



STATEMENT FROM SANTA ANITA PARK

Arcadia, CA (Sept. 17, 2019) -- It is with profound sadness that Santa Anita confirms the humane euthanasia of Zeke, a four-year-old gelding. During training on Monday morning, Zeke's rider recognized a problem with the horse while they were working on the training track, immediately pulled him up, and a team of on-track veterinarians -- led by Santa Anita Park veterinarian Dr. April Mauro -- was dispatched to examine the horse. Zeke was attended to by Dr. Mauro and was loaded onto the on-track equine ambulance and transported back to his barn for further evaluation and diagnosis. Veterinarians diagnosed a pelvic fracture. Zeke was initially stable, but, unfortunately, his condition deteriorated later that evening.

After consultation with veterinary experts, the owner's team determined that this type of injury would not be able to be repaired to support continual weight on all four legs, a must for a horse's survival.

"Everyone at Santa Anita and throughout The Stronach Group is devastated by this loss," said Dr. Dionne Benson, Chief Veterinarian for The Stronach Group. "We are carefully reviewing what factors could have contributed to Zeke's injury. Santa Anita will continue to work closely with the California Horse Racing Board and will continue to be transparent with our stakeholders and all of our constituents, including the public, as more facts come in. Zeke will undergo a necropsy run by the University of California – Davis' School of Veterinary Medicine, as is mandatory for all on-track accidents. The accident and the necropsy report will be reviewed by the California Horse Racing Board team to learn what, if anything, could have been done to have prevented the accident."

The thoughts of the management and staff of The Stronach Group and Santa Anita go out to Zeke's owners and to trainer Dean Pederson and his hardworking staff who cared for Zeke each and every day since he was claimed August 29th at Del Mar. The Santa Anita community is strongly connected to each other and Zeke's loss is devastating not only to those who touched him on a daily basis, but to the entire racing family who care deeply for the horses and we ask you to keep them all of them in your thoughts at this difficult time.

Every horse who works (a timed training run) at Santa Anita Park is required to undergo the same safety protocol, which includes applying 48-hours in advance to work, evaluation of their recent workout and racing history to identify risk factors and, for approximately 20% of those horses, a physical examination by an association veterinarian. In addition to those measures, every horse is required to be examined by that horse's private veterinarian within five days prior to its workout. Horses working out are required to follow the same strict medication reforms enacted earlier this year.

Monday's fatality was the second on the training track in 2019.

The Stronach Group and Santa Anita's safety measures put horse and rider safety above all else. There is an expected level of safety and accountability that is required to participate at a Stronach Group racetrack. If anything less is found which could have contributed to this accident, it will be addressed immediately. Santa Anita and The Stronach Group remain committed to leading transformative change in this traditional sport.