

## **Maryland Horse Trainers Suspended For Doping Violations**

Three horse trainers have been suspended for doping violations, according to an announcement by Maryland racing officials. The suspensions include a ban of more than a year for Pimlico-based Hector Garcia and a 120-day ban for Scott Lake, who is behind one of the most successful barns at Laurel Park.

A. Ferris Allen received the lightest penalty — a \$1,000 fine and a 30-day ban with 15 days suspended if he does not commit another violation over the next three years because of his relatively clean record and testimony from his veterinarian in reducing the suspension. The suspended trainer has filed an appeal with the [Maryland Racing Commission](#).

J. Mike Hopkins, the executive director of the commission, said Ferris Allen's vet had remarked that they thought they were using it in the proper way, about 35 days out of the race. Hopkins added the Maryland Racing Commission adopted rules that treated any finding of an anabolic steroid in the blood as a violation, a so-called “zero-tolerance” rule, in 2013. [Anabolic steroids](#) were not regulated in racing before 2010.

Garcia received the harshest penalty as he had three horses test positive for Stanozolol and one for Xylazine between early December and mid-January. Garcia faces suspensions for each violation and an additional suspension as he accumulated 10 medical violation points under a system designed to punish repeat offenders.

Garcia, who is deputizing for the already-suspended Juan Vazquez, received the maximum wrath. Sal Sinatra, the vice president and general manager of the Maryland Jockey Club, confirmed that Vasquez and Garcia were served with papers that demanded them to vacate the grounds of MJC-owned properties within two weeks. Sinatra remarked we will not tolerate this kind of behavior and will come after those who are found to have broken the rules.

In December, Lake had two horses test positive for Stanozolol and faces a longer penalty as he also had a horse test positive in Pennsylvania last year. The horse trainer plans to appeal the penalties. Lake once ran one of the largest and most successful stables in the

United States and focused mostly on claiming horses running at Mid-Atlantic tracks. Years ago, he sharply reduced the size of his stable.

All three trainers ran horses that tested positive for Stanozolol ([Winstrol](#)), a banned anabolic steroid in races at Laurel Park in December and January. Hector Garcia also had a horse test positive for the sedative Xylazine and will be banned from training in Maryland until March 2016. The state started operating under new drug testing rules, shared by seven other states in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic, at the start of last year. Maryland used to allow horses to run with low levels of Stanozolol in their blood. Mike Hopkins, executive director of the Maryland Racing Commission, remarked the testing system is working and said he could not speculate on the reason for the sudden rash of violations.

All horses that tested positive were retroactively disqualified from their races, and purses will be redistributed based on the new results. The trainers have been assigned a variety of points under a new penalty system used in a handful of racing states that is designed for assessing the increasing penalties on the trainers if they have any other racing violations in the next several years.