



**GREYHOUND WELFARE & INTEGRITY COMMISSION**  
**DISCIPLINARY ACTION DECISION**

**Date of decision:** Friday 1 December 2023

**Decision-maker:** Chief Steward Troy Vassallo

**Name of relevant person:** Charlie Azzopardi

**Track:** Dapto

**Date:** 7 September 2023

**Rule no.:** 141(1)(a)

**Charge(s):** Mr Charlie Azzopardi presented the greyhound 'Smooth Avatar' for the purposes of competing in race 1 at the Dapto meeting on 7 September 2023 in circumstances where the Greyhound was not free of any prohibited substance.

**Plea:** Not Guilty

**Prohibited Substance(s):** Theobromine

**Disciplinary action taken:** To issue a 12-week suspension, to commence Friday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023 and to expire on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

**INVESTIGATION**

Following receipt of a certificate of analysis from Racing Analytical Services Limited dated 19 October 2023, the Commission conducted an investigation into the results of a post-race urine sample taken from the greyhound, "Smooth Avatar" at the Dapto meeting on 7 September 2023.

Further analysis of the sample was conducted by the Australian Racing Forensic Laboratory confirming the presence of Theobromine.

**DECISION:**

1. Mr. Azzopardi is a registered Public Trainer and Breeder and the trainer of "Smooth Avatar" ("the Greyhound"). The Greyhound competed in race 1 at the Dapto meeting on 7 September 2023. Following the Event, a urine sample was taken from the Greyhound.
2. The post-race swab revealed the presence of Theobromine.

3. Theobromine is a prohibited substance under Rule 137 of the GWIC Greyhound Racing Rules.
4. On Monday 20 November 2023 Mr Azzopardi was issued with a notice of charge and proposed disciplinary action (“**Notice**”).
5. In the Notice issued on 20 November 2023 the decision makers proposed a penalty of a 4-month suspension and charged Mr Azzopardi with an offence under Rule 141(1)(a) of the Greyhound Racing Rules, which reads:

**Rule 141(1), Rules**

(1) The owner, trainer or other person in charge of a greyhound:

(a) nominated to compete in an Event;

...

must present the greyhound free of any prohibited substance.

...

(3) The owner, trainer or person in charge of a greyhound presented contrary to subrule (1) of this rule shall be guilty of an offence.

6. The Notice invited Mr Azzopardi to attend a hearing on Thursday 30 November 2023 to enter a plea and make submissions in relation to the charge.
7. On Thursday 30 November 2023, Mr Azzopardi attended a hearing held via Microsoft Teams and;
  - entered a plea of Not Guilty; and
  - made verbal submissions.
8. In considering the matter, the decision makers considered Mr Azzopardi’s plea and submissions, as well as all available evidence. The decision makers found the charge proven and took the following disciplinary action against Mr Azzopardi:

**Charge 141 (1) (a):** To issue a 12-week suspension, to commence Friday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023 and to expire on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

9. In taking this disciplinary action, the decision makers considered all evidence, including:
  - Mr. Azzopardi’s Not Guilty Plea
  - Mr. Azzopardi’s 40-year registration history and first offence

- Personal and professional circumstances
- GWIC Penalty Guidelines

10. In addition, the Greyhound was disqualified from race 1 at the Dapto meeting on 7 September 2023 pursuant to Rule 141(4) of the Rules