



Author: WTLV Staff  
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## Greyhound trainer whose license was suspended after cocaine found in dogs has checkered past

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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 Benzoylcegonine (BZE) -- a metabolite of cocaine.

The dogs McClellan was training are housed at a kennel owned by Steve Sarra, including a female Flicka, who tested positive for cocaine six times over four months, according to state records. Sarra acknowledged the positive tests, however in a statement to First Coast News, Sarra 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," Sarra 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

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Domain 79 - Dept of Business & Prof Regulation Logged in as: bbarber

VR Home > Complaint Search > Maintain Complaint

Lic Type	1021 - Pari-Mutuel Wagering Individual Occupational		Status	90 Closed	Status Date	07/30/1992
Complaint #	2001504815	Case Type	CMP - Complaint	Disposition	Disposition Date	
Docket#		Respondent	MCCLELLAN, CHARLES F	Responsible	jpozar - POZAR, JOHN	Public Case

Complaint	Respondent	Complainant	Add'l Info
Source	INTN - Internal	Security Level	1
Form		Priority	
Class'n		Complexity	R - Regular
Security	STND - Standard	Incident	
Region	SR - Southern Region	Received	06/23/1992
Reference	92060420/149-		
Entered		Entered By	
Summary	J/Ruling 149-000122 purse redistribution, warning issued. Closed 7/30/92 Palm Beach Kennel Club (Invst Corp of PB) SS# [REDACTED] DOB: 3/21/64 Closed 7/30/92		
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



STATE OF FLORIDA  
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL REGULATION  
DIVISION OF PARI-MUTUEL WAGERING

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS &  
PROFESSIONAL REGULATION, DIVISION  
OF PARI-MUTUEL WAGERING,

Petitioner,

DBPR CASE NO. 2011017650

v.

MCCLELLAN, CHARLES,

Respondent,

CONSENT ORDER

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

1. The Division has jurisdiction over this matter and the parties.
2. The Division is authorized by Section 120.57, Florida Statutes, to resolve

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**

**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL REGULATION  
DIVISION OF PARI-MUTUEL WAGERING**

<b>FILED</b>	
Department of Business and Professional Regulation	
Deputy Agency Clerk	
CLERK	Brandon Nichols
Date	8/29/2014
File #	2014-06606

**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS &  
PROFESSIONAL REGULATION, DIVISION  
OF PARI-MUTUEL WAGERING,**

Petitioner,

**DBPR CASE NO. 2012018061**

v.

**CHARLES F. MCCLELLAN,**

Respondent,

**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.

1. Division is the state agency charged with regulating pari-mutuel wagering, pursuant to Chapter 550, Florida Statutes.
2. At all times material to the above-numbered complaints in this matter,

Respondent held a pari-mutuel wagering trainer license number 816680-1071 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



Ken Lawson, Secretary

Division of Pari-Mutuel Wagering  
Office of Operations  
1640 North Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1037  
Phone: 850 488 3211 • Fax: 850 410 5359

Rick Scott, Governor

January 14, 2014

Mr. Charles McClellan  
19 Stewart Drive  
Holly Hill, Florida 32117

**Re: Official Notice of Warning for Failure to Report Death of Racing Animal – Case 2013050948**

Dear Mr. McClellan,

You are receiving this official notice of warning from the division for failure to report within 18 hours the death of a racing animal for which you are responsible. Please be advised effective May 21, 2013, Rule 61D-2.023, Florida Administrative Code, Animal Welfare, requires trainers to report the death of a racing animal to the division within 18 hours from the time of death. The division received the notification of the death of AMF Pennywise on December 18, 2013. The time of death reported was November 27, 2013. The division is hereby advising you of this new rule for future reference. Notifications must include the following information:

- 1) Track/facility where death occurred;
- 2) Incident date and time;
- 3) Registered name of animal;
- 4) Tattoo number(s);
- 5) Reporting person's name and telephone number;
- 6) Kennel Operator/Stable name, address, and telephone number;
- 7) Trainer's name and telephone number; and
- 8) Location of deceased animal.

Notification to the division can be made through the following link:

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

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

Sarra calls the positive tests a contamination.

"This is an issue of innocent environmental contamination," said Sarra. "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."

Sarra 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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