

**STRENGTHENING
THE INTEGRITY
OF RACING**



QUARTERLY

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Fall 2008

Thoroughbred Safety Committee Makes Recommendations on Medication

In June, the Thoroughbred Safety Committee (TSC) made three key recommendations: a ban on toe grabs, several reforms pertaining to the whip, and the elimination of steroids in training and racing — an endorsement of RMTC's model rule on anabolic steroids. The TSC, a standing committee of The Jockey Club, was formed to review the health of the Thoroughbred and to devise recommendations for the racing industry to improve the health and safety in the sport. At The Jockey Club Round Table Conference on Matters Pertaining to Racing on August 17, four new recommendations from the TSC were announced.

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The committee's recommendations relating to drug testing and laboratory standards include the creation of a task force, underwritten by The Jockey Club, to:

- develop a business plan for the most efficient and cost-effective infrastructure for equine drug testing and research
- develop strict equine drug testing laboratory standards
- develop a uniform request for proposal from state racing commissions for drug testing laboratory services that requires adherence to those standards
- develop and maintain a facility to store frozen samples for future analysis

The TSC also called for the immediate adoption and implementation by all state racing commissions of the RCI Model Rule on Uniform Classification Guidelines and Penalties, and the implementation of this model rule by all state racing commissions no later than December 31, 2008.

Another recommendation by the TSC was the adoption of RMTC's recommendation on TCO2 testing as a house rule at all North American Thoroughbred racetracks and the publishing of TCO2 levels of each tested horse by state racing commissions.

DECLINE IN STEROID POSITIVES

Since its phased implementation of RMTC's model rule on the regulation of anabolic steroids, the Pennsylvania Horse Racing Commission has seen a sharp decline in the number of positive test results. "In Pennsylvania, the playing field is level now," said Dr. Lawrence R. Soma of the University of Pennsylvania Veterinary School's New Bolton Center and West Chester University.



Photo by Laura Plato

CHRB Now Enforcing Steroid Regulations

At the end of a grace period for the detection of four commonly used anabolic steroids, the California Horse Racing Board (CHRB) on August 1 started to regulate the medications.

Complaints are now filed against trainers who violate threshold levels for boldenone, nandrolone, stanozolol and testosterone. Trainers whose horses exceeded threshold levels during the grace period received unofficial notices for the positive tests. Of 347 samples taken over the first 10 days of testing, 27 exceeded the threshold levels.

On July 17, the CHRB adopted an amendment to the regulations that reclassified the four steroids as Class 3 prohibited substances. Positive tests will result in purse redistribution and automatic disqualification, and could also result in suspensions and/or fines for the trainer in violation. However, these penalties will not be issued until the California Office of Administrative Law approves the amendment, expected to come in time for the Oak Tree Santa Anita meet.

“We must provide an even playing field for all our equine athletes if we are to continue to offer the best Thoroughbred racing in the world.”
— Breeders Cup president and CEO Greg Avioli

Breeders' Cup Takes Action to Eliminate Steroids

The 2008 Breeders' Cup World Championships at Santa Anita Park on October 24-25, will mark the first Breeders' Cup where post-race testing for the detection of anabolic steroids will be performed. Trainers who violate threshold limits for nandrolone, boldenone, stanozolol and testosterone will be penalized with a one-year suspension from the Breeders' Cup. Trainers whose horses test positive three times will face a lifetime ban from participating in Breeders' Cup races.

Starting in January, the Breeders' Cup will no longer fund Stakes purses or award Breeders' Cup Challenge events to U.S. and Canadian tracks unless those tracks are in a state or province that has adopted RMTC's model rule on anabolic steroids approved by the Association of Racing Commissioners International (RCI). Tracks located in states where the racing commission has not adopted the rule are encouraged to adopt the regulation as a house rule.

Currently, there are 53 scheduled Breeders'

Cup Challenge races in the U.S. and Canada, which qualify horses for the Breeders' Cup World Championships. Additionally, \$6 million in purses are funded by the Breeders' Cup through its Stakes Program.

In the 2007 World Championships at Monmouth Park, the Breeders' Cup began out-of-competition testing for EPO (10 days prior to the race) and TCO2 (14 days prior to the race). A horse is declared ineligible for competition if an EPO test comes back positive, and that horse's trainer is subject to a suspension. Failed TCO2 tests are penalized by suspension and purse forfeiture.

“We must provide an even playing field for all our equine athletes if we are to continue to offer the best Thoroughbred racing in the world,” said Greg Avioli, Breeders' Cup president and CEO. “Our number one priority remains preserving the integrity of our competition and protecting the welfare of our athletes.”

“Recent decisions by the TOBA Graded Stakes Committee and the Breeders' Cup will help us tremendously in meeting our self-imposed deadline on January 1, 2009, for uniform adoption of the anabolic steroids model rule.”
— Dr. Scot Waterman

Graded Stakes Committee to Require Steroid Testing

Starting in 2009, the Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association's American Graded Stakes Committee will require testing for anabolic steroids and restrictions on toe grabs as conditions for grade eligibility.

To be considered for graded races, states or tracks must at least adopt RMTC's model rule on anabolic steroids approved by the RCI by January 1, 2009, or by the time that state or track hosts its first graded race of the year. No races will be eligible for grading until the model rule is adopted.

With a recommended withdrawal time of more than 30 days prior to a race, RMTC's model rule on anabolic steroids effectively eliminates any performance-enhancing effects of anabolic steroids on racing competition.

The Graded Stakes Committee also revised its drug-testing protocol to include screenings for milkshaking, which will begin in January. The screening will be a condition for grade eligibility,

along with the post-race drawing of blood samples on all horses entered to race.

Another provision adopted by the Graded Stakes Committee requires state racing commissions or tracks to adopt the RCI model rule that restricts toe grabs. The RCI board of directors voted on August 2 to ban toe grabs

more than 2 millimeters long — a recommendation of The Jockey Club's Thoroughbred Safety Committee. Keeneland Race Course and Woodbine are two tracks that have taken the initiative and adopted their own house rules to ban toe grabs that are longer than the regulation permits.



Photo by Laura Plato

“There is no doubt that the recent decisions by the TOBA Graded Stakes Committee and the Breeders' Cup will help us tremendously in meeting our self-imposed deadline of January 1, 2009, for uniform adoption of the anabolic steroids model rule,” said RMTC Executive Director Dr. Scot Waterman.

“All Things Medication” Q & A with Dr. Rick Arthur Featured on BloodHorse.com

JS:

What is Winstrol and how is it used in horses?

RA:

Winstrol is a manufactured pharmaceutical anabolic steroid that mimics testosterone. Some stables use it routinely, as much as once every week or two. Other trainers use it when a horse is off its feed from rigorous training, or to pick up appetite or attitude. It's used a little different by everybody.

JS:

There is a lot of debate as to whether Winstrol, and steroids in general, are performance enhancing for horses. Are they?

RA:

The short answer is we don't know. There is no scientific information to say it makes horses run faster, just as we don't know if it makes a batter hit more home runs or a pitcher strike out more batters. Anecdotally and from surveys we have conducted, we do know that roughly 60% of all horses have evidence of steroids in their systems. If it was proven that it was performance enhancing, all trainers would probably use it. In my opinion, performance enhancement is not the primary issue with steroids. The other aspect is, do they allow horses to train at an intensity level that is good for them? Do they make horses train harder? If they do, it is possible that horses are training at an intensity level that is an increased catastrophic injury risk to them.

JS:

Discuss the current rules regarding steroids and what direction the industry is moving towards in regards to banning them.

RA:

The consortium allows horses to train with them, just not use them within a certain amount of time before race day. I believe within a year all states will have rules in place that will prohibit steroids. In Europe, steroids have been prohibited since the mid-1970s.

JS:

Who decides which horses are tested and how often?

RA:

In California, the first, second and third (finishers) and stakes (races) are tested, and we do about six to nine randoms every day. I would say about 20% of all (race) horses are tested.

JS:

Recently, there has been talk of having a zero tolerance drug policy implemented. Is this realistic?

RA:

Zero tolerance really depends on which ones you are talking about and at what levels. Let me start by saying that drug testing has improved dramatically over the last 20 or 30 years. For example, lasix was introduced in the early 1960s before any test could detect it. Now, virtually every test in the world can identify it. When you're talking about clenbuterol, we can trace it in levels as low as 25 parts per trillion. So with some of these drugs we are talking about very, very low levels. There needs to be specific guidelines for each drug.



Photo by Laura Plato

*Dr. Rick Arthur
is secretary of
the RMTC and
equine medical
director of the
California
Horse Racing
Board.*

A full transcript can be found at <http://cs.bloodhorse.com/blogs/triplecrownstalk/>

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821 Corporate Drive
Lexington, KY 40503
Phone: 859-224-2844
Fax: 859-296-3033
Email: hroach@rmtcnet.com

**BOARD MEETING
REMINDER:
The RMTC Fall
Board Meeting will
be held on
September 24 at
the Marriott
Griffin Gate Hotel
in Lexington, KY.**

Our Mission

The RMTC strives to develop, promote and coordinate, at the national level, policies, research and educational programs that seek to ensure the fairness and integrity of racing and the health and welfare of racehorses and participants, and to protect the interests of the racing public.



Industry News

Louisiana State Racing Commission Adopts Rule on Steroids

It was announced on August 1 that Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal appointed Jerry Meaux as chairman of the Louisiana State Racing Commission. Meaux immediately focused his attention on the anabolic steroids issue.

"First thing, we have to look at, as hard as we can, some form of the model rules. That's a very important thing for all horsemen," he said. "I don't think the steroid issue is even arguable."

By late August, the commission had passed a rule to eliminate steroids in racing. The proposed bill states that exogenous anabolic steroids are not allowed in a horse's system on race day. Three endogenous anabolic steroids are prohibited "at levels above the normal physiological state of the stallion, gelding or mare." The rule also states that "administration of any of these endogenous steroids within 45 days of a race shall be considered a violation."

If the bill gets too delayed in the bureaucratic process to go into effect by January 1, it will be passed by the commission on an emergency basis, according to Meaux.



Kentucky Regulators Approve Ban on Steroids

On August 25, the Kentucky Horse Racing Commission voted unanimously to ban steroids from racing competition. Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear is expected to sign an emergency regulation that will put the rules in place by the first week of September.

Recommendations from the Kentucky Equine Drug Research Council, which voted August 14 to ban steroids, were amended by the KHRC. The commission permits the use of boldenone, nandrolone and testosterone for therapeutic use. However, horses who receive these medications are ineligible to race for 60 days and must test negative at an approved laboratory prior to race entry. The three aforementioned anabolic steroids are now classified as Class B substances, which if detected result in a license suspension of up to 60 days for the first offense. Once the rule is in place, there will be a 90-day grace period for penalties, but a positive test in the last 30 days is considered an aggravating factor in any subsequent violation of this rule.

As RMTC recommended in March, the bill also enables people who claim horses at Kentucky tracks to request tests for steroids and void claims if horses test positive.

New York Senate Approves Legislation for Steroid Testing

On June 23, the New York Senate approved a bill that would establish a steroid testing program via horsemen's contributions. The bill was sponsored by Republican Sen. Bill Larkin, whose office released a statement saying the legislation would "provide adequate funding from the Thoroughbred horsemen's organization for the veterinary college at Cornell University to acquire equipment suitable for detecting the presence of steroids in horses."

The bill would extend by one year (through August 31, 2009,) a 2% purse deduction. The proposed bill would mandate that up to one-half of 1% of the amount be used to fund the testing program for steroids.

In response to the bill, New York Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association Executive Director Jim Gallagher said, "We're in support of it. It's sending the right message that we're just as involved in trying to self-police the game, and that we're concerned about integrity as well."

On May 29, the New York State Racing and Wagering Board passed proposed restrictions on the use of anabolic steroids in racing, based on the RMTC model rule approved by RCI.