Family Sues Over Eventing Tragedy

Parents file suit after daughter dies on course.

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According to the Associated Press, the parents of a 17-year-old girl who died during the 2006 Galway Downs International Three-Day Event and Horse Trials in Temecula, Calif., after she fell from her horse during the cross-country phase of the event, are suing the girl’s former trainer, the United States Eventing Association and the United States Equestrian Federation.

Mia Eriksson died during the event after her 7-year-old horse, Koryography, landed on her during a fall. The parents claim their daughter’s death was caused in part by a dangerous course and a horse unfit to ride, according to the report. The suit, filed May 6, 2008, alleges negligence, emotional distress and seeks unspecified damages.

According to the Associated Press report, the lawsuit claims the course "was made more dangerous in order to make the competition more thrilling to spectators;" equipment used on the course was defective; the standards of care to protect riders and horses were breached; and that Koryography was unfit to ride because of prior falls and lack of practice.

"I stepped forward to file a lawsuit trying to voice in a way all of the concerns we're feeling at the level of eventing to press for change," Mia's mother, Karan Eriksson, told The New York Times.

In a strange twist of fate, Mia's older sister, Shana, died in 2003 after she was thrown from her horse at Fresno State University.