



RCI Bulletin

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ONTARIO ENACTS HORSE SUSPENSION FOR DRUG VIOLATIONS

The Ontario Racing Commission has enacted stiff regulation changes related to owner and trainer responsibility, including an automatic 90-day suspension for any horse testing positive for a non-therapeutic drug.

The automatic three-month suspension will apply to any horse testing positive for Class 1, 2, or 3 banned substances or for exceeding the permitted level of total carbon dioxide.

“A number of obvious situations have arisen where an owner has had a number of his/her horses test positive for a banned substance,” the commission says in a fact sheet on the new measures. “The current suite of rules does not provide any burden of responsibility on the owner for the positive tests incurred by his/her horses. ... The purpose of these rules is to encourage owners to conduct proper due diligence in selecting their trainers.”

The commission clarified its position on the responsibility of trainers for medication violations, citing a previous rule inconsistency.

“Currently under the rules, if a trainer is able to demonstrate that he/she took all reasonable care of the horse, there can in certain circumstances be a finding of no responsibility,” the commission said. “In the end there is no establishment of who was responsible, while there remains the condition of a horse that obtained a positive. ... Establishing trainer responsibility for the condition of his/her horse as an absolute liability offense will provide certainty in the eyes of the public and the industry that someone maintains ultimate responsibility.”

The commission also established new guidelines for the use of shock wave therapy and launched a phasing-in of a requirement of the use of safety reins in training and racing.

Among other measures in a sweeping list of reforms effective January 31 is a rule that will allow only licensed veterinarians to administer medication to racehorses in the province.

The commission also will be moving toward the establishment of a horse passport that will require former owners to make the medical history of a horse available on request of the new owner within 72 hours. The request for medical records must be made within one week of the date of transfer.

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"I am confident these efforts to protect the horse, the participant, and the public confidence send a strong message to the public: that through measures such as these, our sport continues to operate at the highest level of integrity," commission Chairman Rod Seiling said. Source: Thoroughbred Times.

ANTIGUA SEEKS WTO ARBITRATION IN US GAMBLING DISPUTE

Antigua has asked the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to arbitrate in a dispute over gambling with the United States, its lawyer in the case said on Thursday.

Mark Mendel told Reuters that Antigua, which last month won a related case against the United States for being shut out of the U.S. online gambling market, was continuing to seek discussions with Washington.

In that case the WTO ruled that Antigua was entitled to compensation of \$21 million a year -- far less than the tiny Caribbean nation had sought; but, controversially, it was given the right to levy the sanctions on U.S. intellectual property by lifting copyright on products such as software or DVDs.

As a result of an earlier ruling in that case -- that a U.S. law allowing only domestic companies to provide online horse-race gambling services was discriminatory -- Washington announced in May last year it would withdraw gambling from the services it opened up under a 1994 world trade deal.

Under WTO rules the United States then had to offer comparable access in other services to any of the WTO's 151 members who sought it, prompting the current dispute.

The European Union has said it reached an agreement with the U.S. over access to postal and courier, research and development and storage and warehouse services in compensation.

Washington has reached similar deals with Japan and Canada.

But no agreement has been reached with four other countries seeking compensation -- Antigua, Macau, Costa Rica and India.

"What they are very much hoping to do is withdraw the commitment and get away with it. That would be horrible for the WTO," Mendel said.

Mendel said Costa Rica had also filed for arbitration by the Jan. 28 deadline to do so.

Officials in the WTO missions of Costa Rica, Macao, India and the United States were not available for comment.

Although Antigua won much less than the \$3.44 billion it had sought in the trade dispute, it hopes that its right to break copyright on U.S. products would give it plenty of leverage in seeking compensation for the U.S. withdrawal of gambling.

Under WTO rules, parties seeking arbitration in disputes like this about changing services commitments have 20 days to agree on the arbitrators, usually three people forming a panel.

If they fail to agree on the arbitrators any party can ask the WTO's director-general to appoint them within 10 days. Source: Reuters

MARYLAND RACING COMMISSION POSTPONES BAN ON STEROIDS

by John Scheinman

Citing concerns of horsemen and veterinarians as well as a lack of consensus across racing jurisdictions on policy, the Maryland Racing Commission on Tuesday scrapped plans to ban the race day presence of steroids in racehorses.

The commission had voted last month to implement the ban beginning April 19, the opening of the Pimlico spring meet, and also had joined with neighboring racing commissions last November in agreeing to a ban beginning this spring throughout Mid-Atlantic racing states. Horsemen's groups have voiced their objections this month, complaining about the model rule created by the Racing Medication and Testing Consortium, the Association of Racing Commissioners International, and others.

The horsemen's groups say there are too many unanswered questions about issues such as withdrawal times, penalties, and therapeutic uses of steroids. The groups said questions also remain about whether to test urine or blood samples and how the withdrawal of steroids from horses on regimens will affect their form.

Maryland Racing Commission Chairman John Franzone announced a four-member commission task force to continue studying the issues and rules with the goal of implementing a steroid policy by January 1, 2009.

"The [veterinarians] are wild about this because they say there is therapeutic use for steroids," Franzone said. "The [veterinarians] claim this isn't a race-enhancing thing. Do they make a horse run faster? I assume so. If we could, we'd go back to hay, oats, and water, but we're past that point."

Pennsylvania reportedly is set to begin a race-day steroid ban on April 1, while Delaware will not allow steroids to be present in horses when the Delaware Park spring meet begins April 19. Bill Rickman, president of Delaware Park, said he was worried about out-of-state horsemen opting to race at Mid-Atlantic tracks that don't have steroid bans rather than shipping in to his facility.

"That's a problem," Rickman said. "That's why I thought we'd all ban steroids at the same time."

Alan Foreman, general counsel for the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association and chief executive officer of the Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association, said the Maryland commission made the right decision to postpone a ban.

"There is a clear consensus to control and regulate steroids in racehorses; it's the implementation that has suffered from problems and needs to be coordinated," Foreman said. "I think a January 1 date will allow for all these issues to be resolved." Source: Thoroughbred Times.

RMTC CALLS FOR UNIFORMITY ON REGULATION OF ANABOLIC STEROIDS IN RACEHORSES

The Racing Medication and Testing Consortium (RMTC) firmly believes that the appropriate regulation of anabolic steroids in racehorse is essential to the integrity of horse racing and the welfare of the horse. RMTC is comprised of the major industry organizations in racing, and thus our opinion is one of consensus on this issue. We are confident that the majority in racing agrees with this concept, and this is evidenced by the fact that, while there have been public statements questioning how this should best be achieved, there have been no calls for abandoning the goal of regulation of anabolic steroids. RMTC urges the horse racing industry to avoid letting inaccurate, inflammatory rhetoric interfere with progress toward achieving the goal of uniform regulation of anabolic steroids by the end of 2008.

According to Kent Stirling, RMTC board member and chairman of the National Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association, "HBPA welcomes the regulation of anabolic steroids based on scientifically established thresholds and published withdrawal time guidelines, a targeted national implementation date. We have never tried to stall these recommendations and are very pleased with the actions taken by the RMTC."

The RMTC and Racing Commissioners International (RCI) model rule calls for the regulation of the four androgenic anabolic steroids permitted for use in the horse by FDA, and bans the use of any other anabolic steroids in racehorses. These four anabolic steroids, stanozolol (Winstrol®), boldenone (Equipose®), nandrolone and testosterone, can be regulated through testing in blood and urine. The current model rule provides research-based screening levels in urine that have been used to successfully regulate these anabolic steroids internationally since 1976.

In order to provide blood plasma threshold levels for these anabolic steroids to reduce the anticipated costs and better facilitate the testing, the RMTC is currently funding research in both plasma and urine at the University of Florida Pharmacokinetics Laboratory. When completed by this August, horsemen, veterinarians and regulators will have definitive threshold levels and withdrawal times for anabolic steroids in both plasma and urine.

In issuing the original recommendations for the regulation of anabolic steroids in racehorses last February, the RMTC recommended to RCI that all 38 state racing commissions begin the adoption process as soon as possible. RMTC vice-chairman and president of the Thoroughbred Racing Associations, Chris Scherf affirmed, "We realized that there are testing and logistical issues individual state racing commissions must work through before adopting this anabolic steroid model rule and implementing the penalty phase, but RMTC believes every racing jurisdiction should be strictly enforcing the regulation of anabolic steroids by the end of 2008."

In adopting the recommended model rule on anabolic steroids, the RMTC also encouraged states to be uniform to achieve a national approach, and should resist the temptation to adopt stricter standards and establish more severe penalties than what the RMTC recommends. While RMTC must wait for the completion of the Florida research study before definitive withdrawal times can be recommended, the range is anticipated to fall between 30 and 45 days.

Concerning penalties, the RMTC and RCI recommend a \$500 fine and disqualification of the horse for the first violation; a \$1,000 fine, disqualification and a 15-day trainer suspension for the second violation in a 365-day period; and a \$2,500 fine, disqualification and 30-day trainer suspension for the third violation in a 365-day period. These recommended penalties could be reduced or increased if warranted by extenuating circumstances. In addition, the RMTC strongly encourages state racing commissions to give the horsemen sufficient forewarning before starting the penalty phase of the anabolic steroids model rule after final adoption.

Alan Foreman, CEO of the Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association and RMTC's other vice-chairman has asked that states take the time to address all of the issues and, if necessary, wait until January 1, 2009 to begin enforcement. According to Foreman, "There is no question that anabolic steroids are being abused, but this is an issue that needs to be handled responsibly and uniformly. Horsemen that are using anabolic steroids therapeutically need plenty of opportunity make sure their horses will not test positive once regulation begins. It would be great, if this could at least be addressed uniformly on a regional basis."

Finally, RMTC realizes this will be an ongoing process to successfully achieve proper and effective uniform regulation of anabolic steroids in racehorses. And, while all state racing commissions must move forward with adoption this year, this process will require patience and inevitable modifications along the way. But, according to Alex Waldrop, President of the National Thoroughbred Racing Association, and another RMTC board member, "Given the scrutiny of anabolic steroids by the media and Congress, and the consequential negative perception of these drugs by the public, the horse racing industry must take initiative on its own volition to properly and uniformly regulate the use of anabolic steroids in racehorses this year."

The RMTC consists of 23 racing industry stakeholders and organizations that represent Thoroughbred, Standardbred and American Quarter Horse racing. The organization works to develop, promote and coordinate, at the national level, policies, research, and educational programs that seek to ensure the fairness and integrity of racing, the health and welfare of racehorses and participants, and protect the interests of the betting public. Source: RMTC Press release

WILL NYRA TAKE TEMPORARY EXTENSION?

With another deadline looming that could shut down racing at Aqueduct Feb. 14, rumors are circulating among horsemen that the New York Racing Association might not be willing to accept another temporary extension to keep racing going.

As of Jan. 28, NYRA officials had given no indication on the record if they would agree to another short-term extension to operate the franchise.

"There seems to be rumblings that NYRA may not accept (another extension) at the deadline," trainer Rick Violette said from Florida Jan. 28. "I don't think NYRA is blowing smoke. I don't think it is a bluff."

"There are easily two mindsets here: We all would like to have seen this resolved months ago because it isn't doing anybody in the industry any good. But if NYRA stopped racing for a few days, or a few weeks, could that bring a resolution? That is where the devil lays."

Violette is the president of the New York Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association, which represents the interests of 6,000 people in the racing industry.

"It's a very fine line you have to walk," Violette said. "It's unacceptable to lose even one day of racing. On the flip side, extension after extension doesn't do anyone any good. It's a dire time, no doubt about that."

Violette said for some New York horsemen, the winter months at Aqueduct are an essential means of income, and the money the trainers and owners earn during the meet keeps them afloat the rest of the racing season.

"Winter racing presents an opportunity for money to be made, and this is a necessity for many who make their nut for the whole year," he said.

The most recent deal between NYRA and the state--the second extension was brokered Jan. 21--keeps racing alive through Feb. 13. NYRA's first extension was granted Dec. 31, the day its franchise expired, and secured racing through Jan. 23.

A wrinkle took place after the most recent extension was granted when the state government panel overseeing Thoroughbred racing made a resolution Jan. 22 restricting the power of its new chairman, Steven Newman, who was appointed by Gov. Eliot Spitzer to unilaterally broker deals with NYRA on short-term extensions.

The sides have agreed in principle to allow NYRA to continue running racing at Aqueduct, Belmont Park, and Saratoga. Two of the issues that have caused stumbling blocks between the sides are the length of the franchise, and if another entity should be involved in overseeing the operation of video lottery terminals at Aqueduct. Source: The Blood-Horse.

STATE OFFERS "ANYTHING TO ASSIST" AILING OTB

BY KARLA SCHUSTER

The chairman of the Senate Racing, Gaming and Wagering Committee expressed support yesterday for New York City's position that the state's off-track betting operations need to be reformed.

As the state tries to figure out a long-term plan for its racing franchise, "we might as well do something" for the OTBs, Sen. William J. Larkin Jr. (R,C-Cromwell-on-Hudson) told Mayor Michael Bloomberg. "I personally think it's long overdue [and] I will do anything to assist you."

The mayor, in testimony here yesterday about the proposed state budget, reiterated his intention to shut down New York City OTB when it runs out of money on June 30. "If anybody thinks I'm kidding, they don't know me very well," Bloomberg testified.

The city OTB is technically in the black, but under state law it must turn over so much of its revenue to the state that it has been running in the red and using its reserves to make ends meet, city officials say.

"I've always been uncomfortable with government depending on gambling to cover its expenses," the mayor said, "But I think, if we're going to have gambling, we might as well get the revenue for New York City."

Between 1997 and 2001, the city received an average of \$11 million a year from OTB. That number fell to just \$1 million in 2002, and the city got no money in 2003 and 2005, according to a 2006 report by city Comptroller William Thompson.

The New York Racing Association's franchise to run the state's thoroughbred racing expired at the end of 2007, and has been extended twice since then to prevent Aqueduct Race Track, the only track now operating, from going dark.

The latest temporary extension is set to expire Feb. 13. Source: Newsday.

SLOT MACHINES PULL 63% OF MIAMI VOTE

By Staff / Baptist Press

Voters in Miami-Dade County approved the first-ever installation of Las Vegas-style slot machines in the jurisdiction Jan. 29, awarding gambling promoters 63 percent of the vote.

Under the measure, three facilities -- Flagler Dog Track, Calder Race Course and Miami Jai-Alai -- each can install up to 2,000 slot machines.

"This is the happiest, greatest day of my life," Isadore Havenick, a Flagler Dog Track vice president, was quoted by the Miami Herald as saying. "We've worked so hard for years.... I feel like we won the Super Bowl."

In 2005, 52 percent of Miami-Dade voters turned down a similar measure, while slot machines tallied a 57 percent victory in adjacent Broward County encompassing Fort Lauderdale.

With the Seminole Tribe also offering gambling in the region, the Miami Herald described the January 29 vote as "perhaps pushing South Florida closer to a future as a gambling destination."

A "Yes for a Greater Miami-Dade" organization spent more than \$6 million promoting the measure, the Herald reported.

The measure will trigger, at least according to plans by owners of the Flagler facility, up to \$100 million in renovations encompassing a casino and outdoor amphitheater, according to the Herald.

Slot machine opponents, from a financial standpoint, were "outnumbered 10 to 1," said Eduardo Triana, leader of an Animal Rescue League-related group that was part of what the Herald described as an anti-slots campaign that was slow in starting. Animal protection advocates oppose the dog tracks.

Hialeah Mayor Julio Robaina, who headed a "Truth for Our Community" anti-slots organization, told the Herald, "They started as far back as November," whereas, "We started two weeks ago."

Miami Baptists, former Gov. Jeb Bush and former U.S. Sen. Bob Graham also were part of the slots opposition, the Florida Baptist Witness newspaper had reported.

The Miami-Dade Baptist Association's executive committee unanimously adopted a resolution Jan. 15 declaring that gambling is not good for the community, creates harmful addictions, harms families and businesses and brings other morally harmful activities. The resolution was circulated to the association's 300-plus churches, whose 50,000-plus members comprise the largest evangelical group in Miami-Dade County. Source: Miami Baptist Press.

INVESTORS ANNOUNCED IN TUCUMCARI'S PROPOSAL FOR RACE TRACK AND CASINO

[By Chelle Delaney](#)

The major player and majority stock holder in Tucumcari's bid for a race track and casino was introduced Wednesday to Quay County residents.

Rio Rancho businessman Don Chalmers and principals of a management team that plan to put together an application to the state gaming and horse racing agencies spoke to about 200 people at the Tucumcari Convention Center.

"This is a No. 1 prospect ... If we get a license, there will be \$40 million in capital expenditures in Quay County to build what needs to be built," said Chalmers, who described himself as a car dealer and developer of businesses.

That investment does not include other investors who would be attracted to the area because of the economic momentum, Chalmers said.

In addition, about 300 permanent jobs will be created, Chalmers said.

Chalmers said he was investing in the proposed casino and race track, sometimes called a “racino,” to get a return on his investment and for Quay County. “I know we’ll be successful in those goals,” he said.

Chalmers said he has established Coronado Partners, a New Mexico limited liability corporation, to own and operate the race track and casino.

Other players are:

- David Vance, president of the Vance Group, from Oklahoma City, Okla., who would manage the racetrack operations. He is vice president of racing operations at Louisiana Downs and Remington Park in Oklahoma.

If Tatumcari is awarded the license, Vance said he planned to move to Tatumcari.

- Larry D. Wolf, president of the Navegante Group of Las Vegas, Nev., would manage the casino operation. Earlier this year, he was approved to operate eight casinos in Nevada by the Nevada Gaming Commission.

- Brad Friedmutter is founder and CEO of the Friedmutter Group of Las Vegas, which specializes in casino, restaurant and entertainment venues. The Friedmutter Group is the project’s architect.

The Quay County Gaming Authority was created about a year ago to put together a team to apply for a sixth license that was made available with the advent of new gaming compacts made last year with Indian tribes.

The authority represents Quay County, Tatumcari and the villages of Logan and San Jon. The plan for a racino in Tatumcari, however, first surfaced in the spring of 2004 when Gov. Bill Richardson suggested to a few residents that they explore the idea of landing a casino and race track in Tatumcari for economic development.

Tatumcari is about 110 miles from Amarillo on I-40. Its planned gaming operations are expected to draw from nearby Texas urban areas and the traffic along I-40.

There are five racinos in the state: the Downs at Albuquerque, Sunland Park Racetrack and Casino, Ruidoso Downs/Billy the Kid Casino, SunRay Park and Casino near Farmington, and Zia Park Racetrack/Black Gold Casino in Hobbs.

In addition to Tatumcari, there are three other groups vying for the license, according to news reports. They are Horse Racing at Raton, the Pojoaque Pueblo in Santa Fe and a proposed move of the Downs at Albuquerque to a new \$65 million racino in Moriarty.

Other investors will be sought for the Tatumcari project, Chalmers said.

Lawrence P. Tombari, president of the development division of the Friedmutter Group, said, he thought the ownership group would stand well in Santa Fe and good team had been put together to apply for the license.

The Friedmutter Group has been retained by the Quay County Gaming Authority for its design expertise and to help in the application process.

The group expects to file its application with the state by March 30, according to Warren Frost, a Logan attorney and executive director of the Quay County Gaming Authority. Source: Quay County (NM) Sun

HORSEMEN AT MEADOWLANDS NOW DISCUSSING RACING BOYCOTT CLAIM CORZINE IS NOT HELPING STRUGGLING INDUSTRY

*By BOB JORDAN
FREEHOLD BUREAU*

A boycott of the state's two harness racing tracks — an idea endorsed by Freehold Raceway horsemen last week to protest looming purse cuts — will be considered further when horsemen based at the Meadowlands Racetrack meet with union representatives on Saturday.

Members of the state Standardbred Breeders and Owners Association said Wednesday they are angry over not hearing from Gov. Corzine's administration about a plan for renewing race purse subsidies. A four-year subsidy deal worth more than \$80 million and sponsored by Atlantic City casino interests is expiring, though casino officials say the payments were to cover all of 2008. The money was paid in exchange for a promise from the racing industry to not pursue having video lottery terminals installed at the tracks.

Freehold Raceway officials said last week they will cut purses 20 percent because of the lack of a new subsidy.

But Thomas Luchento, president of the owners association, said this week that track officials agreed to delay making the cut.

"They have agreed to wait another week before implementing the cuts to give the process in Trenton a little more time," Luchento said.

The Meadowlands is expected to announce its own purse cuts, Luchento said.

Corzine's spokeswoman, Lilo Stainton, said work to provide assistance to the racing industry is continuing.

"The administration is working very hard to craft a deal that does as much as possible to stabilize the future of horse racing," Stainton said. "The governor understands the importance of the horse industry. It's a priority."

State Sens. Jennifer Beck, R-Monmouth, and Paul A. Sarlo, R-Bergen, said they want to meet with Casino Association of New Jersey representatives, in part to discuss having the casinos drop their opposition to VLTs at the tracks. The senators said in a joint statement that such a step could provide the horse racing industry with "a stable source of funding."

Joseph A. Corbo Jr., vice president and general counsel for the casino association, said the group will meet with Beck and Sarlo to "explain to them our perspective and to listen to theirs."

Corbo added: "As we have expressed to key members of the governor's office, we are willing to discuss an extension of the subsidy agreement so long as it includes a continuation of the moratorium on slot machines outside of Atlantic City and is done in a manner that will assist the horse race industry (to) become self-sufficient."

Corbo said the racing industry has failed to maximize revenues on its own, pointing to slow start-ups in the operation of off-track wagering facilities.

Corbo said the OTWs are "a business opportunity that New Jersey's horseracing industry has not fully taken advantage of for years now, as the legislation permitting them was enacted in 2001. These facilities would undoubtedly generate millions in revenue per year and for some reason only 2 of the 15 permitted sites have been opened to date. This is a topic that we certainly will raise in our discussion with Senators Beck and Sarlo."

The company that owns Freehold Raceway is building an OTW in Toms River and is planning to have it open by May if not sooner. Source: AP.

WOMEN OF VISION BLAZED TRAIL IN HARNESS RACING

When harness racing honours Ann Curran for creating and running an all-women's driving series, the harness racing pioneer after whom the series is named will fittingly be in attendance, reports Don Campbell.

Ann Curran has first-hand knowledge of how great a horse Cam Fella was, why he was nicknamed both "The Pacing Machine" and "The People's Horse," and why he was Canada's standardbred equivalent to thoroughbred's Northern Dancer.

Curran, the Smiths Falls horsewoman, was no different than a lot of trainers in the North American harness racing industry in the 1980s, trying so hard to train a horse who could beat Cam Fella at a time when the Hall of Fame horse was reeling off 28 consecutive wins, or winning 58 of 69 races over a two-year period and earning in the millions of dollars.

She thought she had Cam Fella with a horse named Watering Hole. Then Bobbo.

"But we never beat him," says Curran. "You couldn't beat him."

That's just part of the reason Curran will be so honoured Feb. 2 when she receives the 2007 Cam Fella Award, the first woman to receive the award that recognizes "extreme meritorious" service to the Canadian harness racing industry.

Cam Fella is the horse Canadian trainer Doug Arthur paid \$19,000 for in 1980 at sales in Lexington, Kentucky, and that quickly became the superstar of the sport, attracting record crowds to North American tracks and retiring in 1984 as the richest pacer (at that time) in harness racing history.

Curran is being honoured for creating and running the Mildred Williams International Women's Driving Series, which not only honours the now 92-year-old pioneer in harness racing from Curran (near Plantagenet) by highlighting women in the sport, but also raises money for breast cancer- related illnesses.

Williams will accompany Curran to the O'Brien Awards banquet next month in Mississauga.

"I was reading an article in Standardbred Canada which asked how many people have you brought to the sport recently," said Curran, who herself raced for the first time at age 12 at the Perth Fair, about 33 years ago. "I thought to myself -- none."

"So I tried to think of something to bring women to the races."

That article spawned the series, named after the Ottawa-area legend who, in 1969, at age 53, successfully challenged a Canadian Trotting Association ruling banning women from driving at pari-mutuel tracks.

But the fight Williams put up on behalf of all women in the sport began long before that, defying even her husband's wishes against her being permitted to race to embark on a 21-year career, beginning with her first win in 1951 at Thorncliffe Park in Toronto and running through 1973, retiring as the winningest driver in North America.

The sport is still male-dominated and likely will be forever.

Of the almost 1,500 drivers in Canada with at least one start this past year, only 39 were women.

Williams had to battle trotting associations on both sides of the border over the years to keep driving and then took it from there, racing at Blue Bonnets, Mohawk (Campbellville), Vernon Downs (near Syracuse) and the Green Mountain Race Track in Vermont where she had one tremendous season, winning 21 of 116 starts, placing in the money in another 37, meaning she won money in precisely 50 per cent of the races in which she started.

A car accident in 1973 spelled the end of her career, though she remains feisty and still gets to some of the series races.

Curran and Williams had never met until the idea of the series first developed though Curran's father, Ross, himself a legend in the sport with 1,709 career wins, raced against her. Ross is 70 now and ailing, though he will also attend the awards banquet.

"What I will say is I was one of a large group of people who have made the Mildred Williams driving series a huge success," says Curran. "The series has now almost taken on a life of its own."

This is a busy time of the year for Curran. She's just booked the season-opening Williams Series event for Edmonton's Northlands Park for March 1 and most of the field will be at Fraser Downs in Vancouver the next day.

The series raised \$92,000 last year for various breast cancer-related charities and her goal for '08 is to top the \$100,000 mark.

Curran is responsible for recruiting the drivers and last year 77 different drivers, from across Canada and the U.S., drove at least one event.

The inaugural series in 2006 had 11 events, all in Eastern North America.

Last year saw growth to 35 dates and she expects a similar number in 2008.

Curran says women have a unique style on the track and, no, it's not about last-second lane changes, talking on their cellphones or speeding up, then slowing down.

These women are professionals as evidenced by the likes of Clare Macdonald, of Antigonish, with more than 1,000 wins and Floridian Kelly Case with over 800.

"I really enjoy the all-female races," says Curran. "In some ways, the women are even more aggressive. Certainly more competitive and aggressive with each other." Source: Ottawa Citizen

MARYLAND: STUDY NEEDED ON STEROIDS

by Tom LaMarra

The Maryland Racing Commission remains committed to regulating anabolic steroids in racehorses, but will delay implementation of a model rule given questions about the rule itself and laboratory testing procedures.

On Jan. 25, the Maryland commission was among those in the Mid-Atlantic region that [issued a joint release](#) indicating steroids regulation would begin as early as this spring. Maryland indicated it planned to have rules in place by late summer.

However, Maryland regulators said Jan. 29 rules won't be in place until about Jan. 1, 2009. Horsemen's groups around the country have supported that start-up date because of what they say are problems with the model rule, a need for national uniformity, and lingering questions about threshold levels and withdrawal times for the drugs.

Maryland Racing Commission executive director Mike Hopkins couldn't be immediately reached for comment Jan. 30, but commission chairman John Franzone was reported in the Baltimore **Sun** as saying: "There is much confusion as to how you test for (steroids)."

Franzone said there will be regulation of steroids in racehorses, hopefully by January 2009. He called for further study of steroids.

Horsemen's groups have taken heat in recent days from industry officials who believe they are attempting to thwart plans to regulate anabolic steroids. The issue came to a head Jan. 25, when Dr. Steven Barker, chemist for the Louisiana State Racing Commission and an adviser to the National Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association, [bashed the model rule](#) and those who devised it.

Barker pointed out several things in the rule that could prove problematic and called for a "common sense" approach to regulation.

In addition, at least one industry official is said to have called for the removal of Kent Stirling, executive director of the Florida HBPA, as chairman of the National HBPA Medication Committee. Barker made his comments during a meeting of that committee in New Orleans.

"It's a very emotional issue, Alan Foreman, chief executive officer of the Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association, which has a Maryland affiliate, said Jan. 30. "One side is saying this needs to be done tomorrow, while the other side is saying that's not practical, and issues need to be addressed."

Foreman, who earlier in January called for the Jan. 1, 2009, national implementation date, said it is imperative steroids testing be done in plasma, not urine. Studies to that effect are under way, he said.

Mid-Atlantic regulators in particular have warned horsemen to stop using steroids in horses about 120 days before regulations take effect. Horsemen's groups have said that timeframe amounts to a ban on substances that have worthwhile therapeutic uses in horses.

Foreman said it wouldn't surprise him if the accepted withdrawal time ends up at 30 days based on scientific research.

Other issues that haven't been addressed are horses claimed while on steroids, the impact of going "cold turkey," the shipping of horses from state to state if regulations are different in each jurisdiction, and unjust penalties for horsemen, Foreman said.

"The issue is not regulation or control, but it needs to be done responsibly and uniformly," Foreman said. "There's no question there is abuse going on, and we're going to get this under control."

On Jan. 27, National Thoroughbred Racing Association president and chief executive officer Alex Waldrop called regulation of steroids a "very critical issue" on Capitol Hill, where hearings have begun into steroid use in major league sports. Waldrop said the NTRA and others assured lawmakers the industry is taking steps to regulate steroids in race horses, though he acknowledged the current rule isn't perfect.

"There is a problem with the model rule, and we need to fix it," Waldrop said. "But the model rule has got to be put in place, because Congress is watching."

Delaware and Pennsylvania plan to enact regulations in April. New York last year began a public comment period on steroids regulation and probably won't have rules ready until the end of this year.

The model rule calls for regulation of four commonly used steroids--boldenone (Equipoise), nandrolone (Durabolin), stanozolol (Winstrol), and testosterone. Dr. Scott Stanley, associate professor at the University of California-Davis, told the National HBPA Jan. 25 his state is developing tests for non-approved steroids as well.

California plans to have regulations in the books in time for this year's Breeders' Cup World Championships in late October at Santa Anita Park. Stanley also commented on an acceptable withdrawal time for steroids in racehorses.

"It won't be 120 days," Stanley said. "We're going to let the data tell us rather us telling the data what it should be."

Stanley suggested research might support a withdrawal period of 30-45 days. The objective, he said, is to use steroids therapeutically to treat various conditions and not allow horses to remain on a steroids regimen. Source: Blood-Horse.

MP BLASTS 'INEFFECTIVE' WHIP RULES

Chris Cook
Guardian

Racing's ruling body has been attacked by an MP for failing to protect racehorses from whip-happy jockeys. Mike Hancock, the Liberal Democrat member for Portsmouth South, wrote to the British Horseracing Authority on Monday, complaining that it had been "extremely ineffective in curbing excessive use of the whip".

Hancock's intervention comes just weeks after Eddie Ahern was given a three-month ban for deliberately flouting the whip rules in order to trigger a "totting-up" ban at what, for him, would have been a convenient time. Ahern raised weals on the

skin of his mount, Marsam, prompting the local police force to take an interest. The RSPCA concluded there was insufficient evidence for a prosecution of Ahern under the Animal Welfare Act.

On Sunday, the Kelso stewards referred conditional jockey Michael O'Connell to the BHA's disciplinary panel after he was found guilty of four separate breaches of the whip rules in one ride.

In his letter, Hancock suggests that racing is in danger of losing its right to self-regulation on the issue. If the BHA does not "get a grip," he claims, "pressure from the public will, I am sure, ultimately force the government" to pass legislation.

Hancock is awaiting a response from the environment secretary, Hilary Benn, who has responsibility for rural affairs, to three written questions on the subject which he tabled on Monday. One question asks whether Benn intends to criminalize the excessive whipping of racehorses.

Named "most progressive politician" for 2007 by the animal rights organization PETA, Hancock describes himself as "a long-standing campaigner ... for better conditions for animals." He has had recent contact with Animal Aid, an animal rights organization whose director would like to see racing banned.

"We received Mr Hancock's letter yesterday [and] are responding to his concerns," said the BHA's Paul Struthers. "We are confident that, when he takes time to review the evidence, he will be reassured that we regard the welfare of horses and other participants in the sport as of paramount importance."

Struthers revealed that the BHA is seeking guidance from a member of the Association of Chief Police Officers on how best to fulfill its role as regulator in areas, such as whip abuse, which might also attract police attention.

Straw Bear will go to Sandown on Saturday for his Champion Hurdle prep race in peak form. His trainer, Nick Gifford, said that the seven-year-old had impressed in his work yesterday morning. "I'm very, very pleased with him," said Gifford, who said that Timmy Murphy would ride in the absence of the injured Tony McCoy. Source: The Guardian (Britain).

KIEREN FALLON OFFERED JOB AS A TRAINER

By Angus Loughran and Marcus Armytage

Kieren Fallon has been given the chance of a quick return to racing - as a trainer. He has been offered the vacant trainer's job at the South Yorkshire stable of owner and football agent Willie McKay - contrary to denials in racing's trade paper the Racing Post yesterday.

McKay, a former bookmaker from Glasgow who is best known in racing for his ownership of the sprinter Les Arcs, the winner of two Group One sprints, has offered Fallon the job. The jockey visited the yard, Martin Grange Stables at Bawtry, near Doncaster, on Monday and is expected to return tomorrow to ride out in order to help him weigh up the offer.

Fallon, the former champion jockey, has dominated racing news in recent months. In December, he was cleared of alleged race-fixing at the Old Bailey, but one day later, it was revealed he had failed a drugs test in France, for the second time, in the summer.

Last Friday, [he was given an 18-month worldwide riding ban](#) for that offence, against which he has appealed. On Tuesday, he was replaced by Johnny Murtagh as first jockey at Ballydoyle.

McKay said yesterday: "Surely this would be a good starting point for Kieren to restart his career and I'm not a believer in knocking a man when he's down."

The agent was himself arrested in December as part of a police investigation into corruption in football. The first person to call on that occasion was Fallon. "That's something I'll never forget," added McKay.

There is no indication yet of whether or not the jockey will take up the offer. The British Horseracing Authority have said that Fallon's riding ban would not preclude him from training but before being granted a licence, he would, like any other

would-be trainer, have to undergo three weeks' worth of courses at the British Racing School in various subjects such as accountancy, health and safety and employment law.

Another consideration would be his career as a jockey, which few genuinely believe is over and many reckon he will have little difficulty resurrecting from July 2009, when he will be 44.

McKay recently advertised the lease on his 50-box stables as the current occupier Danny Murphy's contract expires today and Murphy, who was brought back from the Far East to train for McKay, does not wish to extend his contract.

McKay believes getting away from Newmarket would be good for Fallon, given the jockey's propensity for finding trouble. But having split last year with his previous trainer Tim Pitts, who gave him his biggest successes, McKay is earning a reputation in racing as perhaps not the easiest landlord in the business. Source: Telegraph Media Group, LTD.

IEGEL TO REPRESENT US IN 2008 WORLD CUP

[News Room](#)

Last Sunday, January 27, David Siegel was at Dover Downs to accept an award as National Amateur Driver of the Year.

As he was walking to the podium co-emcee Roger Huston read a letter handed to him which stated that Siegel, as United States Amateur Driver of the Year, will represent the U.S. in the upcoming World Cup of Amateur Racing which is set to get underway in mid-May in Chicago, Ill.

"Not only was I thrilled when I found out I was named the National Amateur Driver of the Year but now giving me the privilege (and responsibility) of representing the US Amateurs in the upcoming World Driving competition the United States is more than I could have ever realized," Siegel told the audience in attendance that evening.

And the next day via email Siegel added: "I basked in the joy of being so honored last night and on the plane ride back today. Beginning tonight I start my study on Balmoral (Park), Maywood (Park), ect. so I give us the best chance of doing well and hopefully winning."

Hosted in America by the North American Amateur Drivers Association the 2008 World Cup of Amateur Racing will also have events at Yonkers Raceway, Monticello Raceway, and Freehold Raceway with the outstanding amateurs from 12 different countries set to participate.

Driving competitively at Cal Expo in Sacramento for the last three years this season has by far been the best for the 49 year old executive.

From 209 starts Siegel won 28 races, has had 35 seconds and 20 thirds for a .259 UDR and purses of \$100,040 while driving mainly against professionals at the only pari-mutuel harness track still operating in California.

About half of his drives at Cal Expo were with horses he owned where he sported an impressive .352 UDR.

This year again, mainly against professional drivers, Siegel already has two wins in 12 starts.

Living in Palo Alto, CA. since 1981 the transplanted easterner- from Livingston, NJ -moved west after he graduated Union College in Schenectady, NY. Siegel later obtained his Masters in Business Administration from Stanford University.

Currently the president of Trackmaster, an Equibase subsidiary which supplies handicap information for thoroughbred and harness players, it was through his profession that Siegel became involved in amateur racing.

"I never even touched a horse until 2002 when I purchased a pacer by the name of Wastin Time," Siegel reflected.

"Ed Hensley was my trainer at that time and for 18 months I jogged and sometimes trained horses with Ed. Two years later when I applied for my driver's license I had to drive in 45 qualifying races before I was granted a Provisional license in late 2004."

However, with 58 driving victories already under his belt in just three full seasons of driving, it's obvious that Siegel has learned his lessons well.

Currently he owns 12 horses most of which race at Cal Expo but he also has three competing on the east coast at Saratoga Raceway in upstate New York. Source: Harnesslink.com.

IN REVIVED CAMPAIGN OVER DOG TRACKS, BATTLEGROUND IS RAYNHAM

By Robert Preer, Globe Correspondent

Marion Penney of Brockton, who adopted her first greyhound 15 years ago, spent days last fall collecting signatures on a petition to ban dog racing in Massachusetts. "It's a terrible thing to do to these sweet, gentle, loving animals," says Penney. "I'd like to put those people out there and let them race."

George Carney, owner of Raynham Park, is one of those people. But he says the activists trying to shut down his greyhound track are misguided. Greyhounds are born to run, he says, and the race dogs are treated better than most house pets.

The battle over greyhound racing is being joined again in Massachusetts, as a proposed ban makes its way toward a November ballot vote - a redux of 2000.

Once again, Raynham Park is ground zero in the battle.

The park, a sprawling racing and entertainment complex on Route 138 about a mile from Interstate 495, is the state's busiest and most successful racetrack and gambling venue. It took in more than \$121 million in wagers in 2006.

The track features live greyhound racing six days a week year-round, and simulcasting of greyhound and horse races elsewhere throughout most of the day and night. The state's other dog track, Wonderland Park in Revere, operates only half the year and takes in about a third as much money.

Both tracks would be forced to end live racing by Jan. 1, 2010, if the latest referendum outlawing greyhound racing passes and survives the expected legislative and legal challenges.

In late November, animal welfare activists cleared their main hurdle in getting the issue on the November ballot: They collected more than 100,000 signatures on a referendum petition to outlaw dog racing in the state. The pro- and anti-dog-racing forces are planning intense public relations campaigns, as well as an expected legal struggle in advance of the Nov. 4 election.

Leading the way against greyhound racing is an umbrella group called the Committee to Protect Dogs. It includes the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Humane Society of the United States, and GREY2K USA.

Organized opposition to dog racing has been growing in Massachusetts in the past decade. Small groups used to picket the tracks, but in 1999 activists changed tactics and decided to use the initiative petition to try to prohibit the sport. In the 2000 campaign, activists were criticized for displaying gruesome photographs of racing dogs mistreated at places outside of Massachusetts. This year, leaders of the anti-dog-racing campaign say they will focus strictly on conditions at the two Massachusetts tracks. The principal complaints against the local tracks are injuries to dogs during races and confinement of the dogs in kennels for long periods. At Raynham Park in 2006, there were 79 reported injuries, most commonly broken bones. Dogs sometimes collide with each other or hit the wall when going around the quarter-mile oval. Supporters of dog racing point out that injuries are a part of every sport. And Carney emphasizes that at his track, "every dog is taken care of."

Critics argue that unlike other athletes, greyhounds are not given a choice about whether to race.

Raynham Selectman Donald L. MacKinnon said he disagrees with arguments of the dog racing opponents but thinks their odds of winning probably are improving. "If you put a thing on the ballot enough, it's going to happen," MacKinnon said.

Bans on greyhound racing have been enacted elsewhere in the country but never in a state in which tracks were operating. In the United States, there are 40 tracks in 12 states.

For the town of Raynham, the stakes are high. Raynham Park is the largest taxpayer and largest employer in the town of 13,000. The town receives one-quarter of 1 percent of money wagered at the track, which produces annual payments to the town treasury of around \$300,000, according to town officials. The track also pays about \$100,000 a year in property taxes and employs about 350 people, many of them Raynham residents.

"It's a lot of money for a small town," said McKinnon. In the petition drive last fall, dog racing foes worked hard in Southeastern Massachusetts, especially at locations near the Raynham track.

"We found the best place was the Market Basket on Route 138 in Raynham," said Anne Albanese of Taunton, who coordinated activities in Bristol County for the Committee to Protect Dogs.

Raynham Park faces difficult times even without the pressure from the animal welfare activists.

Since the early 1990s, other gambling venues - primarily the Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun casinos in Connecticut and the Twin River slots and racing complex in Rhode Island - have been taking away business. Since 2002, the amount of money bet at Raynham Park has fallen by more than a third.

A looming threat is the proposed Wampanoag casino in Middleborough. And Governor Deval Patrick's plan to introduce casino gambling includes no provision for the slot machines that Carney would like to add at Raynham Park to help boost revenue.

Carney, who also owns the Brockton Fairgrounds on Belmont Street in Brockton, has vowed to fight the dog racing petition and is lobbying on Beacon Hill for slot machines. He also said he plans to submit a proposal for a casino, either in Raynham or Brockton, if Patrick's plan for three casinos wins legislative approval.

The 2000 referendum that would have banned dog racing lost by about 2 percentage points. In 2006, the measure never came to a vote. Carney went to court, arguing the proposal was too broad, and the state Supreme Judicial Court upheld his position. Unlike the simple measure being proposed this year banning dog racing, the 2006 proposal included provisions to protect police and service dogs and to prohibit dogfighting. This year's effort also could face legal challenges.

Carney said he probably will sue to try to keep it off the ballot. If voters approve the measure, the Legislature could amend or repeal it. State Senator Michael W. Morrissey of Quincy, who cochairs the legislative committee that regulates gambling, said he doubts the Legislature would make major changes.

"The Legislature," he said, "tends to be deferential to the will of the voters." Source: Boston Globe.

PARI-MUTUEL INDUSTRY SUFFERS BAD NOVEMBER

Florida's pari-mutuel receipts plunged in November. Greyhound racing fell 12 percent to \$30.5 million, compared to the same month in 2006. Horse racing dropped 12 percent to \$55.9 million.

Tampa Greyhound track reported \$5.9 million in total handle, down from \$6.2 million in November 2006. The track's racing schedule was run at St. Petersburg's Derby Lane.

Overall, the pari-mutuel industry suffered a nearly \$12 million decline in handle during November.

It fared much better in card rooms, as receipts increased to \$6.8 million from \$3.9 million in November 2006. Derby Lane's poker room dipped slightly, to \$583,398. It reported \$629,243 in receipts in November 2006.

Competition will ramp up shortly, as the seven casinos operated by the Seminole Tribe add Class III gaming machines and blackjack and baccarat to their product line. Currently pari-mutuel facilities in Broward County are allowed Vegas-style slot machines, but not blackjack and baccarat. Source: Tampa Bay Business Journal.

2008 QUARTER HORSE DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS

January 24, 2008

Earlier this week, the Ontario Racing Commission announced the highlights of its 2008 industry development program for the quarter horse racing sector.

The program, now in its third year, includes incentives to encourage the expansion of the Ontario breeding sector and increased purse money for Ajax Downs' racing program.

Some of the highlights of the 2008 racing and breeding program include:

- \$800,000 in purse supplements for Ontario-bred and foaled horses – a new program for 2008;
- \$730,000 in added money to Quarter Racing Owners of Ontario Inc. (QROOI) Stakes Program – increased by \$200,000 in 2008;
- \$400,000 available in Breeders Awards – increased by \$50,000 in 2008;
- \$40,000 available in Stallion Awards – increased by \$5,000 in 2008.

The deadline for individuals to enroll in the program is March 1, 2008.

This year, the quarter horse Ontario Sires Stakes program is an addition to the industry development program. All Ontario Accredited Stallions for the 2008 breeding season are eligible 'Ontario Sires.' The Ontario Sire Stakes Futurity, the first in a series of OSS races will be run for two-year-olds of 2011 – offspring of breedings of 2008.

Also, a Princess Futurity and a Princess Derby will run in 2008. The top 16 contenders for each stakes race – that is 32 fillies - will earn a bonus to cover stud fees for the first year they are bred as Ontario Accredited Broodmares – as much as \$6,000 for the top 16 fillies. This breeding incentive payment stays with the filly, even if ownership is transferred. Source: Standardbred Canada.

\$20 MILLION FACILITY PROPOSED FOR LONDON

By Janet Patton

Three potential partners in a proposed \$20 million London quarter horse racetrack have dropped out of the application. No reason for the change was given.

According to an amended application filed Jan. 23 with the Kentucky Horse Racing Authority, Randall "Dee" Hubbard, Dr. Edward Allred and Paul Blanchard have withdrawn from Sprint Racing Partners.

Sprint Racing had applied for Kentucky's ninth -- and only outstanding -- racetrack license. Such a license could be worth millions if tracks are allowed to open casinos, as Gov. Steve Beshear has proposed.

The three men, along with Bruce Rimbo, were Zia Partners, which in 2004 built Zia Park racetrack and gambling facility in New Mexico, which they recently sold to Penn National Gaming for \$200 million.

Although Zia Partners has officially withdrawn, Rimbo remains in Sprint Racing Partners, along with Walmac founder Johnnie T.L. Jones Jr., attorney and developer Brent Rice and Outback Steakhouse founder Chris Sullivan, according to reorganization documents dated Jan. 1.

Jones, a longtime horseman in both quarter horses and thoroughbreds, said he has not spoken with the governor's office.

Hubbard contributed \$38,500 to a little-known Democratic campaign fund last fall, the Kentucky Victory 2007 Fund, as well as \$10,000 to Beshear's inaugural fund.

Rice also gave \$10,000 to the Kentucky Victory 2007 fund.

Jones said Hubbard, Allred (who owns Los Alamos quarter horse track and a chain of abortion clinics) and Blanchard (an official in New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson's administration and owner of an Albuquerque track) decided to withdraw "for personal reasons."

"I have gotten no messages from anybody that they should go," Jones said. "They wouldn't be coming back in, but if they did, they would still have to be approved."

No new investors are listed on the application.

Hubbard, who owns Ruidoso Downs in New Mexico, had to give up his gambling license in Indiana after an incident involving hookers flown in for a golf tournament at Belterra Casino and Resort, which is owned by Pinnacle Entertainment.

Hubbard was the founder and largest single shareholder in Pinnacle. But he was forced to divest his shares and cease all involvement with the casino company. He promised never to apply for a gambling license in Indiana again and paid \$750,000 in fines.

The Herald-Leader reported in December that Hubbard did not spell out those circumstances on his Kentucky license application with Sprint Partners. Source: Lexington Herald Leader

GAMBLING RULING SET FOR FRIDAY

A crucial step toward getting a Kansas Supreme Court ruling on whether the state's expanded gambling law is constitutional will happen Friday when a district judge releases his ruling on the question.

Shawnee County District Judge Charles Andrews' ruling comes after he heard testimony last month in a so-called "friendly" lawsuit filed by the attorney general's office.

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius asked the attorney general to file the lawsuit because she believed developers would be discouraged from investing in casinos and slot machines unless the law was upheld by the state's highest court.

At issue is last year's law allowing four state-owned and operated resort casinos, plus slot machines at horse and dog tracks. There already are four tribal casinos in northeast Kansas.

Whatever the ruling, it is expected to be appealed to the state Supreme Court. The attorney general initially filed the lawsuit with the Supreme Court, which said it should be first considered by a district court.

The attorney general argued that the law is unconstitutional to set the stage for the required legal controversy. The Kansas Lottery argued the law is constitutional.

Lawmakers specified that casinos are owned and operated by the lottery, which will contract with casino developers to carry out the day-to-day management.

Eleven states have nontribal resort casinos, but Kansas is the first to have state-owned and -operated ones.

The legal controversy is prompted by language in the Kansas Constitution and a Supreme Court ruling.

A constitutional amendment approved by voters in 1986 says the Legislature may provide for a state-owned and -operated lottery. In 1994, the Supreme Court declared the term "lottery" was broad enough to cover slot machines and other casino games.

The gambling law says those picked by the state to run the casinos must pay for the buildings and equipment, but the Kansas Lottery is the owner and operator. The attorney general argued the lottery is regulating rather than operating.

The lottery maintained that the state does have ownership and can exercise whatever control is needed.

Even as the issue works through the legal system, the lottery is moving forward with prospective developers of casinos in Wyandotte, Cherokee, Sumner and Ford counties, plus slots at the Woodlands in Kansas City and Camptown Greyhound Park in Frontenac.

The lottery has until the end of March to complete negotiations with the 13 applicants for the four casinos.

It can enter into contracts with as many applicants as it wants and forward them to the Lottery Gaming Facility Review Board, which makes the final selection. The selected casino developer also must pass a background check by the Kansas Racing and Gaming Commission. Source: Topeka-Capital Journal.

POCONOS SLOTS OWNER FACES 4 PERJURY CHARGES

By Brad Bumsted and Tony LaRussa
STATE CAPITOL REPORTER

The Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board on Wednesday temporarily suspended the casino license of Scranton-area businessman Louis DeNaples after he was charged with perjury for allegedly lying about his ties to organized crime figures.

Dauphin County District Attorney Edward Marsico charged DeNaples, 67, of Dunmore, and his company, Mount Airy No. 1 LLC, which operates a resort and casino in the Poconos. Each was charged with four counts of perjury based on a grand jury presentment, Marsico said.

DeNaples is accused of lying to gambling regulators, as he sought a license and underwent a background check, about his relationship with several individuals including Billy D'Elia, reputed to be a member of La Cosa Nostra and head of the Bufalino crime family in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

"It's another black mark for Pennsylvania," said Sen. John Eichelberger, an Altoona Republican who opposed gambling.

Perjury is a third-degree felony punishable by up to three years in prison. A second or subsequent offense is a second-degree felony punishable by up to 10 years in prison, according to Marsico's office.

DeNaples strongly denied the charges through his spokesman Kevin Feeley, who called the case "outrageous."

"One thing is clear now: Mr. DeNaples is glad that we are finally moving from the rumor mill to the courtroom. Anybody who knows Mr. DeNaples knows he tells the truth. And he's eager to have the chance to show that he did exactly that before the gaming board," Feeley said.

Defense attorney Richard Sprague said his client is "absolutely innocent" of the charges.

"Louis DeNaples is a good and decent man, and these charges amount to nothing more than a shameful witch hunt by the prosecutor," Sprague said.

In addition to DeNaples' guilt or innocence, what's at stake in the case is the integrity of Pennsylvania's gambling oversight board, officials said.

"The integrity of gaming has to be upheld," said State Police Commissioner Col. Jeffrey Miller, who announced the charges with Marsico.

DeNaples will voluntarily surrender to authorities for a preliminary arraignment by the end of the week, Marsico said.

The charges won't slow down gambling at any casinos, predicted political analyst G. Terry Madonna, but could lead to "more scrutiny of the operations of the gaming board."

The Mount Airy Lodge will remain open.

Anne Neeb, executive director of the gambling board, issued an emergency order suspending DeNaples' license until the board considers it Tuesday.

A trustee would be established to run the casino if a permanent suspension is ordered. DeNaples' profits would be held in escrow pending the outcome of the case. He is not allowed on the premises, Neeb said, and can't sell or transfer the business.

Since DeNaples' casino opened in October, gamblers there have wagered \$535 million, according to Gaming Control Board figures.

The grand jury recommended revoking DeNaples' license and requiring him to forfeit his \$50 million licensing fee.

"We're still in America. This is a charge. This is a (grand jury) presentment," Neeb said.

The grand jury's report urged the gambling board to be more open in hearings in which applicants testify.

The report said "because DeNaples' testimony regarding character and integrity was conducted in secret, those with knowledge of its falsity were not put on notice that they possessed pertinent information."

Neeb defended the board's licensing process, which relies primarily on its own investigators.

"Because of this indictment, are we going to change the entire process? No," Neeb said.

The case raises "serious questions about the licensing application process," said Rep. Mike Turzai, R-Bradford Woods, whose policy committee is investigating board decisions on casinos. "I think we need full Sunshine."

Rep. Doug Reichley, R-Allentown, said the allegations point to the need for including the attorney general in the investigation of applicants.

"We have just received a copy of the grand jury's findings and have not had a chance to review it," said Chuck Ardo, Gov. Ed Rendell's spokesman.

DeNaples told gambling board agents in August 2006 that he knew reputed mob figure D'Elia but did not meet with him regularly. The grand jury contended the two had a "close relationship spanning many years."

When DeNaples' father was dying, D'Elia would visit him and spent time with the elder DeNaples. When his father died, DeNaples gave D'Elia his father's rosary beads, the presentment said.

The presentment refers to Shamsud-din Ali, a Muslim cleric convicted in federal court of racketeering. It says that when shown a picture of Ali by a gambling agent and asked whether he could identify him, DeNaples said, "To me, all black people look alike."

DeNaples has said the only things he truly cares about are his faith and family. He does not drink, smoke or gamble and attends Mass daily at 6:30 a.m. at St. Peter's Cathedral in Scranton.

"He feels that he's been incredibly blessed and believes it's his responsibility to help others," Feeley said. Of the charges, he said, "This fight has just begun. Mr. DeNaples will prove he is innocent of these charges."

DeNaples has a previous felony conviction that did not keep him from gaining the casino license in December.

Prosecutors said DeNaples, who supplied heavy equipment to Lackawanna County to clean up damage from Tropical Storm Agnes in 1972, plotted with three county employees to falsify records to obtain \$525,000 in federal reimbursements.

DeNaples was tried for fraud, but the trial ended in a hung jury when a juror whose husband was bribed by a reputed mobster held out for acquittal. DeNaples subsequently pleaded no contest to a conspiracy count, paid a \$10,000 fine and spent three years on probation. Source: Pittsburgh Tribune.

22-YEAR HANDLE LOW SETS TONE FOR 2008 OHIO EQUINE INDUSTRY OUTLOOK

With wagering at Ohio horse race tracks reaching a historic low, state industry leaders are highlighting the convergence of factors that continue to prevent racing from level competition with states with expanded gambling.

Ohio handle dropped 12 percent in 2007, to \$371.8 million. It was the first time since 1984 wagering at Ohio horse race tracks dropped below \$400 million.

Dropping handle is the key indicator of horse racing activity migrating out of Ohio to states that support the industry with expanded gambling revenue, where horses race for fatter purses driven up by track casino wagering. Save Ohio Racing has created a 2008 outlook report that explores the impact of expanded gambling on horse racing in neighboring states and a legislative summary of likely expanded racetrack gambling adoption in new states around Ohio.

"Ohio is in the middle of a perfect storm raging against the future of horse racing, breeding and training," says Elisabeth Alexander, president of Ohio Thoroughbred Breeders & Owners. "At a time when our leaders should be making every effort to protect a viable, home-grown industry contributing \$779 million a year to the state economy, the storm just keeps growing with the legislature having no appetite to help our plight."

Ohio's handle decline is especially alarming because other states that have turned down expanded gambling in the past are accepting the reality of its direct correlation to the health of the equine industry and as a viable government funding source.

"Sometimes -- many times -- it feels like our messages are falling on deaf ears," says Dr. John Mossbarger, past president of the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association. "But we have no choice in the industry but to keep repeating ourselves, in the hopes Ohioans will start to understand we're not just crying wolf. We are not only suffering against uneven competition now, but stand to be in much worse shape if Kentucky or Maryland, or both, also vote in 2008 to expand gambling supporting their horse racing operations."

Save Ohio Racing's 2008 outlook report is available at <http://www.saveohioracing.com>, where more information is also available about the negative impact to Ohio of expanded gambling in surrounding states. Source: Press release.

SANTA ANITA REVISES REPAIR SCHEDULE

By JAY PRIVMAN

The work that will be needed to repair Santa Anita's soggy main track will now have to be done in two steps because of recent wet weather, and will not be completed until the end of next week, according to both Ron Charles, the president and chief executive officer of Santa Anita, and Ian Pearse, the founder of the synthetic surface Pro-Ride.

Pearse said he would need two days this week to make the track level again before adding his polymers and fibers next week.

Pearse has been brought in by Charles to help reconstitute the current main track, which was installed last summer at a cost of more than \$10 million by another synthetic surface company, Cushion Track. The track has not drained properly, which has resulted in seven canceled race cards, including Sunday and Monday, through the first 26 scheduled days of a meet that began December 26.

Under a revised schedule, Santa Anita intends to race this week from Thursday through Sunday, then take four days next week for the final work to be done by Pearse. If that schedule holds, Santa Anita would lose two more previously scheduled racing days, February 4 and 7. The first day of racing on the revised surface would be February 8. The meet is scheduled to end April 20.

"We can't do it half-assed, with everything at stake," Charles said this past weekend. "It's important to get this surface down right, get us through the meet, and have something hopefully the whole industry will embrace. What we've got now is chaos. This is the only chance we have, plus it's a long-term solution."

The track was installed level from the inside rail to the outside rail by Cushion Track because the surface was supposed to drain vertically. But because it did not, Santa Anita in recent weeks has created a gradual incline, as with a traditional dirt track, to try and get the water to run off to the sides.

"We have to regulate the track, make sure the depth is consistent," said Pearse, a native of Australia. "Then we can add the polymeric binder. The plan is to regulate the track Tuesday and Wednesday, race Thursday through Sunday, then apply the binders and the fibers next week."

The binders, or polymers, were developed by Pro-Ride. In lab experiments earlier this month with the University of Southern California's school of civil engineering, the polymers allowed the track to drain vertically.

Perse said the polymers and fibers would be mixed into what's left of the current Cushion Track surface, which is a mixture of sand, rubber, and fibers, all coated in wax. Pearse said spray trucks would be filled with the binder, then would circle the surface. The application of the binder over the surface would be evenly distributed through computer calculations, Pearse said.

"The trucks will be followed by power harrows to mix in the binder," Pearse said. "We will do three applications. It will take two days to put down the binder, then two days to put down the fiber. It's a lot of equipment, and we're on a tight schedule."

Perse said 125,000 gallons of binder would be needed, and at least 480 tons of fiber.

"Ian is taking a failed product and is fixing it," said Charles, who said he has not had any recent contact with any representatives of Cushion Track.

The schedule outlined by Pearse presupposes cooperation from the weather. The long-range forecast for this week from Weather.com calls for dry conditions until at least Sunday following a storm that was expected to clear out here Monday afternoon. If heavy rain returns this weekend, that would jeopardize the intended timetable.

"Once we get it in, everyone is very confident that we won't miss any more days for the rest of the meeting," Charles said of the maintenance project. "Hopefully, it will be in on Friday the eighth."

This past week, Santa Anita was able to conduct only one of its scheduled five race cards, the Saturday program that included the Sunshine Millions. The track played extraordinarily fast on Saturday, with Bob Black Jack setting a world record of 1:06.53 for six furlongs in the Sunshine Millions Dash and Go Between setting a track record of 1:45.64 for 1 1/8 miles in the Classic.

Racing was canceled Thursday and Friday, and then again Sunday and Monday after a severe storm hit Saturday night and Sunday morning. For the past week, training at Santa Anita has been confined to the infield training track, with the exception of a brief window on Saturday morning. Only eight horses worked on the sloppy training track on Sunday, and eight more on Monday. Source: Daily Racing Form.

FORMER DOG TRACK SITE ATTRACTS DEVELOPMENT

Associated Press

The former dog track near Kaukauna is attracting plenty of development interest.

The property was vacant for years until the greyhound track along Highway 41 was razed. Now it's a hot area for new business construction.

Terry Geurts hopes to open the Lazy Dog Sports Bar and Grill by May. His business is just the beginning.

The city says additional property has been sold to a wireless phone dealer, a mortgage company and another business.

Kaukauna Mayor Eugene Rosin says plans are being made to build the largest indoor archery range in the U.S. on the property. It will be a facility spanning four acres. Source: WBAY, Wisconsin.

DISCORD OVER JEFFERSON DOWNS DEVELOPERS SAY PROJECT COULD BOOST ECONOMY; OPPONENTS SEE A THREAT TO ENVIRONMENT

By Bruce Ritchie

Where a nursery business now grows trees and shrubs in plastic plots in a space the size of a football field, David Romanik sees possibilities for quarter-horse racing, community equestrian events and concerts or other entertainment.

Romanik is a principal in Equestrian Land Holdings LLC, which has proposed the quarter-horse track, card room and bowling alley at Interstate 10 and State Road 59 — also called Gamble Road. But he said the proposed Jefferson Downs is going to be about more than gambling.

"This is going to be a fun place to go," Romanik said. "It's an entertainment center with a focus on equine activity."

But opponents, including some Jefferson County horse farm owners, say the project is a threat to Jefferson County's rural community. They've raised concerns about gambling, waste handling and the effects on nearby creeks, sinkholes and roads.

And they contend that the development is a casino in the making if state laws continue to be changed. They say the plans reveal there is no real emphasis on horse racing.

"Once you give them the blank check, they can do anything," Lloyd resident David Hall said.

Equestrian Land Holdings, which includes Romanik and associate Paul Micucci, applied in August and received a permit in December from the state Division of Pari-mutuel Wagering following a background check and study of the business plan. The company submitted a development application to Jefferson County Nov. 30.

The company proposes a 25,200-square-foot building for a card room, lounge and a 12-lane bowling alley. The site also has four out-parcels, including one that will be developed in the future for horse facilities and another that could be a hotel.

The race track is a quarter-mile straightaway from the gate to the finish line with a half-mile cool-down loop. There will be bleachers for seating and picnic areas built into the terraced hillside created years ago when dirt was dug away to build Interstate 10.

The 117-acre site is owned by Rick Baker, who operates Triple Creek Nursery, and Jamaro Inc. About 38 acres of the site is wetlands. Most wetlands that will be disturbed are those where the county is requiring a road along the interstate, said Marc Dunbar, an attorney for the developer.

The project still must receive stormwater permits from the Northwest Florida Water Management District, Dunbar said. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection must issue a permit for wastewater treatment if the company installs its own wastewater system.

The developers say the project will be a boost for the county, representing an investment of up to \$22 million, plus about 60 jobs paying nearly \$30,000 a year.

At the recent Jefferson County Planning Commission meeting, some residents said the project isn't the kind of economic development that is needed.

"I agree we need income, but we need it from subdivisions, not a casino posing as a race track," said Lisa Alden, who lives on Gamble Road about two miles north of I-10.

Opponents also questioned the lack of horse facilities in the development application. Dunbar responds that those amenities will be planned in a future phase in consultation with the equestrians.

The model for Jefferson Downs is the Los Alamitos Race Course in Los Angeles, Romanik said. Los Alamitos opened in 1951 with racing for 11 days and eventually increased that to 207 days a year.

Likewise, Jefferson Downs will start with four to six days of racing and increase gradually from there.

Rather than threatening Jefferson County's horse farms and rural lifestyle, Dunbar said the project should be a horse-lover's dream compared to what else could be built at the site.

"A horse track is the closest thing to rural in that zoning classification," Dunbar said. Source: Talahassee.com.

BARRED COUPLE GETS NATIONAL SUPPORT

by Tom LaMarra



Dick and Janene Watson

Photo: Charles Town Races

Horsemen's groups are rallying around a couple banned from Charles Town Races & Slots in West Virginia because of what the track owner terms integrity issues.

Affiliates of the National Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association have agreed to write a letter to Penn National Gaming Inc., which owns Charles Town, and copy it to the West Virginia Racing Commission concerning the exclusion of Dick and Janene Watson. The husband and wife have been [banned from the track](#) for more than two years.

It remains to be seen what the letter will say, but the National HBPA board endorsed the writing of the letter during its Jan. 28 board meeting in New Orleans.

PNGI claims the exclusion stems from events in 2004, when the Charles Town Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association sued Dick Watson, then the president of the group, largely for allegedly misusing funds. On June 14 of that year, the Charles Town HBPA issued a release saying Watson admitted to making personal loans; using an HBPA vehicle at his farm; paying retirement benefits, bonuses, and vacation funds to his wife, who at the time was executive director of the HBPA; using HBPA money to pay personal bills, and later repaying the money; and failing to provide audit reports to the HBPA board.

At the time, Watson said the civil suit--he never was charged with a crime--had been mediated and settled. The Charles Town HBPA then expelled Watson and his wife for more than two years; they were officially eligible to rejoin the HBPA Jan. 1, 2007.

To again become members of the association, the Watsons have to run one horse at Charles Town under the rules of the association. To date, they have been unable to do so because of the ban by PNGI.

On Jan. 9, the WVRC said it has no control over PNGI in regard to individuals it chooses to exclude from its property even though the Watsons have been licensed to race in West Virginia.

"There certainly were mistakes made I don't think any of us would be proud of," Charles Town HBPA president Randy Funkhouser said in reference to Dick Watson. "But I don't think Dick did anything that the members of our association wanted to see him thrown out of racing forever."

An attorney for PNGI has said the company never indicated the exclusion would be permanent and is willing to review it on an annual basis. He also said the company must protect integrity.

Doug McSwain, an attorney for the National HBPA, acknowledged exclusion from private property is a “broad-sweeping right” and not easy to address. He also said the issue could potentially affect any horseman in any state.

“The saga in West Virginia is problematic and a lesson for all of us,” McSwain said.

Funkhouser, one of the top Thoroughbred breeders in West Virginia, has had run-ins with Charles Town management and has been involved in high-profile legal cases involving the track. A few years back, the track pulled his stalls.

“As president (of the Charles Town HBPA), I worry about these politically motivated situations,” Funkhouser said. “Dick and I have fought hard for horsemen. Gaming is the 11,000-pound gorilla. If you stand up for horsemen and things that are right, it seems to be a problem.”

The Charles Town HBPA presented a letter to the WVRC Jan. 9 in support of the Watsons. The following week, the horsemen’s group voted to grant them status as honorary members because they can’t officially rejoin until they run a horse.

The Watsons and others also are seeking support for legislation in West Virginia that would not allow a licensee to be banned without just cause. Source: The Blood-Horse

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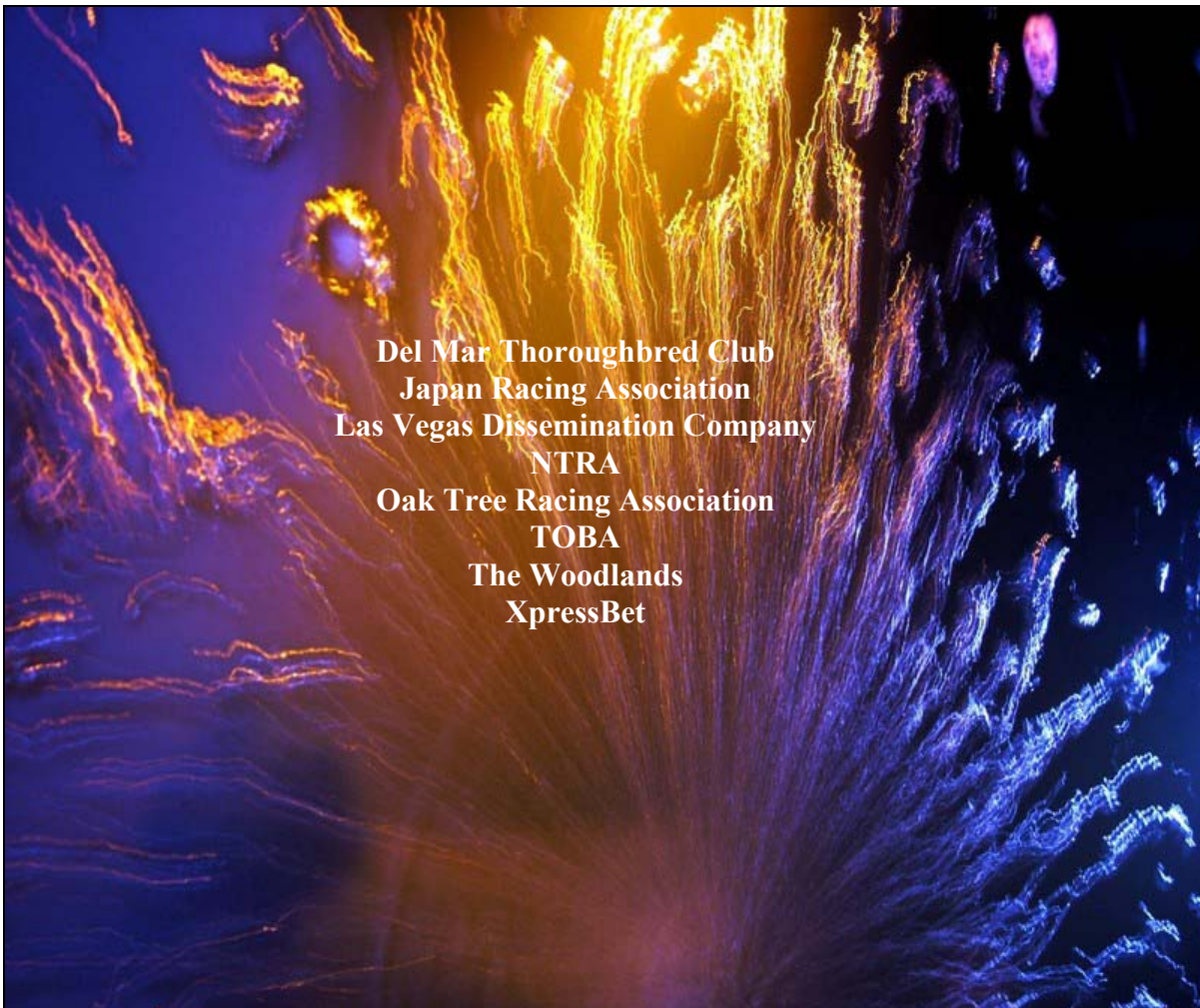
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