

United Schutzhund Clubs of America

Board of Inquiry Decision

Re: Charges against Rolando Salvador filed by Al Govednik

Date: 09/29/24

Charges and Investigation

Charges were filed on July 22nd, 2024 by Al Govednik against Rolando Salvador for animal cruelty, which would be prejudicial to the interests of USCA. Mr. Govednik states that this occurred during a training session on May 16th, 2024 at O.G. Edgerton Schutzhund Club in Illinois. Mr. Salvador was doing helper work for Cody, Mr. Govednik's dog. Mr. Govednik had asked for a strong correction from Mr. Salvador if Cody did not out. Mr. Govednik claims when Cody did not out after two commands, Mr. Salvador struck him on the head with the handle of a flexi leash. Mr. Govednik claims that this caused injury to the dog's head. The dog did compete for an FH title at the O. G. Edgerton Schutzhund Club two days after the May 16th training session. Mr. Govednik took Cody to the veterinarian two weeks later. The dog has continued to train since the May 16th incident. THE BOARD REVIEWED THE VETERINARIAN'S REPORTS. The veterinarian reported on June 11th, 2024 that trauma to the dog's head was resolved.

The Board of Inquiry conducted a thorough and extensive investigation. The BOI interviewed every witness identified by the parties as well as Mr. Govednik and Mr. Salvador. The Board was in communication by email discussing evidence and interviews. We held three meetings to interview witnesses and discuss evidence and make a determination.

Findings and Conclusions

Based on the USCA Board of Inquiry's investigation, we have determined the following findings of fact:

1. There was a long history of Cody refusing to out the sleeve.
2. The four witnesses to this event stated they are afraid of Cody, although Mr. Govednik claims he is not aggressive and supplied pictures of Cody around strangers while on vacation.
3. Mr. Salvador believed he was in danger during this altercation and felt he had to defend himself. He stated that Cody let go of the sleeve and grabbed the bottom of his jacket and would not let go. He hit him with the flexi leash in order to make him let go of his jacket. He stated that Cody finally let go after Mr. Govednik reached him and grabbed his collar. Mr. Salvador also stated that he told Mr. Govednik that he would no longer work Cody.

The Board of Inquiry has unanimously concluded that the actions of Rolando Salvador were not animal cruelty, but actions of self-defense, as Mr Salvador was in fear of bodily harm. Helpers in our sport put themselves in harm's way all the time, and sometimes have to make split second decisions. It is very unfortunate that a dog was unintentionally injured during this training session. But the safety of our helpers is of the utmost importance and cannot be trivialized.

Therefore, the charge of animal cruelty is NOT SUSTAINED.

Respectfully submitted,

Trish Taylor

Chair, USCA Board of Inquiry