

8th April 2021

***NOTICE OF INTEGRITY HEARINGS PANEL RESULT
– Ms Rosa Panagiotou***

PANEL: Mr Timothy McGrath (Chair), Ms Tanya Johnston and Mr Graham Loch.

STEWARDS REPRESENTATION: Mr Derek Kordick, Risk & Compliance Manager and Mr Des Jonas, Chief Steward.



Authorised for public dissemination.

On 8th April 2021 Ms Panagiotou appeared before the Integrity Hearings Panel (IHP) in relation to matters arising from:

1. The participation of greyhound Panda Rose at Gawler Greyhound Racing Club on 13th November 2020, and;
2. A post-race sample of urine was taken from Panda Rose and was subsequently determined to contain Sotalol, a prohibited substance.

Following consideration of various sources of information, Stewards considered it appropriate to subsequently charge Ms Panagiotou with the following charge:

- Breaching Greyhounds Australasia Rule 83 (2)(a) in that on 13th November 2020, Ms Panagiotou presented Panda Rose at an event, namely, Race 9 at Gawler Greyhound Racing Club not free of any prohibited substance(s). The prohibited substances identified following a post-racing sample being taken from Panda Rose was analysed and determined to be Sotalol (Sotalol is used for the prevention and treatment of supraventricular and ventricular arrhythmias (irregular heartbeats) prescribed for humans).

Ms Panagiotou elected to enter an early guilty plea to the charge.

The IHP heard submissions from Ms Panagiotou, and from Messrs Kordick and Jonas on behalf of the Stewards.

No irregular betting was identified in relation to the race Panda Rose raced in that relate to the charge.

Of significance, it is important to note that, without in any way seeking to diminish the seriousness of the allegation, Stewards accept that the presence of the prohibited substance noted in the charge, were not intentionally administered by Ms Panagiotou. Stewards accept that the likely source of the identified substance was through inadvertent transference (Sotalol is a prescribed medication legally possessed within the home of Ms Panagiotou).

As noted in previous matters, the IHP is ever mindful of the underlying importance of presenting greyhounds free of prohibited substances. Presentation offences have been rightly condemned through past decisions of the Stewards, a stance that has been supported by the Racing Appeals Tribunal on many occasions. Such offences invariably result in suspensions or disqualifications. Matters will invariably differ in their surrounding circumstances.

The IHP have now considered matters involving prohibited substances on a number of occasions (e.g., in the past 12 months the matters of Bates and Wilson). The IHP have formed the view that this matter should be differentiated from those offences that have resulted in immediate suspensions and disqualifications. The IHP have formed this view, for the following reasons, all of which were undisputed by Stewards:

- Ms Panagiotou has an unblemished and commendable significant history in greyhound racing.
- She has undertaken to commit to the self-imposed militant regime of hygiene she has put in place to ensure transference of this nature cannot occur in the future.
- Through her admission to the charge at the earliest opportunity, along with the clear depth of remorse displayed before the IHP.
- Ms Panagiotou was fully co-operative with Stewards throughout their investigation into this matter and she was polite in the extreme when appearing at the IHP.

Although a lenient approach should be sparingly considered when addressing matters involving prohibited substances, the IHP have formed a view, in all of the circumstances, that this is indeed a case that is deserving of such an approach.

In all the circumstances, the IHP have resolved to finalise this matter as follows:

- Ms Panagiotou will be suspended for a period of 3 months.
- Considering her early guilty plea, that suspension will be reduced to a period of 2 months and 14 days.
- Given the circumstances of the offence, and all matters personal to Ms Panagiotou, that 2 months and 14 days will be fully suspended for a period of 12 months.
- A fine of \$300 reduced to \$200 considering her early guilty plea will be imposed.

It necessarily follows that the IHP endorse the recommendation of GRSA Stewards, acting under GAR 83(4), to direct that:



1. Panda Rose be disqualified from Race 9 at the Gawler Greyhound Racing Club held on 13th November 2020, and;

Stewards will direct that the placings in the event be amended accordingly and that the \$860.00 prizemoney be returned to GRSA for redistribution where appropriate.

Both parties were advised of their right of appeal.



Timothy McGrath
GRSA INTEGRITY HEARINGS PANEL CHAIR

