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N4T Investigators: Is State covering-up dog injuries?

Tucson - Tucson Greyhound Park's public relations issues intensified on March 7th. That's when a dog named "LNB Night Mare," was killed during a race after being bumped into the electrified rail by another dog.

Now, the News 4 Tucson Investigators have obtained injury reports filed by both stewards at TGP and the Arizona Department of Racing that Greyhound advocates say may show that the state is not reporting all injuries at TGP.

Christine Dorchak, President of the Greyhound protection group, Grey2K USA Worldwide, told the News 4 Tucson Investigators, "The Arizona Department of Racing is trying to protect Tucson Greyhound Park from exposure."

TGP stewards are the officials responsible for enforcement of racing regulations. The stewards are required by state law to send a list of all racing-related injuries and deaths to the Arizona Department of Racing. Also called ADOR, it's a public agency partially funded by your tax dollars, and it's required to disclose all Greyhound racing injuries that have been reported by TGP.

However, the News 4 Tucson Investigators examined TGP Stewards' reports and compared them to ADOR'S monthly injury statistics. Numerous dogs were cited on the stewards' reports as having "pulled up," which usually means they didn't finish the race, often due to injury. But many of those were not mentioned in the monthly Department of Racing reports. We counted 17 dogs on the stewards' reports from last June through this January that pulled up, one that fell, and another that had what was called a "poor effort." That's 19 dogs that were in the TGP's stewards' reports, but were not mentioned in ADOR's statistics.

TGP critics including Tucson Councilman Steve Kozachik say they're sure those dogs were injured because they haven't raced in months. Keep in mind that most dogs at TGP race twice a week.

Kozachik told the News 4 Tucson Investigators, "Every one of the track injuries that you see that are reported by the stewards was a career-ending injury, those dogs never raced again."

The News 4 Tucson Investigators checked the respected racing website, "trackinfo.com" and all 19 dogs in question indeed have not raced in months. Critics say ADOR could be hiding injuries because if TGP closes, ADOR would lose staff jobs and money from TGP.

Kozachik said, "It minimizes the public knowledge of what's really going on at that place."

However, ADOR spokesman Greg Stiles emailed us that, "Comparing the daily stewards' reports and the monthly injury reports hoping to draw any conclusion or making inferences is not possible. This is an apples to oranges comparison."

We wanted to ask him on camera about these differing report numbers, but he declined.

Susan Via of Tucson owns three Greyhounds and has been a Greyhound advocate for years.

Via told the News 4 Tucson Investigators, "What is happening at the track with the number of dogs that are being injured, is not being accurately reported to the public from the Department of Racing."

Christine Dorchak of Grey2k USA Worldwide said, "What we need now is, as long as dog racing continues, is full injury reporting to the public. We want dog racing to end."

TGP General Manager Dale Popp did not return our calls requesting comment.

Grey2k USA Worldwide has been working with Arizona lawmakers to try to end commercial dog racing in the state. Last week, Colorado became the 39th state to ban Greyhound racing.