



GREYHOUND WELFARE & INTEGRITY COMMISSION
DISCIPLINARY ACTION DECISION

Date of decision: 29 April 2024

Decision-makers: Chief Steward Troy Vassallo and Steward Michael Hall

Name of relevant person: Casie O'Neil

Rule no(s): R159(5)(a), R159(5)(b)

Charge(s): **Charge 1 – R159(5)(a)**
Ms. O'Neil committed an offence by using anything containing animal material as a lure.

Charge 2 – R159(5)(b)
Ms. O'Neil committed an offence, by possessing anything containing animal material which could be used for the purpose of being a lure.

Plea: Guilty to both charges

Disciplinary action taken: **Charge 1** - To issue a disqualification of 12 months.
Charge 2 - To issue a disqualification of 12 months.

With the penalties to be served concurrently, commencing 8 May 2024 and expiring 8 May 2025.

DECISION:

1. Ms O'Neil was, at all relevant times, a registered Public Trainer and Breeder with the Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission.
2. On 26 October 2023 Commission Inspectors attended Ms O'Neil's registered kennel premises. During the inspection, Ms O'Neil was found to be in possession of a lure which, when examined at the Australian Centre of Wildlife Genomics, was, found to contain natural hair fibres. Ms O'Neil admitted to Commission Inspectors to using the lure for the purpose of training greyhounds.
3. It is an offence under Rule 159(5)(a) to use any item containing animal material in connection with greyhound racing as a lure.
4. In addition, possession of an item containing animal material for the purpose of use as a lure is an offence under Rule 159(5)(b).
5. On Monday 22 April 2024 Ms O'Neil was issued with a notice of charge and proposed disciplinary action ("**Notice**"). The Notice issued two charges against her for breaches of the following Greyhound Racing Rules:

R159(5), Greyhound Racing Rules

(5) A person who, in the opinion of a Controlling Body or the Stewards:

- (a) uses or attempts to use in connection with greyhound training or greyhound racing, anything containing animal material whether as bait, quarry, or lure;
- (b) attempts to possess, has possession of, or brings onto any premises, grounds or within the boundaries of any property where greyhounds are, or activities associated with greyhound racing occur or are intended to occur anything containing animal material, for the purpose of being, or which is reasonably likely to be or capable of being, used as bait, quarry or lure;

6. The Notice invited Ms O’Neil to attend a hearing on 29 April 2024, and to enter a plea and make submissions in relation to the charges and proposed penalties. The penalties decision makers proposed had regard to Rule 159, which outlines that a person who commits an offence under that Rule **must** be disqualified, unless a finding of special circumstances exists at the time the offence occurred. Accordingly, the decision makers proposed the following penalties:

Charge 1 Rule 159(5)(a) – To issue a disqualification of 2 years

Charge 2 Rule 159(5)(b) – To issue a disqualification of 2 years

7. On Monday 29 April 2024 Ms O’Neil attended a hearing held via Microsoft Teams and;
- Entered a plea of guilty to both charges; and
 - Provided written and verbal submissions.

8. After considering Ms O’Neil’s pleas and submissions, the decision-makers found the charges proven and determined to impose the following disciplinary action upon her:

Charge 1 Rule 159(5)(a) – To issue a disqualification of 12 months

Charge 2 Rule 159(5)(b) – To issue a disqualification of 12 months

With the penalties to be served concurrently, commencing 8 May 2024 and expiring 8 May 2025.

9. In taking this disciplinary action, the decision-makers considered all evidence, including:
- Ms. O’Neil’s guilty plea to both charges;
 - Ms. O’Neil’s 20-year registration history within the industry;
 - Ms. O’Neil’s disciplinary history, with no prior penalties for any like offences;
 - Ms O’Neil’s submissions in mitigation, including in respect of her personal and professional circumstances;
 - Principles of specific and general deterrence and what message is being sent to the industry in respect of such conduct;
 - The purpose of issuing penalties as a protective measure, in order to:
 - promote and protect the welfare of greyhounds;

- safeguard the integrity of greyhound racing; and
 - maintain public confidence in greyhound racing
- The requirement under Rule 159 for a disqualification to be imposed unless a finding of special circumstances is made. In this matter, special circumstances were not established, and accordingly a disqualification was the only available penalty; and
- Previous decisions imposed by the Commission for like offences.

.....End.....