

New York State

Racing and Wagering Board

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Racing and Wagering Board Set to Uncork New Equine Testing Rules on New Year's Day

As part of a major new push for greater integrity in racing, the New York State Racing and Wagering Board, effective New Year's Day, 2010, will be authorized to conduct unannounced drug testing of horses slated to compete at New York tracks even when they are stabled at farms away from those tracks.

Racing and Wagering Board Chairman John D. Sabini said the new "out of competition" rules apply to all horses within 180 days of a race date in New York. The rules, he explained, empower the Board to direct licensed owners or trainers to bring horses to New York tracks for testing when those horses are being stabled out of state within a 100-mile radius of a New York racetrack.

"Horses are sometimes drugged by unscrupulous individuals seeking to either strengthen or weaken their performance in the next race," Chairman Sabini said. "These new rules give us the tools we need to go after the cheaters. By adopting out-of-competition testing rules, the Board is protecting not only the wagering public but also the health and safety of the magnificent equine athletes who compete at New York's four Thoroughbred and seven harness tracks."

Under the rules, the Racing and Wagering Board can place owners and trainers on notice that it wants to have its veterinarian take samples from horses wherever they are being kept. A trainer or owner who fails to comply with the Board's out-of-competition rules can face serious sanctions, including lengthy suspensions, fines and possible, license revocation, Chairman Sabini noted.

If a horse is not made available for testing in a timely manner when a trainer or owner is directed to do so by the state Steward or the Board's representatives, that horse can be declared ineligible from participation for 120 days. Chairman Sabini said the Board will be working closely with racing officials in neighboring states to coordinate testing efforts.

"The overwhelming majority of owners and trainers are meticulous in abiding by our medication rules – but there are some who deviate and apparently believe they can lessen their chances of getting caught by drugging a horse away from the tracks," Chairman Sabini said. "Anyone who flouts our rules will inevitably find out the hard way that we are very serious in promoting integrity in racing. By introducing an element of surprise, we are sending a loud and clear message that we have zero tolerance for cheating."

The new rules apply to both Thoroughbred and Standardbred race horses. New York has a total of four Thoroughbred tracks and seven harness tracks, all of which are regulated by the Racing and Wagering Board.

Prohibited substances that will be tested for include: blood-doping agents; gene-doping agents; protein and peptide-based drugs, including toxins and venoms.