

# THE WHIPPET CLUB RACING ASSOCIATION (FOUNDED 1968)

*November 29, 2009*

Dear Secretary,

The season just gone has raised a number of questions on matters we have all taken for granted over many years. As a committee we have tried to look at these matters logically to give guidance to affiliated clubs.

## **Disputed pedigrees – the legal position.**

Firstly, ANY pedigree organisation rejecting a whippet – either barring the dog from racing or restricting its ability to breed - must have robust supporting evidence, to avoid

- Its decision being overturned
- Risk of legal action against the organisation and/or individual committee members.

To state the progeny is non-pedigree is to allege deception on the part of the breeder and associated persons. It is a serious allegation. If not proven it is defamatory. The law provides protection for the defamed and monetary compensation for them if they can prove damage, loss or injury.

The risk is greatest for organisations such as the Whippet Club/WCRA and the NPWRA, and for clubs that have been at the forefront of the recent campaign; for others the risk is lessened but nevertheless still there.

Observance of club rules is important. Where committee members have broken their club rules, they may cease to have the protection of the club and in such cases are individually accountable for their actions.

Banning persons who own dogs of disputed pedigree is at first sight a different issue, but any organisation doing so may have to prove they were not banning because of particular dog(s). The organisation must be mindful that any allegation or implication of fraud/deception is potentially actionable.

## **Open race meetings**

This year, some clubs have reserved the right to refuse entry to Opens and stated that their Open meetings are run under club rules.

For the protection of club committee members, if a club wishes to reserve that right, it is important that the right to refuse entry to Opens is endorsed by a general meeting of the club. For clarity, in such circumstances we recommend that the club rules be changed to correspond.

We have no objection to clubs running Opens under club rules. It makes sense that club workers use rules they are familiar with week in, week out. It is however important that the rules be posted prominently so all can read them if they wish.

We recognise that clubs pay their affiliation primarily to buy into the passport system. Therefore we have determined that affiliated clubs have the right to ask for sight of valid passports at Opens even if not counting for Superstars. (Affiliation and Superstars are different issues.) It is sensible also to continue the disqualification system – the relevant WCRA rules apply in respect of open race meetings where WCRA passports are a condition of entry - and the signing-off of dogs as fit to run on bends and straights.

### **Superstars**

We have determined that to keep the integrity of the competition, to qualify for Superstars an open must be open to all passported whippets.

In 2009 it has been customary for persons to put pressure upon clubs holding opens to refuse to admit passported whippets (by threatening to “boycott” Superstars events), as part of the campaign against the Vensuter Alamo Flyer x Wheatroyd Magic Maisie litter.

Pressure by individuals to “boycott” Superstars events is unsporting conduct against the organising club committee – thus in breach of club rules - and is also conduct against the interests of the WCRA (Whippet Club rule 9, WCRA Rules 2.9, 2.10).

Clubs that have experienced such pressure during the 2009 season should report this in writing, with supporting evidence if available.

Any instances where a club is threatened or pressured, by an individual, for instance with a conditional entry, should be reported in writing to the WCRA Secretary within 7 days of occurrence.

Said reports must be as a result of a Club Committee decision rather than the recipient Club Officer alone.

### **Passport stickers and clearance of dogs**

Passport stickers will only be available from affiliated clubs.

Clearance trials are only allowable at affiliated club meetings. As this is a safety issue, if there are geographic gaps due to a lack of affiliated clubs we will review this policy.



### **The benefits of affiliation**

A time-proven passport system – now being supported by a pilot scheme for voluntary DNA profiling, which is receiving a good take-up.

“Government Lobbying” – decried by some, who think we should be doing something more constructive, but it is noteworthy that we were the only canine organisation to pick up on the Animal Welfare Bill – which initially grouped us in with greyhounds as “dog racing”. If we had not had that changed to “greyhound racing” we would have been required by law to have a vet present at every club meeting – among other legal requirements!

The Whippet Club representation re Animal Welfare Bill - the fact our representation came from a nationally recognised body (i.e. senior breed club, KC affiliated) gave it weight that an unrecognised outfit would never have.

The Whippet Club/Kennel Club link is useful for references etc in cases of planning applications, noise complaints etc as it gives respectability.

There is a perception amongst racers that the Whippet Club interferes but the reality is that it only takes an interest when there is a problem! For a sub-committee (and the WCRA is no more than that) we are generally given a free hand.

### **The Whippet Club Rules and WCRA Rules of Racing**

Several Clubs have requested a copy of The Whippet Club Rules and WCRA Rules of Racing which I will forward to all the Club Secretaries in the near future. Please note that the latest version of the WCRA Racing Rules is available to download from The Whippet Club website [www.thewhippetclub.com](http://www.thewhippetclub.com)

### **Response to Clubs' Questions.**

As you may be aware there were nearly 8 pages of questions from a number of Clubs; submitted back in May this year. The responses to these have now been compiled and will be sent out with the Rules as above.

### **The next WCRA Committee Meeting will be on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2010.**

We will be considering the nominations for the Sports person awards so please ensure that all written nominations are sent to me in time to be discussed at this meeting.

Yours sincerely

Kim Saxby  
WCRA Secretary

