

NBC Hosts Racing Roundtable

Network to kick off Preakness coverage with panel discussion on controversies in Thoroughbred racing.

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NBC's coverage of Eight Belles' death at the Kentucky Derby on May 3 drew fire as well as praise for the network, and there's been a national debate ever since. According to news reports, NBC producer Sam Flood has defended his decision not to air images of Eight Belles' final moments before she was euthanized. "There's no question what we saw — in terms of the horse on the track with the compound fracture of its legs — should not have been going into living rooms around the country. It's not an image that should be (seen) during family viewing hours," Flood said.

The racing debate is scheduled to continue in front of millions of television viewers on May 17 when sports commentator Bob Costas kicks off a panel discussion on NBC prior to the network's Preakness Stakes coverage. The panel will discuss track breakdowns and other controversies surrounding Thoroughbred racing, including breeding, training, drug use and whether artificial surfaces are safer than dirt.

Panel guests include Churchill Downs veterinarian Larry Bramlage; Eight Belles trainer Larry Jones; NBC analyst Gary Stevens; and New York Times columnist William Rhoden, who has been blasting racing's ethics and morals in his column.

The Preakness and panel coverage is scheduled to air on NBC Saturday, May 17 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. ET.