

DECISION ON AN INTERNAL REVIEW APPLICATION UNDER SECTION 91 OF THE *GREYHOUND RACING ACT 2017*

Matter for determination	Decision dated 21 March 2025
Internal review decision date	12 May 2025
Internal review decision by	Dean Degan – Acting Chief Steward
Internal review decision summary	Affirm the decision of 21 March 2025 to issue Ben Talbot with a warning for a breach of Rule 156(f)(ii) of the Greyhound Racing Rules

REASONS FOR DECISION

1. These are the reasons for decision following an application by Mr Ben Talbot for internal review under the *Greyhound Racing Act 2017* (**Act**) of a decision of Stewards Mr Michael Hall and Ms Lyn White of the Greyhound Welfare & Integrity Commission (**Commission**). That decision was to find him guilty of an offence under the Greyhound Racing Rules (**Rules**) and issued a warning.
2. This is a reviewable decision within the meaning of section 91(1) of the Act. As a person who was not involved in making the reviewable decision, I have dealt with this application.
3. Under section 91(7) of the Act, an internal reviewer is empowered to:
 - a. Confirm the reviewable decision the subject of the application; or
 - b. Vary the reviewable decision; or
 - c. Revoke the reviewable decision.

Background

4. Mr Talbot attended the Wagga Wagga Greyhound race meeting on 21 March 2025 (**Event**). Mr Talbot nominated the greyhound “Line Breaker” to compete in Race 7.
5. Mr Clint Colaiacovo also attended at the Event and nominated the greyhound “Stew Bob” to compete in Race 7.
6. At the conclusion of Race 7, Mr Colaiacovo claimed that, as he entered the catching pen, he witnessed “Line Breaker” had “Stew Bob” by the throat. Mr Talbot was not in the catching pen at the time.
7. Mr Talbot was walking from the 525m boxes towards the finish line. Mr Colaiacovo was walking toward the finish line from the catching pen. At the finish line, Mr Colaiacovo began to make accusations, including swearing, towards Mr Talbot (**Incident 1**), with regard to the alleged catching pen incident. Mr Colaiacovo then walked to the kennel block.

8. Mr Talbot, a short time later, entered the kennel block and walked directly towards Mr Colaiacovo and exchanged further words, swearing at Mr Colaiacovo (**Incident 2**). This was witnessed by a number of persons in the kennel block, as well as vision being captured by a CCTV camera.

Disciplinary action

9. On 21 March 2025, Stewards Michael Hall and Lyn White conducted an enquiry into Incidents 1 and 2, interviewing Mr Talbot, Mr Colaiacovo and witnesses Mr Talbot identified who were present in the kennel block when Incident 2 occurred.
10. At the conclusion of the enquiry, the Stewards issued Mr Talbot with a Notice of Disciplinary Action (**NDA**), finding that he had breached the following rule:

Rule 156(f)(ii)

An offence is committed if a person (including an official):

...

(f) has, in relation to a greyhound or greyhound racing, done something, or omitted to do something, which, in the opinion of a Controlling Body or Stewards:

...

- (ii) constitutes misconduct or is negligent or improper.

11. The Stewards penalised Mr Talbot by way of issuing a warning.

The internal review application

12. On 8 April 2025, Mr Talbot lodged an application for an internal review of the original decision.
13. Mr Talbot provided, by email over the proceeding days, a number of witness statements with regard to Incidents 1 and 2.
14. Mr Talbot's internal review application is in respect of the charge as well as the penalty. The internal review was conducted on the papers.
15. Below are my reasons in respect of this internal review application.

Decision

Charge One

16. In considering this internal review, I have had regard to the following:
 - a. The material before Stewards Michael Hall and Lyn White;
 - b. The internal review application; and
 - c. Additional material provided by Mr Talbot.

17. When considering whether the charge is established, I have had reference to the interviews with Mr Talbot, Mr Colaiacovo and Mr Newcomb, Mr R McKinnon, Mr G McKinnon, Mr Felke Mr Bryce Talbot and Ms T Talbot, the Stewards Report and the relevant CCTV footage.
18. As noted above, two distinct incidents occurred involving Mr Talbot and Mr Colaiacovo. Mr Talbot received the NDA and penalty as a result of Incident 2.
19. It is clear from the CCTV footage that Mr Talbot instigated Incident 2 by entering the kennel block and approaching Mr Colaiacovo, who was already in the kennel block, with Mr Talbot pointing his finger and saying words to Mr Colaiacovo. The exchange drew the attention of Steward Lyn White who directed Mr Talbot to a separate room.
20. I am satisfied on the evidence that Mr Talbot has breached Rule 156(f)(ii) and find that the charge is proven.

Penalty

21. Having confirmed the decision on liability, I turn to the question of penalty.
22. Mr Talbot cooperated with the Stewards whilst they undertook their enquiry.
23. Any verbal altercation between participants is a serious matter, particularly if it is in the view of the public, or intervention is required by officials to de-escalate the situation.
24. The two incidents are linked, stemming from Mr Colaiacovo's witnessing of the alleged conduct of Mr Talbot's greyhound in the catching pen. When Mr Talbot's conduct during Incident 2 is considered in context of Incident 1 which occurred a short time prior, I consider the circumstances of Incident 1 are a mitigating factor, which need to be considered with regard to an appropriate penalty.
25. As such, I am of the view that the penalty of a warning is appropriate and should not be altered.

Decision

26. In accordance with section 91(7)(a) of the Act, having reviewed all the material and having conducted the internal review in accordance with the applicant's request, I have decided the appropriate course is to confirm the original decision.

Dean Degan

Acting Chief Steward

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