

**Steroids should be  
banned**



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Steroids Should Be Banned It is amazing what athletes will do to achieve higher levels of performance and to sometimes get the extra edge on the competition. Most of the time people do not realize the long-term effects that result from the decisions they make early in life. This resembles the use of steroids in a person's life. Steroids became an option to athletes in the Olympics and other major sporting events during the 1950's. But this use of steroids among athletes only became widely apparent when Canadian sprint runner Ben Johnson tested positive for steroid use after winning the gold medal for the one hundred-meter dash during the 1988 Olympics (Francis, 45). Now a skinny fifteen-year-old can just walk down to the local gym and find people who either sell or know how to get in contact with those who sell the drug that will make him envious of his friends. Steroids are an attractive drug. While steroids seem harmless to the unaware user, they can have a risky effect. Most of the time whether the users are new or experienced, they do not know the dangerous consequences steroids can have on their bodies and their minds. Though steroids cause a relatively insignificant number of deaths in our society, the banning of steroids is justified because steroids have a lot of side effects not known to the uninformed user. Even though steroids are known as a somewhat dangerous substance, they are legal to have and to consume. There are those who have pointed out several cases where someone has died and an autopsy showed that the person was using steroids, but some professionals claim this does not mean that it is a deadly drug (97). Some advocates of steroids believe that steroids should be kept legal, because it is the decision of the user to take the drug, and that steroids are not causing a problem in society. Alcohol and cigarettes are consumed by millions of people, causing a lot of deteriorating effects on their

bodies, but there has never been a ban on these items because of the dangers that they can cause. Why should steroids be different? Some people say that the wide spread use of steroids among athletes is forcing the young athletes to use steroids, even though it is against their standards. This is because they know they cannot compete at the level against their opponents who are using steroids to go to the next level of performance. A lot of people claim that this is how competition is supposed to be. Racecar drivers are out there every day, pushing themselves to the limit. They are taking that corner a little bit faster, putting themselves in danger just a little bit more. This is no different than the risk football players, wrestlers, and weight lifters take when they decide to use steroids to take them to the next level. They are the people who justify steroid abuse because of these reasons, claiming that their use in sports and other activities are just the added element that an athlete needs to boost their performance. However, there has not yet been any definite medical research to prove that steroid abuse is linked to severe medical conditions (Coward, 33). Only the warnings that come from users that are currently dealing with medical difficulties those most likely have been a result of steroid use. These people are living proof of the harmful effects of steroids. Cigarettes and alcohol are major contributors to thousands of deaths each year (47). A lot of people have family members or friends that are suffering from diseases and health conditions cause by smoking and drinking. Sometimes these can lead to an early grave, sometimes a very painful death. Some people will use these situations as a reason not to drink or smoke. A similar situation would be a young athlete watching their muscular idols suffering from medical problems caused by steroids. Some of these professionals will even admit to their former steroid

abuse in hopes to persuade the thousands of young athletes that the quick results of steroids do not pay off in the end. When these kids see the long-term results that occur to professional athletes, they should realize the need to stay away from steroids or give up the addiction that they have to them. This might mean they will have to give up the idea of the body that they have always dreamed of. If someone who was currently abusing steroids was to listen to what a former addict has gone through, that person might very well be persuaded to give up the addiction. In the end these people would have the advantage because they will be the ones who are going to live a longer and happier life. Also, the physiological and psychological dependencies caused by steroids are most of the time consistent with steroid abusers (Silverstein, 61). These problems cause personal problems with the user as well as with the family and friends of the user. Once a young user sees the results in his body from the steroids, there is no turning back. It would be his worst nightmare to go back to that little body that was made fun of or picked on in school. When athletes see the performance advantages that they have gained, they will soon want to take more steroids because they will get used to the level they have obtained. These addictions can also lead them to lose interest in friends and family because they are concentrating only on their physique and their athletic improvements. One of the worst results of steroid abuse is that the drug will cause "roid rages." Roid rage is usually caused when the user is cycling on and off of steroids (Lukas, 29). This creates a psychological rollercoaster that can lead to violent outbursts because of the need to workout and release tension. The situation can be worse if the user is non-athletic because football players can release a lot of their rage on the field. Some severe addictions can include symptoms

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such as increased libido, sexual perversion, and psychotic episodes (48). Steroids are also becoming more common in women's athletics. The doses of steroids that women will take when they are cycling on steroids can have a lot of dangerous side effects. Some of the short-term effects involve deepened voice, loss of scalp hair, growth of facial hair and chest hair, and also genital problems. Women may also have irregularities in their menstrual cycle. The long-term side effects for women have not been determined yet. Even with all of these effects, steroid use is very common in the sports world (Courson, 88). Athletes who use steroids do not think of themselves as cheaters. Many set high goals for themselves and work hard at achieving them. Steroids are seen as a way to help them work harder and more effectively. Athletes that do not use steroids know that steroid users have an unfair advantage. The pressure to take drugs is enormous. An athlete asks himself, 'Do I take drugs and win medals, or do I play fair and finish last?' If professional athletes are taking steroids, then a high school athlete has to be kicking the thought around of trying steroids. They have to wonder how they are going to succeed if they do not take them. Steroid use could possibly be lowered in high school age kids if their high school physical education teachers taught their students about the effects of steroids and the lifestyle it could lead to. Just because there is no official proof that steroids can damage and possibly kill is no reason to allow steroids to be legal in our society. Just because there isn't any actual proof, does not mean that the dangers do not exist. Every year more and more famous retired athletes are admitting to steroid use in their career, and admitting certain medical problems as a result of their steroid abuse. People need to listen to what they have to say, and use them as the example for teaching the younger

crowd. The banning of steroids would not only help the people who are currently abusing them, but also help it taper the spread of addiction to steroids in society. Works Cited Cowart, Virginia. Anabolic Steroids. Caramel: Benchmark Press, 1990. Francis, Charlie. Speed Trap. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990. Gallaway, Steve. The Steroid Bible. Sacramento: BI Press, 1997. Lukas, Scott. Steroids. Springfield: Enslow Publishing, 1994. Silverstein, Robert. Steroids: Big Muscles, Big Problems. Hillside: Enslow Publishers, 1992.