



Everything Alabama

Greyhound at the Birmingham Race Course tested positive for cocaine

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Stan Diel -- The Birmingham News

A greyhound at the Birmingham Race Course tested positive for cocaine last fall, and the dog's handler was fined and suspended for 60 days, **according to Birmingham Racing Commission documents and a greyhound advocacy group.**

Cocaine has been administered to greyhounds in attempts to fix races in Florida, Massachusetts and overseas in recent years.

According to a ruling from the Racing Commission, which regulates racing in Birmingham, the dog Potrs Banshee won the 10th race on Oct. 20, 2009, and then tested positive for benzoylecgonine, a common marker for cocaine that can be detected in urine days after cocaine itself has left the body.

The commission ordered the purse from the race rescinded and fined the handler, Robert Edward Trow, \$750 because of the positive test. Trow, who has not been charged with a crime, was fined an additional \$50 because "indictable medication" and a syringe were found in the kennel, the ruling indicates. Efforts to reach Trow for comment were unsuccessful.

Grey2k USA, a Massachusetts-based organization opposed to dog racing, last week asked Gov. Bob Riley's Task Force on Illegal Gambling to investigate the incident, as well as a similar incident in Mobile the group says occurred in December.

"This calls into question the integrity of wages being placed at Alabama dog tracks," said Jennifer Krebs, vice president of the organization.

Efforts to reach representatives of the anti-gambling task force and the dog track were unsuccessful Thursday afternoon.

It's not the first time that racing greyhounds in Alabama have been associated with improper drug use. In 2007, 13 regular patrons at Mobile Greyhound Park were arrested for what authorities described as a scheme to fix races using so-called "male enhancement" products.

Prosecutors said at the time that a pill commonly available at health food stores -- and marketed as a sex aid

-- was given to dogs that were favored to win. Those behind the plan hoped the drugs would raise the dogs' heart rate to the point that they became exhausted before the race and would lose, prosecutors said at the time. The conspirators bet on nondrugged dogs that offered longer odds and a better payout, authorities said.

Of the 13 men arrested, three were charged with tampering with racing. All of the tampering-with-racing charges eventually were dropped.

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