

Germany Dissolves its National Equestrian Teams

The national governing body for equestrian sport aims to make a statement on the use of banned substances.

By Leslie Potter

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German show jumper Ludger Beerbaum, shown here on All Inclusive NRW, has been suspended from competition. Photo by Kit Houghton/FEI. On May 28, the German Equestrian Federation—known as the FN—officially disbanded its national show jumping, dressage and eventing teams after several team members were found to have used prohibited substances on their horses.

On May 5, show jumper Marco Kutscher admitted to using banned substances on his Olympic mount, Cornet Oblensky. His teammate Christian Ahlmann was one of six riders penalized by the FEI after the 2008 Olympics when his horse tested positive for the banned substance capsaicin.

German show jumper Ludger Beerbaum has also recently admitted to having used banned substances on his competition horses. He told the newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeine, "In the past I had the attitude that anything that could not be detected was allowed." As a result, he has been suspended from competition.

Germany has been very strict on its anti-doping stance. Ahlmann, the only German rider whose horse tested positive for a banned substance at last year's Olympics, had been fined and given a four month suspension by the FEI. However, the FN complained that the punishment was too mild, and the suspension was increased to eight months. He will not be eligible for the national team for two years. In addition, Ahlmann will have to reimburse the FN for his Olympic expenses and pay toward their legal costs.

Former members of the disbanded teams and other German riders wishing to be considered for the national teams will be evaluated by an independent panel designated by the German Olympic Committee.

Read about the doping case involving American dressage rider Courtney King-Dye.