

Early Reports Show Rolex Accident Was an Error

USEF president says horse and rider misjudged obstacle.

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According to the Associated Press, United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) President David O'Connor says Laine Ashker's tragic crash during the 2008 Rolex Kentucky Three-Day Event, which ran April 24-27 at the Kentucky Horse Park, was probably due to error.

In a statement, O'Connor said a preliminary investigation into the accident shows Ashker and her mount, 16-year-old Frodo Baggins, misjudged the flower basket obstacle during the cross-country phase of the three-day event.

The ensuing crash left 24-year-old Ashker with collapsed lungs, as well as broken ribs, a broken jaw, and a broken clavicle and scapula. She is in stable condition, but is breathing with the assistance of a ventilator at the University of Kentucky Hospital. Frodo Baggins, a Thoroughbred gelding, was euthanized as a result of injuries.

At a different cross-country jump at the Rolex event, The Quiet Man, a 12-year-old gelding, fell with his rider, Sarah Hansel. The horse was euthanized on April 27 as a result of a severe shoulder injury. A necropsy is being performed. Hansel was not seriously injured.

O'Connor himself is an accomplished three-day event champion, having ridden at the Olympic level and competed at Rolex several times.