Greyhound tests positive for cocaine
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DENVER (AP) A dog trainer at Wembley Park in Commerce City has been fined $500 and penalized after one of his greyhounds tested positive for cocaine.

A state official said only a trace amount was detected, while a greyhound advocate said the test result raised questions about the integrity of betting at Wembley Park.

State Division of Racing records show the test was done on a urine sample from a greyhound named MG Super Cool who ran fourth at Interstate Kennel Club Greyhound Racing at Wembley Park on Oct. 9.

Division Director Dan Hartman said a "very low trace amount" of cocaine was detected but that it was impossible to tell whether it came from the dog's feed or if the sample was contaminated from another source. The dog's trainer, Steve Bunner, was penalized because Colorado has zero tolerance for banned substances, he said.

Bunner did not say where the cocaine came from but was fined and agreed to undergo drug counseling and rehabilitation at his expense in a settlement signed Dec. 16. Penalties also included a 90-day suspended license and the loss of purses from the race. Hartman did not know the purse amount Bunner forfeited. Under terms of settlement, 87 days of the license suspension would be canceled if Bunner and his dogs fulfilled terms of the settlement.

Division officials also will be able to test Bunner randomly in the next year for drugs.

Bunner did not return a phone message seeking comment.

The settlement showed that investigators found no cocaine in Bunner's kennel. Hartman said investigators found nothing linking the cocaine directly to Bunner, and the case was not referred to police or federal officials.

The greyhound protection group Grey2K USA, which opposes greyhound racing, uncovered the test after a routine request for records from state regulators.

In the last year, Rhode Island officials have confirmed that four greyhounds that raced at the dog track at Lincoln Park tested positive for cocaine and one dog tested positive in Massachusetts, the Somerville, Mass.-based group notes. There have been 109 positive tests in Florida in the last three years.

Grey2K USA President Carey Theil said it's unclear why the greyhounds would be given cocaine, but speculated that the drug could affect the outcome of a race. Theil said it appeared the greyhound in Commerce City may not have been intentionally drugged.

"Either scenario is troubling. In fact, I'm not sure which is worse, that greyhound trainers use cocaine to fix races, or they're handling dogs while under the influence of serious narcotics like cocaine," Theil said.

"Any time you have dogs testing positive for serious narcotics like this, it calls into question the integrity of wagers at Wembley Park."

Hartman said it was the first positive test for cocaine that he had seen in his 12 years with the division.