



## **Introduction and Frequently Asked Questions Regarding The United States Polo Association Equine Drugs and Medications Program.**

Consistent with the mission of the United States Polo Association (USPA) to protect the welfare of players and our equine partners during polo tournaments, competitions and games, as well as the role of the USPA to provide rules and conditions to ensure the safety and welfare of all participants and mounts - the USPA has developed an Equine Drugs and Medications Program (ED&MP).

It is the goal of the USPA - that by developing and enacting the ED&MP Rules regarding permitted, restricted and prohibited drugs, medications and substances, as well as rules regarding enforcement and sanctions for ED&MP Rules violations - participants in the sport of polo will have a heightened awareness concerning the welfare and safety of the horses used in polo competition as well as ensuring the fairness of USPA competition.

USPA Players, horse owners and veterinarians - and all others responsible for the care of our equine partners - should be aware that polo horses will be subject to testing pursuant to USPA By-Law 4.d., which provides: **“As a condition of membership each Individual Member of the Association will be considered to have given consent to submit to random blood and/or urine testing of any mount owned by, played by, or under the control of that Individual Member.”** Therefore, commencing in 2010, the USPA has established a pilot Equine Drugs and Medications Program, under new USPA Equine Drugs and Medications Rules (“Rules”). In 2011, enforcement and adjudication of those Rules will also be in place, and at that date, the entire USPA Equine Drugs and Medications Program (“Program”) will become fully effective.

Testing of blood samples taken from horses will be conducted at the existing testing facilities of the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) Testing Laboratory. The USPA has selected this laboratory because the USEF has an established, ongoing program and protocol for veterinarians and technicians to sample and test equine competitors for prohibited and restricted drugs, medications and substances used in competition.

The USPA has published its USPA Equine Drugs and Medication Rules that describe permitted, restricted and prohibited drugs and medications. **All drugs and medications not specifically permitted by the USPA Equine Drugs and Medications Rules are prohibited.** Within those Rules, the USPA has provided Comments and Guidelines to assist in the interpretation and with the application of the new Rules. The Rules, Comments and Guidelines may be revised during and after the conclusion of the 2010 pilot program.

After the official publication date of the new Rules - **February 25, 2010** - all USPA Members will have a 30-day “Notification Period” to inform and educate

themselves of the Rules. As of **March 28, 2010** - all USPA mounts used in any USPA competition or event shall be subject to random drugs and medications testing at randomly selected USPA events. In 2010, there will be no adjudication or sanction if a horse is tested positive for prohibited drugs or medications. The owner of tested horses will be notified by the USPA of test results if the test results are positive for prohibited drugs or medications. Beginning in 2011, the USPA Rules will provide an adjudication process that will include specific USPA sanctions for horse owners of horses that test positive.

There will be a USPA Equine Drugs and Medications Program seminar scheduled for the Polo Museum, located in Lake Worth, Florida; and, there will be a USPA Equine Drugs and Medications Program teleconference scheduled within the first two weeks of March. Should anyone have questions or require additional information concerning the USPA Equine Drugs and Medications Rules or the Program, please contact your veterinarian or USPA Executive Director Peter Rizzo at: 859-608-4766 or email: [rizzo@uspolo.org](mailto:rizzo@uspolo.org). For more information about the USEF, please contact USEF at: 800-633-2472 or email: [medequestrian@aol.com](mailto:medequestrian@aol.com)

## **Frequently Asked Questions Concerning The USPA Drugs and Medications Program:**

### **What horses will be tested?**

By-Law 4.d. of the USPA provides in relevant part that: **“any mount owned by, played by, or under the control of that Individual Member.”** This includes horses owned by a Member of the Association - even if that horse is, or those horses are, played by another person at a USPA match, to include borrowed horses, leased horses and horses owned by corporate entities.

### **Who will be conducting the sampling and testing?**

The USPA has engaged the professional sampling and testing services of the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF).

### **When will horses be sampled and tested?**

Samples will be taken after the game is over, before departing the field. Testing will be conducted after the samples reach the USEF Testing laboratory.

### **Why will a particular horse be selected?**

The testing veterinarian will select horses randomly for testing.

### **Where will the samples collected?**

Field side and/or at the trailer before the horse leaves the area where it competed.

### **What types of samples are collected and how much?**

USPA rules allow for the taking of blood and or urine. At present, it is the intent of the USPA via the USEF to take sufficient blood samples so that each horse sampled is represented by at least two samples, to be labeled “Sample A” and “Sample B”.

### **What will happen to the samples after the competition or event?**

The samples will be shipped to the USEF Laboratory in New York as soon as possible for testing. Upon arrival, each sample is inspected carefully and logged in. The integrity of each sample and its identity is verified. Initially, the samples labeled A are tested, and the samples labeled B are stored securely.

### **What if my horse is under a veterinarian’s care and tests positive for prohibited drugs or medications?**

Members are encouraged to report use restricted and prohibited drugs ahead of possible sampling and testing. Any prohibited drug or medication administered at least 12 hours prior to a USPA competition for a medically and scientifically valid therapeutic purpose must be administered by a veterinarian licensed in the specific State within the United States wherein the USPA event occurs and must be reported in **Therapeutic Drug Use Form (USPA Medication Report Form 1)**. That form must be received/date stamped in the USPA office before the commencement of the USPA competition at which a given sample is taken from the horse. Facsimiles, email submissions as well as hand delivery will be acceptable.

### **What if my horse is injured the day of the game and requires emergency medical treatment?**

Minor injuries occurring before the competition such as scrapes or lacerations, may be treated by a licensed Veterinarian. An **Authorization of Emergency Treatment of Lacerations Form (USPA Medication Report Form 2)** must be submitted to the USPA within 24 hours of the event in which the horse competed indicating all drugs/medications used in treatment.

### **Where do I get a copy of USPA Forms 1 and 2?**

All information concerning the USPA Equine Drugs and Medications Program, including downloadable copies of the USPA Forms may be obtained from the USPA website at [www.us-polo.com](http://www.us-polo.com) or contact the USPA at 800-232-USPA or [uspa@uspolo.org](mailto:uspa@uspolo.org) for copies of those forms.

### **What if I refuse to allow my horse to be tested?**

Beginning in 2011, the USPA Rules will sanction, according to USPA By-Laws, any USPA Member who refuses to allow testing of his or her horse(s).

**May I observe the testing? What assurances do I have that the sample was collected properly and labeled correctly?**

The Rules require you to observe the testing or designate an authorized representative to do so. You or your representative shall witness the drawing of the samples from your horse and shall be asked to sign an acknowledgement form that the blood came from your horse. You or your representative may not interfere with the sampling, but may ask the sampling veterinarian and technicians any questions you have

**What if my horse needs to be un-tacked and cooled out?**

You may discuss these needs with the sampling veterinarian and technician, who will endeavor not to disrupt the post-game schedule or normal horse care, provided the collection of the samples is not unnecessarily delayed.

**What measures will be taken to prevent the samples being contaminated after collection or from being opened after they are collected?**

First, you or your representative must be present when the sampling occurs. Only new sample collection equipment is used, meaning that new blood tubes and needles will be used for each sample from each horse. Also, all equipment and samples will be kept either in the possession of the sampling veterinarian and technician, or in another secure environment. Each sample will be either sealed with evidence tape or placed in a plastic security bag while you or your designated representative watch. Any tampering of the sample would be evident if a seal or security bag were not intact.

**What measures will be taken to prevent my horse's samples from being misidentified as having been drawn from another horse?**

As soon as each sample is collected, it is sealed and labeled with a unique number that is assigned only to your horse's samples, and which remains attached to those samples from that point. To protect the integrity of the testing process, you or a representative designated by you will be asked to witness the taking of the sample from the horse and to sign an acknowledgement at that time that a given sample was taken from a given horse.

**If they ask to test my horse, how can I be sure they are from USEF?**

Each testing veterinarian will have USEF documents specifying the competition to be tested, and will further display a photo ID matching the documents, which they will present to you at your request.

**Who selects the sampling veterinarians?**

USEF will appoint veterinarians to attend a specific event and a team of several technicians who collect samples will also accompany those veterinarians. Testing veterinarians are representatives of the USEF and will not be working for any clients at the same competition.

**What are the Owner and Player responsible for once their horse is identified for sampling?**

The Owner and Player must be courteous and make his or her horse or pony available to the testing veterinarian promptly upon request of the veterinarian. The Owner and Player must provide accurate information to testing personnel and have an English-speaking adult available to provide information about the horse, the rider and the owner. The Owner or Player must be available or designate an English-speaking representative to safely hold the horse and to witness collection of the samples and sign as a witness to the collection and sealing of all samples.

**Who is charged in the event of an alleged violation of the USPA Equine Drugs and Medications Rules?**

For the calendar year 2010, there will be no adjudication for violations of the USPA Equine Drugs and Medications Rules. For that year only, if a horse tests positive for prohibited drugs and medications, the horse Owner and the Player of the horse will be contacted by the USPA. Commencing 2011 and thereafter, upon finding of a positive test under the USPA Equine Drugs and Medications Rules, the Owner, the Player who competed the horse (who may be the same person or not) as well as the Sponsor of the team for whom the horse competed (if the horse is owned by a corporate entity) shall be charged with a Conduct Violation according to USPA Rules and/or By-Laws. Such violation, depending upon the severity, may result in suspension or termination of USPA membership and exclusion from USPA competition and Member Clubs, monetary fine and retroactive disqualification from a competition.

**Will the testing chemists at the USEF laboratory know the name of the horse, owner, rider, player or trainer for each sample?**

No, the testing will be done “blind.” The laboratory will only know the unique number assigned to the sample, the date it was collected, and the name of the competition or event. The document that identifies the horse and owner will be securely maintained separately.

**What kinds of tests are performed on the sample?**

A broad range of screening tests will be employed that could detect thousands of drugs. If any drugs prohibited by the USPA Equine Drug and Medications Rules are detected, further confirmatory tests identify the chemical identity of the drug or medication. No finding of a forbidden substance will be reported to the USPA by the testing facility unless the test result is certain. If you have not received any communication from USPA

within 90 days of the sample being drawn, you may assume the test was negative and there will be no further action.

**What happens if no prohibited or restricted drugs or medications are detected in the sample?**

Both sample A and sample B are destroyed.

**What happens if something forbidden is detected in Sample A?**

Sample B will be available for confirmatory analysis as may be requested or required.

**What assurance do I have that I will not wrongly be accused of violating the USPA Equine Drugs and Medications Rules because of faulty evidence?**

The Owner, Player and / or his or her representative will be present to confirm which horse the sample was taken from. Thereafter, there is a secure process under which the samples are labeled, sealed and shipped to the laboratory. Once at the laboratory, the samples are kept under the secure protocol under which they are labeling and then inspected and tested and the results verified and re-verified if necessary. Persons charged with a violation of the Rules may request a testing of Sample B to confirm or rebut the findings of the Sample A test. Further, persons chargeable under the USPA Rules will have the opportunity to a hearing and appeal in the event of a positive test and a resulting Conduct Violation charge.

**How is the USPA Equine Drugs and Medications Program funded?**

The Program is funded by the USPA.

**Who do I call if I have additional questions?**

The first person to contact is your veterinarian. The health, welfare and the proper treatment of your horse are of paramount importance.

If you have additional questions or require additional information about the USPA Equine Drugs and Medication Program or the USPA Equine Drugs and Medication Rules, please direct your inquires to USPA Executive Director Peter Rizzo at: 859-608-4766 or email: [rizzo@uspolo.org](mailto:rizzo@uspolo.org). For more information about the USEF testing program, please contact them at: 800-633-2472 or email: [medequestrian@aol.com](mailto:medequestrian@aol.com)