

## Idaho Racing Commission suspends horse track's license

IDAHO FALLS, Idaho (AP) — The Idaho Racing Commission has suspended an eastern Idaho's horse racing track's license to operate lucrative betting terminals, but track officials say they will continue to remain open while appealing the order.

The Post Register (<http://bit.ly/1ENeA5D>) reports that a commission hearing officer found that Double Down Betting, Sports Bar and Grill failed to obtain proper approval from the Bonneville County Commission to operate an off-track betting parlor, as required by state law.

"Until the (county commission) has approved such operations, (Double Down's) simulcast license must be suspended. Without an active simulcast license, (Double Down) is unable to continue its historical horse racing operation," wrote hearing officer David E. Wynkoop, in a ruling issued Friday.

Co-owner Jim Bernard said Tuesday that he believes the betting parlor is allowed to continue operating instant horse racing terminals —which require a simulcast license— while appealing the commission's decision.

Double Down has 28 days to appeal the decision. After that, the ruling becomes final.

Known as instant horse racing, the machines allow bettors to place wagers on prior horse races with no identifiable information.

The terminals have been legal since 2013, but have recently come under increased scrutiny from opponents questioning their legality.

Proponents argue the machines are simply the latest technological advance in a legal type of gambling in Idaho. With live horse races no longer attracting the big crowds at Idaho's horse tracks, the machines are seen as vital money makers to help subsidize the industry.

Those opposed to betting terminals counter the machines are cleverly disguised slot machines, which are illegal in Idaho.

According to Idaho law, all instant racing must take place on a state-licensed racetrack, with the exception that the racetrack may allow simulcast and pari-mutuel betting off-site to attract more customers. This is because most Idaho racetracks are tied to county fairgrounds, which are normally away from major cities.

The Idaho Falls track is the only horse racing track in the state to operate instant horse racing terminals off-site. However, lawmakers raised questions about the legality of off-site operation earlier this year, claiming the track didn't receive the correct approval.

"We haven't received the information we need to have a hearing yet," said Bonneville County Commissioner Roger Christensen.

Earlier this year, the Idaho Legislature approved legislation banning the machines, but Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter vetoed the bill. The legality of the veto is now the center of a lawsuit.

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