspended for a period of 12 months;
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Charge 2 (25 February 2021): To disqualify Mr Craig for a period of 6 months, with a further period of 3 months conditionally suspended for a period of 12 months,

with the periods of suspension to be served cumulatively.

Further, the time served under an interim suspension was taken into account as time served, leaving the remaining period of disqualification to expire on 1 March 2022.

14. The Integrity Hearings Panel found that Mr Craig was aware that the first Greyhound was going to be transported to a new trainer in Victoria on the Saturday, some 5 days before the race at Gunnedah. The conduct of Mr Craig was improper as it was known by Mr Craig that the first Greyhound would never take its place in the field. This provided Mr Craig with an opportunity to manipulate the race field which ultimately, had it not been for the discovery by stewards of the irregular scratching of the first Greyhound, would have resulted in Mr Craig's the second Greyhound competing in a field with reduced runners.
15. Ensuring that all runners nominated to compete in a race are legitimate nominations, in that they are expecting to gain a start, is important for preserving the integrity of racing. If the constitution of a race is allowed to be manipulated by participants who have an interest in another runner taking its place in the field then this gives rise to serious contraventions of the Rules. It not only is an affront to the integrity of a race, but it is also unfair. For these reasons the Integrity Hearings Panel considered the conduct serious.
16. In taking this disciplinary action, the Commission considered all the evidence, including:
 - The objective seriousness of Mr Craig's conduct, noting that this is serious conduct affecting the integrity of races;
 - The length of time Mr Craig has held a trainer registration in the greyhound racing industry, being since from 1994 approximately 27 years;
 - Mr Craig plead guilty to both charges at the earliest opportunity;
 - Mr Craig's disciplinary history which included a period of 6-months disqualification in 2015 for the same type of offending. This was considered an aggravating feature;
 - The submissions made by Mr Craig in mitigation of penalty in relation to the charges, including his explanation of the circumstances of offending his personal circumstances and his remorse..

.....End.....