DETERMINATION OF

THE RACING PENALTIES APPEAL TRIBUNAL

APPELLANT:

GEOFFREY ERNEST LIEBECK

APPLICATION NO:

A30/08/691

PANEL:

MR D MOSSENSON (CHAIRMAN)

MR A E MONISSE (MEMBER)

MS K FARLEY (MEMBER)

DATE OF HEARING:

12 September 2008

DATE OF DETERMINATION: 12 September 2008

IN THE MATTER OF an appeal by Mr Geoffrey Ernest LIEBECK against the determinations made by the Racing and Wagering Western Australian Stewards of Greyhound Racing on 15 July 2008 in respect of the following breaches of the Rules of Greyhound Racing:

- 1 Rule 84(2), \$100 fine;
- 2 Rule 86(d), \$500 fine;
- 3 Rule 86(e), disqualification of twelve months;
- 4 Rule 86(q), disqualification of six months; and
- 5 Local Rule 86(B)(1)(a), disqualification of twelve months;

the disqualifications to be served concurrently.

Mr Liebeck appeared in person.

Mr D Borovica represented the Racing and Wagering Western Australia Stewards of Greyhound Racing.

This is a unanimous decision of the Tribunal.

The appeal is dismissed.



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DAN MOSSENSON, CHAIRMAN

THE RACING PENALTIES APPEAL TRIBUNAL

REASONS FOR DETERMINATION OF MR D MOSSENSON (CHAIRPERSON)

APPLICANT:

GEOFFREY ERNEST LIEBECK

APPLICATION NO:

A30/08/691

PANEL:

MR D MOSSENSON (CHAIRPERSON)
MR ANDREW MONISSE (MEMBER)

MS KAREN FARLEY (MEMBER)

DATE OF HEARING:

12 September 2008

DATE OF DETERMINATION: 12 September 2008

IN THE MATTER OF an appeal by Mr Geoffrey Ernest LIEBECK against the determinations made by the Racing and Wagering Western Australian Stewards of Greyhound Racing on 15 July 2008 in respect of the following breaches of the Rules of Greyhound Racing:

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- 5 Local Rule 86(B)(1)(a), disqualification of twelve months;

the disqualifications to be served concurrently.

Mr G E Liebeck appeared in person.

Mr D Borovica represented the Racing and Wagering Western Australia Stewards of Greyhound Racing.

BACKGROUND

Mr G E Liebeck is a public trainer registered with Racing and Wagering Western Australia (**RWWA**). Mr Liebeck describes himself as a hobby trainer who has been involved in the industry for over 20 years, having originated from the Eastern States.

On 1 July 2008 the City of Fremantle Ranger attended Mr Liebeck's premises to speak with him regarding a barking dog complaint. During the visit Mr Liebeck had a conversation with the Ranger regarding training methods employed to excite his greyhounds. Mr Liebeck had said that the best live game for his dogs are cats but they could damage the dogs' eyes with their claws. Mr Liebeck told the Ranger that rabbits were good and showed the ranger two live bush rabbits which were kept in an esky in the house. Mr Liebeck went on to comment that the ultimate live game was a possum. The Ranger was also shown a bottle of penicillin in the fridge.

As a consequence of the Ranger's visit the Principal Investigator for Racing and Wagering Western Australia, Mr Phil O'Reilly, interviewed the Ranger regarding the matter. On 7 July 2008 the Investigator conducted an interview on site with Mr Liebeck. In the course of the latter interview Mr Liebeck denied many of the assertions which the Ranger attributed to Mr Liebeck.

The Stewards subsequently opened a fairly lengthy inquiry on 15 July 2008 into the statements that were allegedly made by Mr Liebeck to the Ranger. Both the Ranger and the RWWA Principal Investigator were called to the inquiry in addition to the RWWA veterinarian Dr P Symons. The Stewards charged Mr Liebeck with five separate offences. Mr Liebeck pleaded guilty to all charges. At the end of the proceedings the Stewards adjourned the matter and advised Mr Liebeck they would set out their sentencing findings in a letter. They wrote to Mr Liebeck several days later and advised in detail their reasons for the penalties which they imposed.

The offences and penalties are listed as follows:

- possessing a non prescription drug which had not been issued by a veterinary surgeon after examining the greyhound (Rule 84(2)), namely penicillin \$100 fine;
- 2 making a misleading statement in relation to an investigation (Rule 86(d)), namely that the supplier of rabbits in the trainer's possession was not connected to racing \$500 fine:
- being a trainer having refused to give evidence at an inquiry (Rule 86(e)), namely refused to provide the name of the rabbit supplier at the inquiry 12 months disqualification;
- engaging in conduct detrimental to the image of greyhound racing (Rule 86(q)), namely when showing the Ranger live rabbits used words to the effect live game was used in the training of greyhounds six months disqualification;
- using live animals to excite greyhounds (Local Rule 86(b)), namely rabbits 12 months disqualification.

The latter three penalties were ordered to be served concurrently.

THE APPEAL

Mr Liebeck appealed against the severity of the penalties. The grounds specified in a appeal notice were simply 'severity of time and fine'. In support of the appeal at the hearing Mr Liebeck failed to raise any issues or arguments of any substance. In essence all the Tribunal was told was that in Mr Liebeck's 'opinion the penalties were severe' and 'more than anyone expected.' This approach was supplemented by an explanation of Mr Liebeck's personal circumstances.

After hearing submissions on behalf of the Stewards and viewing the video taken by the RWWA Principal Investigator, which had been shown at the Stewards' inquiry, the Tribunal unanimously dismissed the appeal. I now publish my very brief reasons for having reached the conclusion the appeal lacked merit.

REASONS

I was satisfied nothing was presented by Mr Liebeck in support of his appeal to demonstrate any error on the part of the Stewards in regards to each of the various penalties imposed for the different offences. I agreed with Mr Borovica's proposition that it had not been shown any relevant facts were ignored, irrelevant factors had been taken into account or any of the penalties were beyond the range that might appropriately apply.

The Stewards' letter to Mr Liebeck dated 18 July 2008 sets out the reasons in some considerable detail. A copy of this letter is attached to my reasons. In my opinion the letter properly and fairly sets the basis on which the Stewards arrived at their determinations of the penalties. The letter sets out the relevant evidence relating to each offence and amply specifies the reasons for arriving at the decisions. It is entirely clear and apparent why each sentence was imposed. Mr Liebeck's misconduct, particularly for those matters which resulted in disqualification, was clearly very serious indeed and justified the Stewards' decision to disqualify for periods and ensure his exclusion from participating in the sport for some time. The fact that the Stewards in their wisdom elected to treat the three disqualifications as warranting being served concurrently rather than consecutively meant in totality, it could be argued, Mr Liebeck was treated somewhat kindly.

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DAN MOSSENSON, CHAIRPERSON

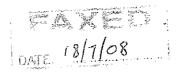




RACING AND WAGERING WESTERN AUSTRALIA

18 July 2008

Mr Geoff Liebeck
1 Smith Street
BEACONSFIELD WA 6162



Dear Sir

STEWARDS INQUIRY CONDUCTED 15 JULY 2008

I refer to the Stewards inquiry conducted at Cannington Greyhounds on 15 July 2008.

At the completion of hearing evidence, you pleaded guilty to the following charges:

- 1. Under Rule 84 (2) with the particulars being that on the 3rd July 2008, you Mr Liebeck, had in your possession at 1 Smith Street, Beaconsfield, a place used in relation to the training of greyhounds, a quantity of Penicillin, contrary to Rule 84 (2).
- 2. Under Rule 86 (d) with the particulars being that on the 3rd July 2008, during an interview with RWWA Investigator Mr P O'Reilly, you did make a misleading statement by stating that the supplier of the rabbits in your possession was not a person who was connected with greyhound racing when in fact such person was.
- 3. Under Rule 86 (e) with the particulars being that during the inquiry conducted on the 15th July 2008, you refused to provide the name of the supplier of the rabbits in your possession on the 2nd July 2008 by Ranger S Reeves and in doing so you refused to give evidence at an inquiry held pursuant to the Rules of Greyhound Racing. 12 month disqualification
- 4. Under Rule 86 (q) with the particulars being that on Wednesday the 2nd July 2008, when showing the City of Fremantle Ranger Mr S Reeves two live rabbits in your possession, you used words to the effect that live game was used in connection with the training of greyhounds, conduct, which in the opinion of the Stewards is detrimental to the image of greyhound racing.

Further you were found guilty to a charge under Local Rule 86B (1) (a) with the particulars of the charge being that you, Mr Liebeck, use in connection with greyhound training live rabbits for the purposes of exciting your greyhounds.

After hearing submissions on the question of penalty for the above offences, the inquiry was adjourned and the Stewards reserved their decision with respect to penalty.

The Stewards have reached a decision on the question of penalty which we now issue as follows below.

Reasons for Decision (Penalty)

The Stewards have had the benefit of time to fully weigh all of the circumstances of the matter in the course of arriving at a decision on the questions of appropriate penalties for the offences recorded at the conclusion of submissions on the 15 July 2008.



Whilst there are a number of distinct offences for which we must arrive at a decision as to a suitable penalty, there are some matters that are relevant on the question of penalty for each offence and therefore can be neatly addressed at the outset before turning to each offence to address any specific matters. In this respect it must be stated that the Stewards have carefully considered all the submissions made on the question of penalty both specifically and generally. For those charges that you have pleaded guilty to, we have applied the appropriate mitigating value for your acknowledgements. We have also taken into account that you have been involved in a registered capacity in greyhound racing for some 20-years and that during this time whilst your record is not unblemished, the offences recorded against you are not aggravating on the question of penalty due to the nature of them and in reflection of the overall length of time of your involvement. For all intents and purposes you deserve to be considered as a person having a good record during your long involvement in greyhound racing which is the logic we have applied. We also are aware that whilst you have described your involvement as at the hobby level, it is clearly something you have a strong passion about reflected in the length of time you have been involved. You may not rely on greyhound racing for your livelihood but clearly it plays a significant part in your life. These are all examples of factors in your favour in general terms in the determination of penalty which we have taken into account in each offence.

Before addressing the heart of the matter, we can dispense at the outset with the penalty in relation to the offence under AR84 (2) relating to your possession of Penicillin contrary to that rule. In this respect we take into account that Penicillin is a therapeutic drug similar to antibiotics which places your possession of it at the lowest scale of an offence under this rule. The proper control of drugs in the sport is benefited when trainer's comply with the rule and only possess drugs that are properly dispensed and prescribed. It is common place for matters such as these for a fine to be imposed in most circumstances. The circumstances of your offence of this rule are similar to the common occasions where this rule is offended against. Whilst you had commented to the Ranger that fines of \$500 applied in these circumstances, we find that a fine of \$100 is appropriate and consistent with past offences of this rule in similar circumstances which is the penalty we impose for this offence.

Returning to the remaining matters it is worthwhile to briefly summarise and put into context the background of matters relevant to this inquiry. This inquiry arose as a result of a visit by the City of Fremantle Ranger to your registered training premises in the course of investigating a barking dog complaint. During this visit you made statements to the ranger in relation to the use of live game in greyhound racing. You regaled him with numerous stories of the use of various species of animal used as live game. Not satisfied with these colourful accounts, through the course of events on the 2nd July 2008, you proceeded to show him two live rabbits in your possession as you recounted ways and means in which live game was used. You suggested to him this was something the greyhound authority was likely to be aware of but did little about. The accounts of cats, rabbits & possums being used as live game were bad enough, but when you actually have two live rabbits in your possession, which you show to the ranger in the course of telling him about how they are used to train greyhounds as live bait, it is unsurprising that the ranger upon leaving your premises almost immediately reported it to other persons' and authorities including the Stewards. As a result the following day, RWWA Principal Investigator Mr P O'Reilly also visited your premises, where you attempted to distance yourself from the comments made the previous day to the ranger and to alter the context in which they were made. Whilst you eventually admitted that your discussions with the ranger may have been in what would be described grammatically as the 'first person' when speaking of using live game, you denied that you actually had done anything of that nature but offered that you were talking about things you had seen in the past. Through the course of Mr O'Reilly's interview and later in greater detail at the inquiry, you described in connection to the questions being asked about why you were in possession of two rabbits, that your use of them involved their skins when they expired due to natural causes and also as a means to excite your greyhounds by exposing them to the live rabbits in cages. Whilst these submissions where offered by you, you were far

less forthcoming or truthful about who supplied the rabbits in the first place. These matters are of a highly serious nature and represent a significant affront to the greyhound racing industry and the control and regulation of it.

Like all codes of racing in this state, Greyhound Racing is reliant upon the public support of it both in the form of the wagering dollar and in more general terms to be accepted by the public at large as a sport in the community. The continued support of the public is paramount in ensuring the financial well being of the industry through the wagering on the outcome of races. This support is inextricably linked to the level of confidence that the public has that the industry is properly controlled, regulated and that the animal participants are competing against each other on equal terms, with the outcome of races decided without unfair advantage. In addition to this, the industry has a public and civic duty to maintain the highest standards of animal welfare and conduct its operations in a non-offensive and publically acceptable manner. If it was ever accepted in the general community that the use of live game was a common and routine training practise, it is not difficult to see that this would spell the end of greyhound racing as an industry in this state. The loss of revenues, livelihoods and overall impact would be nothing short of catastrophic. It is therefore imperative that as an industry, we maintain an impeccable record in these matters, penalise appropriately any proven offences of this nature and for trainers to portray to the wider public a responsible approach at all times. These are critical considerations in any assessment of penalty for an offence such as that committed by you in these circumstances.

The position of trainer is one of privilege and not right. It brings with it a number of responsibilities and onuses. In return the licensed trainer with their greyhounds is able to compete for ever increasing prize monies. When serious offences such as these have been committed by a trainer, there is a need to send a clear an unequivocal message that the industry does not accept or tolerate such offences. A deterrent value both general and specific is therefore appropriate for the offences you have committed.

The above are all matters that must be taken into account in assessing the question of penalty for each offence. Stewards have considered all submissions carefully, weighing the gravity of the offence against your personal circumstances, and do not take lightly the onerous task before us in arriving at a penalty for each remaining offence.

Under the rules of racing the stewards have open to them a number of modes of penalty. These include for licensed persons such as yourself, fine, suspension, disqualification, and cancellation of licence or a combination of these. The stewards have considered each of these carefully in each particular offence and are fully aware of the implications of each mode of penalty and how they relate to your circumstances. The severest mode of penalty is that of disqualification. It is generally reserved for circumstances where an offence of sufficient seriousness has occurred, to send a message that there is no place for such behaviours, practices or events and that the person deserves to be removed from greyhound racing entirely for a set period of time. We do not take lightly the imposition of such penalty and fully appreciate the ramifications of it. Where we have determined that disqualification is the appropriate penalty, this decision has only been arrived at after exhausting the possibility of a lesser form of penalty and finding that disqualification is deserving given the gravamen of the offence and all other matters.

Turning to each specific offence remaining and in relation to the offence under Rule 86 (d) regarding misleading Mr O'Reilly about the supplier of the rabbits, it is pertinent to also address the following matters. It is vital to the proper control and regulation of the industry that registered persons, when dealing with officials such as Mr O'Reilly or the Stewards, do so honestly and do not make untruthful or otherwise misleading statements. The ability for the regulators of the industry to do their job properly is heavily reliant upon registered persons, who enjoy the privilege of being licensed, providing them with

accurate information. When they fail to do so they have not only failed in this basic obligation of being a licensed person, but when it is done in the course of an investigation, it has the potential to prevent the full circumstances of a matter being brought under scrutiny and thus thwarts the proper conduct of the inquiry/investigation. This strikes at the very heart of the proper control and regulation of the industry. In this case the manner in which you came to be in possession of the rabbits was highly relevant to the overall inquiry. By answering that the supplier was someone not connected with the industry you removed from Mr O'Reilly the opportunity to make further inquiries on the question of how the rabbits came to be in your possession and effectively closed down this avenue of investigation. No doubt that is why you made this misleading statement, which you have since explained was to protect the identity of the supplier who turns out to be a registered person. These were serious matters under investigation which you chose to mislead the investigator over. We have also considered past cases of this nature as mentioned to you through the course of hearing submissions on the question of penalty and believe in all of the circumstances that the appropriate penalty is a fine of \$500.

In relation to the offence under Rule 86 (e) regarding refusing to provide the name of the supplier of the rabbits, you have submitted that this refusal was related to maintaining your honour with your associates within the industry by not "lagging" them out to the Stewards. You indicated that you would willingly serve a penalty for such refusal rather than damage your reputation with these associates, which may cause some degree of stress for your son if your name was tarnished in this way. This misplaced and misguided noble principle is not something the Stewards can accept as a reason for not providing the name of the supplier who you confirmed was a registered person. It is a pity that your loyalty to persons who would allow you to suffer a penalty rather than permit you to disclose the information you are obliged to disclose when you asked them is greater than your loyalty to your own licence. We cannot allow registered persons to protect their reputation amongst their peers at the cost of the industry as a whole. We are now left in the totally unacceptable position of knowing that there is a registered person within the industry, who is or has supplied live rabbits to other registered persons who train greyhounds, but do not know who that person is, how often they do it, who do they supply to, what purpose are they supplying them for and any number of related important questions. Whilst punishing the consumer goes some way to eradicating this unsavoury and highly damaging practice of using live animals in the training of greyhounds, finding the source when it is a registered person and removing it, is far more beneficial to the industry and is the most efficient way to remove this from greyhound racing if it is happening. It is considerably in your favour that it was you who offered up the fact that the person was registered and that by doing so were effectively falling upon your own sword. This also had the effect of proving the offence that you had misled Mr O'Reilly for which a punishment is also being imposed. This honesty and circumstances is and must be taken into account as mitigation when determining the penalty in this matter. In all of the circumstances and in reflection to past penalties, after taking into account the miligating factors we believe the appropriate penalty for this offence is a disqualification of 12-months.

In relation to the offence under Rule 86 (q) relating to conduct detrimental to the image of greyhound racing, we find this to be a particularly serious and damaging offence. Trainer's represent the public face of the industry. They have vested in them considerable levels of trust. Even for those involved at the enthusiast or hobby level, they are in the public eye every time one of their greyhounds races and their trainer name is displayed Australia wide. A position of such profile demands that the individual to whom the privilege has been extended does not do anything which detracts from the positive and professional image the industry strives to maintain. When a greyhound trainer is found to be in possession of live rabbits, which are clearly not being housed or kept as domestic pets, there is the almost obvious conclusion that these rabbits are being used for training in some fashion. But to actually go on and state words to that effect, to a council officer, that live game was used in connection with the training of greyhounds is an act beyond stupidity that cannot be acceptably explained away. The detail of your comments to the Ranger goes beyond a flippant remark. If they were said as a boast, this only goes to

exacerbate your total disregard for the image of greyhound racing that you would cast it into disrepute for your own egotistical gain. They were clearly not interpreted to be a joke and neither could they have been from what we have heard. Your words not only brought the industry into disrepute, but did so in the most sensitive of areas and thus in an area where the most damage can be done for the reasons already discussed. Rather than portraying to the wider public a positive and responsible image, you have cast greyhound racing in the most unflattering of lights. Quite simply you have shown contempt for the industry by your conduct and have quite apart from making no attempt to improve or maintain the image, dragged the image of greyhound racing through the mud. There is no excuse or acceptable explanation for such disregard for the privileged position you hold in the industry that sees you sully the reputation and image of the very industry you have been extended the privilege to participate in. Under all the circumstances and for the reasons included within ours reasons we believe the appropriate penalty to be a disqualification of 6 months.

Finally we are left with the serious charge under LR86B 1 (a), which relates to the use of a live animal, in your case rabbits, for the purposes of exciting your greyhounds. The evidence of RWWA Industry Veterinarian Dr Peter Symons was concise, insightful and clearly highlighted why a rule such as this exists. His evidence was uncontroverted and we have adopted his comments and reasoning in full in relation to the comments he made about the practice of using a live rabbit to excite a greyhound in the manner described by you. He articulated how to a rabbit, a greyhound is a natural predator and that its natural instinct is to flee. He described the levels of stress and cruelty that were being perpetrated upon the rabbits by your actions as in the extreme range and it is easily understood why this would be so when it is appreciated what the relationship between rabbit and hound is. It is under the circumstances, poor consolation that according to you the rabbit is not actually killed by the greyhound when what is happening is that it is being terrorised. The art of training requires many things, not least of which is the ability to maintain the greyhounds continued keen pursuit of an artificial quarry that it rarely, if ever, catches. Various approved techniques and resources are available to trainers in this regard. The rules, in reflection of the expectations of the very public the industry needs to survive, explicitly prohibit the use of any species of bird or animal which is alive whether as a lure or to excite a greyhound. In doing so the ground rules of the contest are set which all trainers must abide by. Those which breach this important rule not only do extensive damage to the image of greyhound racing but also enjoy a competitive advantage over those that do not. You yourself have described in vivid terms how effective a means the use of live animals is. The public would in the main be repulsed by the thought that live animals were used as a stimulus in this way to excite a greyhound. It goes in your favour to some extent that it was through your own evidence that it came to light that you use rabbits in this way to train your greyhounds. That is tempered to some extent by the fact that during the course of the investigation and inquiry your answers as to what was said and how you used the rabbits were a moving feast of submissions designed to convince the stewards that these rabbits suffered no harm caused by you. When admitting to using them to excite greyhounds, it appeared that you were of the view that this did not amount to an offence, as it did not involve the rabbits being killed by either you or the greyhounds. These acknowledgements did not amount to a 'mea culpa' in the full sense of the expression as it became evident that once you realised that this too was an offence you then attempted to distort earlier submissions in this respect. The heinous nature of these activities is reflected by the fact that this is the sole rule in the entire rulebook which sets a minimum prescribed penalty of 12-months disqualification if a person is quilty of it. Even if it were not so we would still find this to be the appropriate penalty in all of the circumstances for the reasons indicated. We therefore apply the minimum prescribed penalty of 12months disqualification for this offence.

It is left to the stewards to exercise their minds on the questions that arise when issuing multiple penalties. In this respect we refer to the principles of totality and other related considerations. We have also considered these factors in the course of arriving at each respective penalty. In relation to the two

fines issued we direct that each be paid in full. In relation to the periods of disqualification issued, we believe it appropriate that they be served concurrently on the basis that the total period of disqualification to be served will be 12-months disqualification.

I advise that you have the right of appeal against the Stewards decision which must be exercised within 14-days with the Racing Penalties Appeal Tribunal should you wish to do so.

Yours sincerely

Carlos Martins

RWWA CHIEF STEWARD (GREYHOUNDS)

THE RACING PENALTIES APPEAL TRIBUNAL

REASONS FOR DETERMINATION OF MR A E MONISSE (MEMBER)

APPELLANT:

GEOFFREY ERNEST LIEBECK

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A30/08/691

PANEL:

MR D MOSSENSON (CHAIRMAN)

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- 5 Local Rule 86(B)(1)(a), disqualification of twelve months;
 - ... the disqualifications to be served concurrently.

Mr G E Liebeck appeared in person.

Mr D Borovica represented the Racing and Wagering Western Australia Stewards of Greyhound Racing.

I have read the draft reasons of Mr D Mossenson, Chairperson, and agree with them and the conclusion reached. I only add that in relation to Mr Liebeck's offence of "using live animals" contrary to Rule 86B(1)(a) that the minimum penalty which the Stewards had to impose was 12 months disqualification, which is what he received. This confirms that this appeal was without merit."



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THE RACING PENALTIES APPEAL TRIBUNAL

REASONS FOR DETERMINATION OF MS K FARLEY (MEMBER)

APPELLANT: GEOFFREY ERNEST LIEBECK

APPLICATION NO: A30/08/691

PANEL: MR D MOSSENSON (CHAIRMAN)

MR A E MONISSE (MEMBER)
MS K FARLEY (MEMBER)

DATE OF HEARING: 12 September 2008

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the disqualifications to be served concurrently.

Mr G E Liebeck appeared in person.

Mr D Borovica represented the Racing and Wagering Western Australia Stewards of Greyhound Racing.

I have read the draft reasons of Mr D Mossenson, Chairperson.

I agree with those reasons and conclusions and have nothing further to add.



Kove Farey