

Published: 11:13 PM EDT July 7, 2017 Updated: 6:25 PM EDT July 8, 2017

## Greyhound trainer whose license was suspended after cocaine found in dogs has checkered past

A greyhound trainer, suspended after 12 dogs in his care tested positive for cocaine, has a history of citations for drug violations in racing dogs, First Coast News has learned.

Charles McClellan, a greyhound trainer whose dogs race at Bestbet Orange Park track, has problems dating back to 1992, according to documents obtained from state regulators.

We first told you about the suspension of Charles McClellan last week. McClellan was an independent contractor at Bestbet until last month.

## STORY: 12 greyhounds test positive for cocaine at Bestbet race track

First Coast News obtained records from the state Department of Business and Professional Regulation. 12 dogs in McClellan's care tested positive for cocaine, one multiple times, for a total of 18 incidents in four months.

McClellan's license was suspended on June 9 pending an administrative hearing in August. On Friday, the state confirmed to First Coast News that Bestbet wasn't notified of the test results until McClellan's suspension in June.

According to the state, "there is no statutory requirement that the facility be notified."

The state requires the winner of each greyhound race, as well as another randomly chosen dog, to be drug tested after races. Urine tests conducted by the University of Florida College on Medicine Racing Laboratory came back positive for Benzoylecgonine (BZE) — a metabolite of cocaine.

The dogs McClellan was training are housed at a kennel owned by Steve Sarras, including a female Flicka, who tested positive for cocaine six times over four months, according to state records. Sarras acknowledged the positive tests, however in a statement to First Coast News, Sarras says the amounts of BZE were minuscule and could be the result of environmental contamination.

"All dogs that tested positive WOULD NOT have failed any federally mandated human drug test. Horse racing has also started to use these federal drug testing guidelines. A commercial airline pilot or a truck driver would have to have tested at concentrations 4 to 14 times higher than the greyhound's to even warrant a second test to confirm a positive or failed drug test .... Quite simply it is propaganda against the greyhound industry." Sarras said.

"This is the largest greyhound drug case in American history," says Carey Theil, Executive Director of GREY2K USA in Arlington, Mass., a non-profit that opposes greyhound racing and monitors dog tracks around the country. "This is staggering."

Since this story broke, First Coast News has learned that McClellan had issues with state regulators in multiple counties before the time he even came to Bestbet.

The documents date back to 1992 when McClellan received a warning letter from the state about "purse redistribution" in Palm Beach County.

2001504815 Purse Redistribution Warning by NealBennett on Scribd

VR Home Inbox Entity Application License Cash Exam Inspection Enforcement Report

Complaint Search Public Case Info
Mass Activity Update Mass Discipline Update

Domain 79 - Dept of Business & Prof Regulation Loopalant

VR Home > Complaint Search > Maintain Complaint

Lic Type 1021 - Pari-Mutuel Wagering Individual Cocupational

Complaint # 2001504815 Case Type CMP - Complaint

Disposition Disposition Date

Respondent CHARLES F Responsible Joycar - POZAR, Public Case

Source INTN - Internal Security Level 1 Parties Activities Form Priority Discipline Complexity R - Regular Class'n ✓ Violations Compliance Related 

Disposition Incident Region SR - Southern Region Inspection Received 06/23/1992 Reference 92060420/149-Costs Time Tracking Auto Assign J/Ruling 149-000122 purse redistribution, warning issued.
Summary Closed 7/30/92 Palm Beach Kennel Club (Invst Corp of PB)
SS# DOB:3/21/64 Closed 7/30/92 History Attachments Work Notes Print Report Updated 10/13/2001 03:15:12 By HD0014477

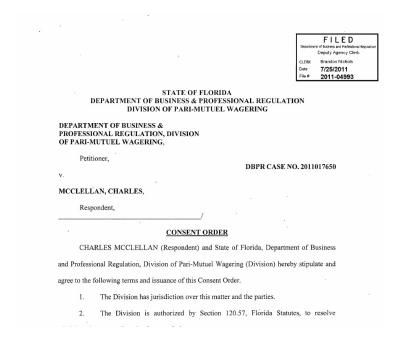
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The first drug case came in June 2011, when in "GS Max", a McClellan trained dog, tested positive for a drug called "procaine", described as a "local anesthetic", after a race in Volusia County, according to state records. He was fined \$100.

2011017650 class 3 drug violation 7 25 2011 by NealBennett on Scribd

Complaint Respondent Complainant Addt'l Info



In March 2012, a McClellan trained dog named "Barts Misty Morn" tested positive for a banned "narcotic analgesic", according to the UF testing lab. That incident happened in Brevard County. The state later ordered that his license be revoked and he be fined \$5,000 after this incident, but that was then reduced to a 60-day suspension and a \$1,000 fine, according to state licensing records.

2012018061 Class 1 Drug Violation by NealBennett on Scribd

## STATE OF FLORIDA

FILED

8/29/2014 DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL REGULAT File # DIVISION OF PARI-MUTUEL WAGERING 2014-06606

## DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL REGULATION, DIVISION

Petitioner.

DBPR CASE No. 2012018061

CHARLES F. MCCLELLAN,

OF PARI-MUTUEL WAGERING,

CONSENT ORDER

Respondent, Charles F. McClellan, and Petitioner, State of Florida, Department of Business & Professional Regulation, Division of Pari-Mutuel Wagering (Division), hereby stipulate and agree to the following terms and issuance of this Consent Order

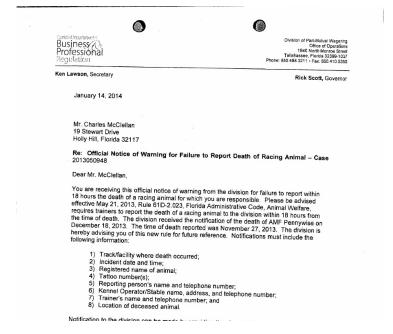
Division is the state agency charged with regulating pari-mutuel wagering, pursuant to Chapter 550, Florida Statutes.

At all times material to the above-numbered complaints in this matter,

Respondent held a pari-mutuel wagering trainer license, number \$16680-1021, issued by the

In 2013, McClellan received an official warning notice from the state for "failure to report within 18 hours the death of a racing animal for which you are responsible." The death of a dog named "AMF Pennywise" was reported some three weeks too late, according to state records.

2013050948 Not Report Dog Death in Time by NealBennett on Scribd



In our previous story, Bestbet Orange Park issued a statement, which in part said they "maintain a zerotolerance policy for any trainer or staff member that does anything which puts one of the dog's health at

In a written statement Steve Sarras acknowledged that "17 positive tests involve 12 dogs in (his) kennel."

Sarras calls the positive tests a contamination.

"This is an issue of innocent environmental contamination," said Sarras. "No dogs were put in harm's way or have exhibited any health issues. My dogs have been tested at a disproportionately higher level than other kennels in Jacksonville since the begin of political sessions.'

Sarras went on to say that "all dogs that tested positive would NOT have failed any federally mandated human drug test."

You can read the statement from the National Greyhound Association on the suspension of the Florida greyhound trainer here

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