

Greyhound advocacy group calls for reform

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An advocacy group is calling for reform at the Pensacola Greyhound Track after a dog injured in a fight reportedly suffered for several hours before receiving treatment.

In an incident Jan. 3, a greyhound was able to remove its muzzle and attack two other dogs, according to a report by the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation. One dog died of its wounds immediately, and another, Starring Act, suffered serious injuries to its neck and two legs.

According to the report, the dog's training team initially planned to take the dog to the veterinarian, but decided to wait until a scheduled visit later in the day. According to a timeline in the report, the dog did not receive care for about five hours and was euthanized shortly after the veterinarian's arrival.

In a letter to the greyhound track, Carey Theil, executive director of the advocacy group GREY2K USA Worldwide, said he was outraged at the way the situation was handled.

"Starring Act should have received immediate care," Theil wrote. "He was failed by his trainer, his kennel and Pensacola Greyhound Track."

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In a statement, track officials wrote that what happened to Starring Act was an unfortunate, isolated incident, and that track management enacted the appropriate response as soon as they became aware of the situation.

"The state holds trainers responsible for providing medical care to the greyhounds, however our track management becomes involved when made aware of injured or sick animals that need attention," the statement said. "Within minutes of being notified of the injury, racetrack management notified a veterinarian and the veterinarian responded immediately."

Track officials wrote that approximately 1,000 greyhounds come through the facility each year, and each one is cared for "better than the average household pet." The dogs are seen by a veterinarian at least once each week; a vet is on site for each race; and the greyhounds exercise multiple times each day, according to management.

They wrote that there are no guidelines that mandate how soon a dog must receive medical care following a medical emergency.



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In his letter, Theil offered to help the track create a policy that would ensure "all greyhounds receive emergency care whenever necessary, regardless of the underlying circumstances," but later said he had not received a response.

"Starring Act suffered because the commercial dog racing industry puts profits ahead of animal welfare," Theil wrote. "He raced over 100 times for the gambling industry, but in the end wasn't even worth a trip to a local veterinary clinic when he needed immediate help."