

Sarasota track dispute over greyhound death continues

By [Billy Cox](#)

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A month after stating an animal-rights group was free to inspect its greyhound injury reports, the Sarasota Kennel Club has revoked the invitation, citing rude behavior over the phone.

"I told them since they were threatening us, we aren't going to release them to you," SKC racing director Thomas Bowersox said. "They're really nasty people."

But in Arlington, Mass., GREY2K USA president Christine Dorchak said a new rule passed in Tallahassee last week will impose greater accountability on Florida's 13 greyhound racing tracks. As of May 21, track operators must notify the Department of Business and Professional Regulation's Division of Pari-Mutuel Wagering in writing of a racing dog's death within 18 hours of the incident.

"It's a first step," Dorchak said. "But it still doesn't tell how many greyhounds are injured and what happens to them afterwards. This is a regulated industry and taxpayers should be allowed to examine the records. It's a transparency issue."

SKC's dustup with GREY2K USA began shortly after the apparent electrocution death of a greyhound during a Feb. 9 race, which followed another fatal canine racing collapse at the track in January. When the animal activists challenged SKC to open its books on deaths and injuries, Bowersox said in April that the group was "welcome to come down and take a look."

After agreeing to meet GREY2K USA at his office on May 8, Bowersox told Dorchak on May 6 that "something came up" and a postponement of perhaps three weeks was necessary.

A few minutes later, GREY2K executive director Carey Theil called SKC back to complain. Bowersox had left the office, but Theil told a track employee he would inform the media that Bowersox had reneged on the offer unless GREY2K USA heard back from Bowersox.

"Either these records are open to public inspection or they're not," Theil said. "The bottom line is, their policy is indefensible."

Bowersox dismissed the criticism, and said the greyhound group had been antagonistic.

"I was never threatened, but the girl in the office was, and so I've told them we're closed for the season and we reopen for racing later this year," he said. "We'll have nothing until then."

In addition to the mandatory reporting of fatalities, the new track rules also set new



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Greyhounds go airborne as they make their way down the raceway at the Sarasota Kennel Club in Sarasota in January of 2009.

standards for canine housing and sanitation.

"The majority of tracks around the country report injuries and deaths," Dorchak said.

"But in Florida, there are 8,000 greyhounds racing in any given year, which means there are 8,000 greyhounds unaccounted for.

"When there's accountability, there's more responsibility, and in every state where there's transparency, adoptions go up. It's clear that Sarasota Kennel Club doesn't want people to know what happens to their dogs."

Sarasota Kennel Club's racing season ended on May 4 and will resume in November.

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