



PRESS-REGISTER

DA probes allegations of race fixing at dog track

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By **RON COLQUITT**
Staff Reporter

The Mobile County district attorney's office is investigating allegations that racing dogs at Mobile Greyhound Park are being drugged in order to influence the outcome of races, Chief Assistant District Attorney Nicki Patterson acknowledged Monday.

Carey Theil, spokesman for the national greyhound protection organization Grey2K USA, said Monday by telephone that he had gotten a tip from a source in Mobile County that drug testing was under way at the park.

Theil said the source, whom he would not name, notified Grey2K USA that the investigation had started. Grey2K USA is a nonprofit organization dedicated to ending cruelty against greyhounds.

Theil stressed that the allegations are against dog trainers at the park and not against the park's owners, managers or members of the Mobile County Racing Commission.

Eddie Menton, chairman of the commission that regulates racing at the track, said Monday the commission is assisting the district attorney's office in the investigation, but he described some of the allegations as "farfetched."

"We have been investigating some wagering irregularities," Menton said. "The DA's office is working with us on it. There is not much I can say right now.

"We will certainly release all of the information as soon as we can to assure the public that we are investigating this. We are getting to the bottom of it, and we want people to know that it's safe to go to the dog track and bet."

The track's management is also assisting the district attorney's office in the investigation, Menton said.

Track General Manager David Jones declined comment on the investigation, referring any questions to Menton or other members of the Racing Commission.

According to Menton, there are about 1,000 racing greyhound dogs being kept in kennels at the track, and they are randomly tested for drugs.

Menton said urine tests are routinely performed at the end of each race, a practice that dates back to when the track opened. He said he preferred not to say which dogs in any given race are tested, winners or losers, because he was concerned that the information could be used by those who are tempted to drug the dogs.

Some blood tests have been taken since the investigation began, Menton said. He would not say exactly how long the investigation has been under way or what the tests have revealed.

Theil, the Grey2K USA spokesman said, "Our sources indicate multiple individuals have been suspended

and/or have had their licenses temporarily suspended. The licenses are to train greyhounds at the track in kennel compounds."

Menton said he was not aware of anyone being fired or arrested.

Grey2K USA, with headquarters just outside Boston, is "a network of humane-minded citizens, who work to pass stronger dog protection laws and close down existing greyhound racetracks," its Web site states.

Officials in other states, particularly Florida, have found cocaine in the systems of some dogs at racetracks, Theil said.

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