

CORAL 
ROMFORD GREYHOUND STADIUM

OWNERS' REP MEETING MINUTES

SATURDAY 19TH JULY 2025





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Attendee:

Karen McMillan - Stadia Manager
Mark Arkell - Racing Manager
Dean Tennant - Paul Young's Rep
Tommy Brown - John Simpson's Rep
Alan Massey - Martyn Wiley's Rep
Kelly Searle - David Mullins' Rep
Andy Dangerfield - Katie O'Flaherty's Rep
Penny Burr - Paul Burr's Rep
David Webb - Marlene Westwood's Rep
Mat Wren - Gemma Evans' Rep

Mark opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

Paul Young's Kennel:

1. Can we see more 6 bend races please, and why are there no more 8 bend graded races?

We hoped to have an increase with the Crayford trainers joining, we go through spells but are generally on the up for 6 bends.

2. Is there any feedback on the injury situation since changing from the water bowser to the apparent haphazard hand watering of the track? The inside of the run-up is often soaked whilst the outside is hardly wet. Also, the ten-metre section where the dogs enter the track late in the meeting is a bog. There appears to be a lot of hip injuries occurring with the quicker dogs at the moment. Is the track condition checked during the meeting? If so, in how many places?



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- *Firstly, it is not haphazard, the outside will naturally dry quicker than the inside, regarding where the greyhounds enter the track - we have more compaction in that area, so we add extra water to help avoid this.*
- *The track is regularly checked plus we have a tighter track than most others.*
- *GBGB "other" injuries is merely due to how good our vets are. They report broken nails and cut feet that is logged as "other" injuries.*
- *We are in line with all other GBGB tracks.*

3. I am concerned with the grading. I realise the Racing Office has no control over the betting markets, I guess the races should be relatively even contests. However, when dogs in graded races are long odds on whilst others are 33/1, the grading would appear not to be based on known form.

That is down to industry prices. Examples available – but we want six dog races which can sometime effect the market.

4. Upgrading is basically understood, although when winners do a poor time for the grade, upgrades can be harsh. The problem is the downgrading, which is so inconsistent. Is downgrading used to fill races?

The rule is to upgrade for a win, demand for six dog races means we will down grade quicker than we would always like. We ideally would have 4-6 runs in a grade.

5. Given the apparent recent increase in serious broken hock injuries, seemingly in the same areas on the track, -

What, if any, analysis has or is being undertaken of why this is happening? Why is it that it is often around the 2nd bend or just straightening into the back straight?

Are you listening and reacting to reports on the track surface from your trainers and kennel hands?

- *All of us have different opinions we try to stick to science and stats. We have regular inspections from STRI and GBGB.*



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- We use power BI database to log all greyhounds, injuries, types of injuries, retired numbers, position on the track, trainer, trap, grade, etc... this system provides graphs and details for us. Power BI is not for public release at present.
- Regarding the second bend this is where greyhounds are usually at higher speed and turning the corner.

6. Has any professional advice been sought on best practice?

- Track staff are professional you don't see the behind-the-scenes efforts. There are lots of praise for them. We regularly discuss issues, re watch videos etc...
- STRI and GBGB inspections on the track.

7. What, if any, changes are being made to the track preparation as a result?

Seasonal changes, we know how much water to add or not depending on the time of year.

8. If a dog is fit, what is a reasonable amount of runs an owner could expect in a two-month period?

You can expect 8 runs across a 2-month period equally 1 run a week, grade and seed dependant. Though, as we know, wides will have more runs than some grades of railers.

9. I appreciate there is a lack of dogs at Romford, but I've noticed that the grading has become quite repetitive, and it might be putting off potential new owners. Specifically, it seems that dogs are assigned a trap number at the start of their careers, and that number rarely changes. Remember when they were planning to introduce "rails-to-middle" and "middle-to-wide" seeding? What happened to that? For instance, it's a huge advantage for a middle seed to be in T3 at Romford where most races are won or lost at the first bend. On Wednesday night, I counted eight middle seeds running from T3 who never move from that box. Back in the day, railers would switch between T1 and T2, middles between T3 and T4, and wides between T5 and T6. That was a much fairer system, don't you think?



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- GBGB haven't launched the rails to middle and middle to wide seeds yet. It's something I am keen for.
- If we feel a trap suits a greyhound, why change it and potentially cause injuries? We do add notes to cards to move runners about if needed though and listen to trainers thoughts on this.

John Simpson's Kennel:

1. Could we have a data base in place to record where and when on the track the injuries are occurring?

Internally we do however the Power BI is not to be shared at present.

2. Can the Track Staff use the water bowser so the track gets an equal amount of water on all parts of the track and if possible can the sprinkler system be used?

- Hoses allow us to get more water onto the track. We can also target areas.
- Sprinklers have been used in the hot weather recently but not as useful as hosing as the wind tends to effect these.

Martyn Wiley's Kennel:

1. Is it possible to stop customers who are not eating in the Paddock Restaurant using the male and female toilet facilities as these facilities have limited space for restaurant paying customers?

- *It's something we will definitely look at avoiding going forward.*

2. Why is the track biased to the inside or outside traps. Could this be because the track is watered using various hosepipes around the track therefore not getting similar amounts of water dispersed? Would using the bowser system not distribute a more equal amount of water around the whole of the track?

- *Track stats for 2025:*



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Jan	50.5	53.5	52	45	47	40	288
Feb	59	53	41.5	44	40.5	50	288
Mar	55	52	56	55	49	55	312
April	55	55	48	45	62	46	311
May	38	58	56	61	59	49	321
June	47	40	53	51	46	48	285
July	51	44	61.5	50	46.5	47	300
	355.5	355.5	368	351	350	335	2105
%	16.89	16.89	17.48	16.67	16.63	15.91	100

3. Why are dogs downgraded into races with dogs that *on paper* should be competitive and then consequently in the race cannot compete with them?

Race example: A11 last three runs/trials

Trap 1: 25.20 - 25.47 - 25.19

Trap 2: 25.16 - 25.25 - 25.13

Trap 3: 25.51 - 25.24 - 25.20

Trap 4: 25.41 - 24.96 - 25.36

Trap 5: 24.76 - 24.89 - 24.69

Trap 6: 26.01 - 25.42 - 25.62

Also, these two races followed each other on the same night:

A10 - 24.52

A5 - 24.59

Five grades lower and 7 spots faster, how is this competitive?



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- *I can't upgrade a dog without winning, I'm aware this does happen at other tracks but it's not something we plan here. No owner will be happy with that.*
- *The going is always argued about. It's one person's opinion to another. We try to take an average for the meeting.*
- *There is no simple answer for this, there could be trouble in the race or an improving pup, various reasons. This was prior to A12s also.*

David Mullins' Kennel:

1. The dogs' weights used to be put on the TV screen. This doesn't happen anymore, is there a reason why? Can the commentator say it when announcing the dogs on parade and can it be added on the tv screen in the middle of the track next to the dogs name?

- *On the race tech computer system, the weights used to automatically upload to the tote, the new RAS system doesn't have this feature. We will manually type these on going forward.*
- *We will ask the commentators about this.*
- *The big screen doesn't have the capability at present.*

2. When you put the pictures of the podium winners on social media, can you put the sponsored race name up as well? We get the dog's name, trainer and connections names which is great, but if you sponsor the race, there isn't always a mention of it.

- *There is not a lot of space in between races to do all this plus we only have a certain amount of characters on the template.*

3. When sponsoring a race, is there a way to have the name of the sponsored race on the podium so when the picture is taken, you can see the name of the race and the winning dogs name? The small screen currently just says Romford. Maybe a separate board can be placed out the front of the podium like we used to have, where you slot in the letters to spell out the words you want to make? Owners love to keep their winning/retirement/memorial race pictures framed at home and it would be nice to see the sponsored race name in the picture, especially if the owner sponsored it as a memorial/retirement race.



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- *We could also ask Jess to look at photo shopping these onto pictures if required.*

4. Can there be an annual owners meeting for all owners to attend? Not just the owners rep meetings, but a full owners meeting, so owners can ask their questions directly.

- *We have tried this before, it becomes personal about their greyhounds. The rep's jobs are to speak to the owners and pass these questions onto us.*

5. Why not have a graded competition/sweepstake for owners, rather than putting weak opens on Friday nights? Even if you have the heats on Saturday night, so you are still using graded runners on graded cards, but have the finals on the following Friday. That way you give something back to the owners, rather than visiting trainers who bring their graded runners here on Fridays and enter opens, looking to pick up extra prize money and bonuses?

- *Opens help fill the card, we don't have enough greyhounds to lose opens on a Friday. Some weeks are better than others but on the whole we like to have open races here.*
- *Graded sweepstakes – we have 5 a year. We did ask for sponsors for these. Time nutrition sponsored one earlier this year. Hopefully a few more can be arranged.*

6. Why are there so few A1/S1 top grade races? Should you be looking to re-grade the card now we have A12 and S6 races and more lower grade races than we ever had before?

- *We use some of these for opens at present, a change in trainers also has lowered these. We appear to have less of this type of runner around at present.*
- *I do want top grade races.*

7. The grading of runners is very inconsistent. Races being won in the same times across several grades. A7's being won in 24.21 and A8/9/10 being won in 24.40? We need a fair and more consistent grading system.

- *The easy answer is to bunch up the grades, then there is less grades to move through.*
- *A full regrade of runners may not be popular with owners and trainers and there would be lots of greyhounds up in grades without winning if that took place.*



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8. Would an graded inter-track competition be possible across Entain tracks? It would be something a little different for our graded runners and may reduce the amount of 5 dog races?

- *Not enough runners to go around at all tracks for this.*
- *We did discuss an Entain track championship at my recent visit to Stratford. This would be for open racers and two in each race now we have three tracks. Hopefully that can happen again in the future.*

Katie O'Flaherty's Kennel:

1. Is there going to be a regrading? Some dogs are winning by more than 4 lengths plus, and also A8/A7 dogs are going faster than A2/A3 dogs.

- *No regrade is planned as discussed already. We will move them around quicker and we have updated our brackets with runners that enter the card.*

2. Just to carry on from last point, a good graded race in theory should be 4 or 5 lengths to cover the whole field and no double digit prices in graded races.

- *6 lengths is my ideal number. Yes there shouldn't be any double digits SP's, but industry prices dictate that. We use an internal graded ratings system that scores the grading.*

3. How can a dog be running in A3 on the 24th of May this year and 7 weeks later be running in an A7? Especially when some dogs spend 6 to 8 races in the same grade.

- *There shouldn't be any dogs running in the same grade 8 times, one did have 7 recently which was an error. We aim for 4 to 6 runs prior to a downgrade.*

4. Could we sort out the inconsistency between dogs being marked awkward and disqualified?

- *We have 4 different stewards that run meetings. We will have different views but we do try and communicate these. It's not always possible e.g. days or nights off. There is usually three in a committee for these decisions.*



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AOB:

- Owners night – Wednesday night in the paddock, we will allow more than 4 spaces per trainer.
- Welfare Day is Thursday 16th October 2025.
- No racing on the 5th November – Bonfire Night.
- Boxing Day will be a morning meeting.
- 'Greyhounds for Sale' notice board will be by the lift for trainers to advertise.

Track Watering:

The track surface has been hand watered for the past two years, watering a track with industrial hoses is the closest to mimicking rainfall which leaves a perfect surface. Bowsering our track does not deliver as much water and is not as targeted. Bowser equipment along with the tractor that pulls it is extremely heavy and with its repetitive lines around the track this creates compaction which we want to avoid as in effect this gives two very different firmnesses of racing surface, this potentially can have catastrophic consequences for a greyhound travelling at speed. Regarding volumes of water, we had to install another water tank, as using hoses we were draining out 95% of available water, this was never an issue when solely using a bowser. The only time we will potentially use a bowser now is to deliver a salt solution to the racing surface during sub-zero temperatures. Our STRI reports always show our water levels as approved by them and we have received praise from officials at Shelbourne Park for our methods of preparation and Cory Hiscock (a highly respected curator from The Meadows in Australia) has also visited Romford and watched our preparation and inspected the track. The diagram below shows our water levels from a recent STRI inspection.

Thank you for attending!

ROMFORD



GREYHOUND STADIUM WELFARE DAY, SAVE THE DATE!

**Thursday 16th October 2025 - 11AM to 3PM -
Pavilion Restaurant - Romford Greyhound Stadium**

GUESTS INCLUDE

DARRELL WILLIAMS

KEVIN LEWIS (GREYHOUND MASSAGE SPECIALIST)

DR LAWRENCE STEED (GBGB REGIONAL REGULATORY VET)

CARLY PHILPOTT (STIPENDIARY STEWARD)

DR CHRISTIAN SPRING (STRI)

DR IAN ANDERSON (STRI)

KEVIN STOW (GREYHOUND HOMING COORDINATOR)

FREE LUNCH INCLUDED!

Please RSVP to romford@GBGBracing.com by 13/10/25.

THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING!