

Alittlevodka

Stewards Summary

Alittlevodka was racing in mid pack when the rider pulled him up near the ½ mile pole, dismounted, and held onto him until help arrived. It was apparent that he had suffered a serious injury to his left foreleg and that he required the assistance of the KHRC veterinarians and the horse ambulance.

Trainer:

Neil Pessin stated that he had trained the gelding his entire career. The horse was making his 31st start and had been working consistently since his last start and leading up to this race, having 4 works at Fairgrounds and 2 works after arriving at Churchill Downs. He had not had any soundness issues and required minimal veterinary care. Pessin did state that the horse was extremely large. The trainer did not voice any concern about the condition of the racing surface.

Jockey:

Mitchell Murrill stated that he had ridden the horse many times prior to this race. He said that he warmed up fine in the post parade and he had no concern about his soundness. He commented that the horse was extremely large. He felt the injury occur with no warning and pulled him up as quickly as possible, and when able to dismount, he held onto him until the KHRC veterinarians arrived. He stated that the racetrack was in good condition.

Veterinary Review

- This 7 year-old gelding, owned by Lothenbach Stables and trained by Neil Pessin, raced at Churchill Downs on May 31st, 2020 in the 3rd race, a claiming race for \$5,000 contested at 1 mile over a fast track.
- Gelding was racing in the pack and suddenly pulled up near the 7/16's pole with an injury to his left front limb. The on track KHRC veterinarian summoned the equine ambulance and administered a sedative/analgesic to assist loading onto the ambulance and minimize further injury. A compression boot was applied to the forelimb. He was ambulated off the track and after consulting with the private veterinarian the decision was made to euthanize the gelding due to the extent of his injuries and a poor prognosis.
- The body was submitted to University of Kentucky Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory for necropsy.

Review of pre-race exam findings and exam history

- A review of pre-race exam findings for the Case horse and unaffected cohorts (Controls) from the same race was performed. These horses were moderately to heavily campaigned in their racing careers. Pre-race exam findings were consistent with horses at this stage of their careers. All horses in this race were deemed sound in the pre-race exams with no gait abnormalities noted. Scrutiny during the warmup on track prior to the race revealed no gait abnormalities.

Review of the 60-day treatment report

The trainer's veterinarian provided veterinary records for the previous 60 days. Veterinary work was very minimal and routine.

Analysis of risk factors and other criteria (case horse compared to uninjured cohorts)

- Age at first start
Case horse: 1274 days
Controls range: 798-1178 days
Controls mean: 938 days
Controls median: 931 days
Comments: Slightly above cohorts.
- Age at first breeze
Case horse: 1171 days
Controls range: 714-1100 days
Controls mean: 845 days
Controls median: 836 days
Comments: Slightly above cohorts.
- Age on 5/31/2020
Case horse: 2665 days
Controls range: 1505-3369 days
Controls mean: 2309days
Controls median: 2263 days
Comments: In the range of cohorts.
- Owner/breeder?
Case horse: No
Controls horses: No: 7/9, Yes 2/9
- Horse acquired through claim?
Case horse: No
Control horses: No: 5/9, Yes: 4/9
- Days in training (1st published work to race date)
Case horse: 1494 days
Controls range: 682-2269 days
Controls mean: 1464 days
Controls median: 1331 days
Comment: In the range of cohorts.
- Cumulative high speed furlongs (racing and training)
Case horse: 645
Controls range: 295.5-891.5
Controls mean: 545
Controls median: 485
Comments: In the range of cohorts

- High speed furlongs per day in training (Day 1=date of 1st published work)

Case horse: .432f/day
Control horses range: .302-.837/day
Control mean: .448f/day
Control median: .375f/day
Comments: In the range of cohorts.

- Interval from previous start

Case horse: 87 days
Control horses range: 18-162 days
Control horses mean: 57 days
Control horses median: 42 days
Comment: In the range of cohorts.

- First time starter?

Case horse: No
Control horses: No: 9/9

- Apprentice Jockey?

Case horse: No
Control horses: No: 9/9

- Drop in class from previous start?

Case horse: Yes
Control horses: No: 2/9, Yes: 7/9

- Double drop in class from previous start?

Case horse: No
Control horses: No: 7/9, Yes: 2/9

- Raise in class from previous start?

Case horse: No
Control horses: No: 9/9

- Number of times claimed in the preceding 6 months

Case horse: 0
Control horses: 0: 8/9, 1: 1/9

- Number of starts in preceding 30 days

Case horse: 0
Control horses: 0: 6/9, 1: 3/9

- Number of starts in preceding 60 days

Case horse: 0

Control horses: 0: 2/9, 1: 4/9, 2: 2/9, 4: 1/9

- Cumulative high-speed furlongs in preceding 30 days
Case horse: 16
Control horses range: 0-13
Control horses mean: 6.8
Control horses median: 8
Comments: Slightly above cohorts.
- Cumulative high-speed furlongs in preceding 60 days
Case horse: 32
Control horses range: 8-37
Control horses mean: 19.9
Control horses median: 18
Comments: In the range of cohorts
- Number of layoffs ≥ 30 days in preceding 6 months
Case horse: 3
Control horses: 0: 1/9, 1: 1/9, 2: 4/9, 3: 3/9
- First start off ≥ 60 day layoff?
Case horse: Yes
Control horses: No: 7/9, Yes: 2/9
- Second start off ≥ 60 day layoff?
Case horse: No
Control horses: No: 7/9, Yes: 2/9
- Length of ≥ 60 day layoff ending in the preceding 6 months
Case horse: 86
Control horses range (n=4) 79-251 days
Control horses mean: 147.8
Control horses median: 130.5
- History of being vet listed
Case horse: No
Control horses: No: 4/9, Yes: 5/9, 2 for illness, 1 for shockwave treatment, 2 for lameness.

Review of necropsy and Drug Testing results

- **Drug testing:** No prohibited substances detected. No therapeutic medication detected above regulatory threshold concentrations.

Note: Only blood was submitted for analysis. Urine collection does not usually occur for horses euthanized. The diagnostic laboratory is instructed to collect urine if it is present in the horse's bladder, but it rarely is. While a blood only sample is subjected to the broadest scope of analysis possible, that scope is reduced compared to what can be applied to a paired blood/urine sample.

- **Necropsy report:**

Musculo-skeletal diagnosis: Left forelimb: biaxial sesamoid fractures, comminuted, closed with fetlock luxation.

Left forelimb: Connective tissues of the distal limb are expanded by a moderate amount of hemorrhage and edema. The medial sesamoid fracture is a comminuted basilar fracture, the lateral is a comminuted apical fracture with and avulsion fracture.

Right forelimb: There is a single lag screw fracture repair of the first phalanx.

Conclusions (below)

- **Horse specific factors:**

On interview with the trainer it was noted that the lag screw in the RF P1 was placed before the horse began racing. Training and racing records confirm this. The RF P1 repair more than 5 years ago was not a factor in this fatality.

- **Race specific factors:**

No race specific factors in regards to this fatality.