

**Sports institute ponied up for wrong horses, says Auditor-General**  
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**By Debra Chong**

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 24 — The National Sports Institute (NSI) paid RM3.94 million for 18 horses that were not qualified to race in the 2008 World Endurance Championship (WEC), the Auditor-General said in his report today.

The report noted NSI had failed to get the Treasury's approval before buying the horses, as required for direct negotiation purchases.

It further noted NSI had failed to adhere to international rules set by the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI), the world governing body for equestrian competitions, which saw the 18 out of 23 horses bought in October 2007 being disqualified from the WEC 2008.

"This was because the horses bought did not undergo adequate training seeing as the purchase was made two months before the championship," said Auditor-General Tan Sri Ambrin Buang, adding the horses were also found to have suffered from poor health.

The 23 horses cost the NSI RM5.66 million in total.

Malaysia was picked by the FEI in February 2007 to host the WEC 2008, and the NSI was given the task of preparing the horses and athletes using government funds channelled through the National Sports Council (NSC).

The Auditor-General also found the specially-formed WEC 2008 secretariat headed by the NSI director-general to have breached the provisions laid down under the MSC Treasury's rules.

The report noted the appointment of the secretariat's chief was not formalised in writing and his powers were also not limited according to any provision.

The selection of horses was conducted by the secretariat, which included the NSI director-general, a veterinarian, a technical and competition officer, and a project manager.

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