

AQHA Statement on Dufurrena

AQHA has recently received various inquiries concerning the eligibility of Brandon Dufurrena to compete at this year's Lucas Oil AQHA World Championship Show. Dufurrena was recently suspended by NCHA and the inquiries are seeking information as to why he was not then also suspended by AQHA under its reciprocity agreement with the NCHA.

First, AQHA's reciprocity agreement with NCHA allows AQHA to reciprocally suspend a member who has been suspended by NCHA for an offense of using prohibited drugs, unsportsmanlike conduct or inhumane treatment. The NCHA suspension of Brandon Dufurrena (together with his father Ed Dufurrena and his sister Rieta Dufurrena) stemmed from alleged violations of NCHA's Non-Professional Rules. Therefore, the NCHA suspension falls outside of the reciprocity agreement with AQHA, since it did not involve a violation for prohibited drugs, unsportsmanlike conduct or inhumane treatment. That said, AQHA does have similar amateur rules. AQHA amateur rules require a horse shown in the amateur division must be solely owned by the contestant or the contestant's family.

The NCHA suspension stemmed from a dispute between the Dufurrenas and Donald and Janie Vogel over certain business dealings and the ownership of certain horses. A lawsuit was filed between these parties, but it was eventually settled when these parties each executed a written settlement agreement whereby the parties, including the Vogels, agreed that AQHA's records of ownership and ownership dates for the horses in question were accurate.

It has also come to the attention of AQHA that following the settlement of the first suit between the Dufurrenas and the Vogels that another dispute arose between them. As a result, the Dufurrenas subsequently filed a second suit against the Vogels whereby the Dufurrenas are asking the Court to enter a Declaratory Judgment that the prior settlement agreement which contained the written agreement regarding the accuracy of AQHA's ownership records for the horses in question is indeed a valid and a binding agreement. When there is pending litigation between parties concerning ownership issues, AQHA has always and will continue to take the position that it will not take any action to change the status quo of its records unless and until a final outcome or resolution of the litigation has occurred by either the entry of a Final Judgment or the execution of a Settlement Agreement between the parties. Until then, it is AQHA's standard operating procedure to wait and see what the final outcome of the litigation is before adjusting AQHA records and, if necessary, acting upon same.