THE USTA-SRIF ALLIANCE

How an Investigation Moves from Start to Finish

USTrotting

SRIF

1 THE IDEA

- The USTA Executive Committee identified the need for an independent investigative capability to investigate hidden ownership and other possible rule violations.
- The USTA needed investigative resources it did not have.

This led to the search for an investigative partner.

2 ABOUT SRIF

- Nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization focused on protecting the welfare of horses in harness racing.
- Governed by a five-member board.
- Financially supported by: Hanover Shoe Farms Foundation, SOANY, PHHA, the Virginia Harness Horsemen's Association, and the USTA.

SRIF emerges as the investigative partner for the USTA.

3 THE ALLIANCE AGREEMENT

- In September 2023, USTA and SRIF finalized a written agreement known as the Alliance Agreement.
- Developed with the help of USTA counsel, which established how the two organizations will work together and includes important safeguards.

4 KEY SAFEGUARDS IN THE AGREEMENT

1. Investigators require Screening Committee approval.
2. Investigators cannot demand unlimited information; disputes are decided by the Screening Committee.
3. Confidentiality is required, with restrictions on who can receive or disclose information.
4. Accused individuals have the right to defend themselves.

5 SCREENING COMMITTEE

- Made up of representatives from both the USTA and SRIF.
- Must approve all investigations before they begin.
- Prepares a written addendum to define the purpose and scope of each investigation.
- Resolves disputes about information requests and whether the requests are appropriate or go beyond what is reasonably necessary.

6 INVESTIGATION PHASE

- Once approved, investigators conduct the investigation within the scope defined by the Screening Committee.
- Investigators may seek extensive records (e.g., financial, breeding, transfers) and other relevant information.
- All investigative work product and information must remain confidential.

7 INVESTIGATIVE COMMITTEE HEARING

- The USTA president selects the five-member committee to review SRIF investigation reports.
- The committee reviews the evidence and any arguments from the person or organization being investigated.
- The committee decides whether a USTA rule was violated.

8 INITIAL DECISION AND PENALTY

- If a violation is found, the committee can only recommend (it cannot impose a penalty).
- The person or organization has the right to appeal the decision to the USTA Executive Committee.

9 APPEAL

- The appropriate appellate body reviews the appeal.
- Example: In July 2025, the Executive Committee reviewed an appeal from an Investigative Committee decision that had imposed a $5,000 fine.
- After the full hearing, the Executive Committee increased the penalty to $15,000.

10 FINAL REVIEW BY THE FULL BOARD

- Under the USTA bylaws, Executive Committee actions must be reported to the full Board of Directors.

11 2026 AMENDMENTS TO THE AGREEMENT

2026

- In August 2026, the SRIF Board approved amendments to the Alliance Agreement.
- Clarified the role of the Screening Committee (up to five members).
- Expanded the committee's authority to approve or reject investigations and to resolve disputes about information requests.

12 CLOSE THE LOOP

- Investigation is complete and decisions are implemented.
- Appeals (if any) are resolved through the appropriate appeal body.
- All actions are documented and reported as required.

THE BOTTOM LINE: KEY SAFEGUARDS

- ✓ Investigations require Screening Committee approval.
- ✓ Every investigation is documented in writing (addendum).
- ✓ Investigators cannot demand unlimited information.
- ✓ Disputes over information requests are decided by the Screening Committee.
- ✓ Accused individuals have the right to defend themselves.
- ✓ Investigative Committee decisions can be appealed to their appropriate body.
- ✓ Executive Committee actions are reported to the full Board.

THE GOAL

The USTA-SRIF Alliance gives the USTA access to SRIF's investigative and financial resources while maintaining strong oversight, confidentiality, and due process for anyone accused of violating USTA rules.