

## **2 Oxford Stadium: ANTIGUA SUGAR - Professional Trainer Mr Mark Wallis**

Professional Trainer Mr Mark Wallis was found to be in breach of Rules 174(i)(a) and (b), 152(i) and (ii), 214 and 217 of the GBGB Rules of Racing in that a urine sample taken from the greyhound **ANTIGUA SUGAR** at Oxford Stadium on 23 December 2022 was analysed by LGC Health Sciences as containing the presence of cobalt and that he had in his charge a greyhound that showed the presence of a substance that by its nature could affect the performance of the greyhound or prejudice its well-being.

## **3 Crayford Stadium: BLUEBERRY BULLET - Professional Trainer Mr Mark Wallis**

Professional Trainer Mr Mark Wallis was found to be in breach of Rules 174(i)(a) and (b), 152(i) and (ii), 214 and 217 of the GBGB Rules of Racing in that a urine sample taken from the greyhound **BLUEBERRY BULLET** at Crayford Stadium on 26 November 2022 was analysed by LGC Health Sciences as containing the presence of cobalt and that he had in his charge a greyhound that showed the presence of a substance that by its nature could affect the performance of the greyhound or prejudice its well-being.

### **Detail of the above Inquiries 2 and 3.**

With the agreement of Mr Wallis the Disciplinary Committee considered the above Inquiries jointly.

Mr Mark Wallis was in attendance. Professor Tim Morris, Independent Scientific Adviser and Carol Chown-Smith, Stipendiary Steward were also in attendance.

The urine samples in question were pre-race samples. In the case of ANTIGUA SUGAR the sample was taken before the bet-365 Challenge Cup Final being a 650m open race with total prize monies of £13,000. ANTIGUA SUGAR was 11-8 favourite and came second by one length.

In the case of BLUEBERRY BULLET, the sample was taken before the Ladbrokes Cesarewitch Final, an 874m open race with total prize money of £15,000. BLUEBERRY BULLET came third after being crowded.

At Local Inquiries held on Tuesday 31 January 2023 in relation to BLUEBERRY BULLET, and on 20 March 2023 in relation to ANTIGUA SUGAR, Mr Wallis suggested that the cobalt could have derived from feeding supplements and in particular Ironcyclen, a supplement containing cobalt and iron.

The Disciplinary Committee heard evidence from Professor Morris that a specific dietary requirement for cobalt is not established in dogs. Cobalt is a strong erythropoiesis agent raising the number of red blood cells and increasing the oxygen carrying of the blood. Exposure to cobalt over longer periods/at high levels can cause nausea, vomiting, cardiac failure and other side-effects. In the opinion of Professor Morris cobalt is a substance which by its nature could affect the

performance of the greyhound and with its side-effects could prejudice the well-being of a greyhound.

In both cases the concentration of cobalt in the urine samples taken was considerably over the threshold agreed by the greyhound racing authorities in Britain and Australia. In his view exposure to a supplement or product containing cobalt was the likely cause of the substance in both greyhounds.

Mr Wallis confirmed that he had administered Ironcyclen and was aware that it contained cobalt. Mr Wallis' practice was to administer Ironcyclen for 1-2 days after a race to aid recovery. However, in the case of BLUEBERRY BULLET the greyhound was tired and dehydrated, and in the case of ANTIGUA SUGAR the going at Oxford had been particularly slow in the semi-final. Accordingly, in both cases, Ironcyclen was administered for six days before the respective Finals. Mr Wallis was aware of the calendar notice of December 2015 advising trainers to be extremely cautious and avoid using products containing cobalt close to racing. Mr Wallis had believed the amount of cobalt in Ironcyclen to be so low that the threshold would not be reached.

The Disciplinary Committee was provided with information about Ironcyclen and its use. The manufacturer recommended that it be used for two days before a race or two days after. Mr Wallis, by administering Ironcyclen for six days before the races concerned had exceeded the recommended period of administration. The manufacturer's recommendation was itself inconsistent with the calendar notice in referring to administration before a race.

The Disciplinary Committee considered that on the evidence available and the balance of probabilities the presence of cobalt in the greyhound derived from the administration of Ironcyclen by Mr Wallis.

It was clear that there had been a breach of those rules involving strict liability, that is to say Rules 152(i), 174(i)(b). and 217. However, in this case there had been an intentional administration of the supplement concerned and therefore breach of Rule 174(i)(a). The link between cobalt and the supplement resulted in a breach of Rule 214. In addition, given the consequences of Mr Wallis' administration and noting the high-profile races involved, the administration of cobalt risked the good reputation of greyhound racing and was also a breach of rule 152(ii).

In considering the extent of any sanction the Committee were told and took into account as a mitigating factor, that there had been no relevant infringement of the rules of racing by Mr Wallis over a number of years., However there were aggravating factors in this case. First, the calendar notice of December 2015 clearly warned against the use of cobalt supplements and this warning was not followed. Second, Mr Wallis had been aware of a limit to the permitted level of cobalt and should have been aware of the risk of this limit being exceeded. Third, that by administering the supplement for six days before each race Mr Wallis was exceeding the

manufacturer's recommendation which in turn failed to follow GB regulatory guidance and similar information from Australia. Fourth, both races were high profile elite races with high prize monies and the effect of the breach of the Rules could be significant in terms of the reputation of greyhound racing.

The Committee considered an appropriate sanction to be a severe reprimand, covering both cases and a penalty of £2500 in each case, ie £5,000 in total.

The Disciplinary Committee of the GBGB was in attendance at a meeting held on 18 May 2023.

Those present:

Mr H Starte (in the chair) Mr P O'Dowd  
Mr R Woodworth CBE