



Podenko Greyhound, Image by Klaus Hausmann from Pixabay

Thousands of Greyhounds Need Homes in Wake of Proposition 13

by Morgan Tolson

April is Greyhound Adoption Month which is especially pertinent considering the recent vote in Florida to ban greyhound racing by the end of 2020. Although this is a great triumph, it does raise concern for what will happen to the racing greyhounds that are now in desperate need for homes.

This past November, a staggering 69% of Floridians voted “yes” on Proposition 13 which will effectively phase out the controversial sport of greyhound racing. Greyhound racing has deep ties in the Sunshine State, notably being the first state to legalize the sport in 1931. The Miami New Times states that, “Florida is home to 11 of the nation’s remaining tracks” making this new law a positive step forward in helping to eradicate the sport completely.

Banning greyhound racing is a great accomplishment for the state of Florida considering it's dark and complicated history. Greyhounds are one of the oldest dogs in history and are best known for their speed. Unfortunately, this led to the dogs becoming exploited for sport which reached new highs in 1931 when “Florida legislators overrode a governor’s veto to approve gambling on races in hopes to add money to the state’s coffers during the Great Depression” (Miami New Times). By 1935, Florida was home to ten greyhound racing tracks, making it a top tourist destination. The Palm Beach Kennel Club located in West Palm Beach Florida became the epicenter for greyhound racing which peaked in the 70’s and 80’s. Greyhound racing was regularly attended by celebrities and attracted spectators from around the world. Illegal betting became increasingly common, drawing in organized crime and other questionable business. Overall, the races generated an immense amount of revenue for the state of Florida and provided jobs for an estimated 3,000 people. However, the once glamorous sport has since lost its shine. According to a report by the Association of Racing Commissioners International, “The total amount of money gambled on races across the nation fell from \$3.5 billion to \$500 million between 1991 and 2014”.

This is largely due to the growing public awareness and belief that greyhound racing is essentially legalized animal abuse. Greyhound racing is inherently dangerous and potentially deadly for those participating. A study from the ASPCA states that, “In the United States, between 2015 and 2018, more than 3,000 dogs suffered injuries such as shattered legs, crushed skulls, broken spines and necks, paralysis, severed toes, cardiac arrest, and even electrocution”. Often times the injuries greyhounds sustain on the track are so severe that they have to be euthanized. Those that do survive the brutality of the race face an equally despairing fate. “Greyhounds spend most of their lives stacked in warehouse-style kennels for 20 or more hours a day, or are kept outdoors in dirt pens with minimal shelter. Most enclosures are not heated or air-conditioned. Many dogs suffer from fleas, ticks, and internal parasites and are not provided basic veterinary care, human affection or adequate sustenance” (ASPCA). Greyhound race dogs are typically between 18 months and 5 years before they retire, however, this does not necessarily mark an end to cruelty. Although some greyhounds are sent to rescue groups, many are euthanized in **mass graves** or sent to breeders when they are deemed no longer useful.

Fortunately, there is more awareness than ever before about the abusive nature of greyhound racing. Nonprofit organizations such as **Grey2k** has played a large role in the rescue and adoption of greyhounds across the world. As greyhound racing becomes less popular, more greyhounds will be in need of forever homes. In Florida alone there are an estimated 3,700-8,000 greyhounds up for adoption in wake of the racing ban. Greyhounds are considered **intelligent and gentle with a quiet disposition**. After all they have been through, these dogs deserve nothing more than to live out their days in a loving and affectionate home. If you are interested in adopting a greyhound in Florida here are some links:

[Adoptable Greyhounds](#)

[Awesome Greyhound Adoptions](#)

[Bay Area Greyhound Adoptions](#)

[Elite Greyhound Adoptions](#)

[Friends of Greyhounds](#)

[Greyhound Ranch Adoptions](#)

[Racing Dog Retirement Project](#)

[Senior Greyhound Adoption of Florida](#)

[Hollydogs Greyhound Adoption](#)

[GST's Sun State Greyhound Adoption](#)

Sources

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