

Steroid use in professional sports sport essay



Steroid use in professional sports: are the punishments fair?

Introduction

Anabolic steroids are continually used by sporting professionals though major sporting organizations have banned their usage due to the negative attributes and effects associated with continued usage. Many nations are troubled by the increasing occurrences of usage of performance enhancing drugs exhibited by the sports people. Professional athletes and baseball players have been in the limelight especially during the summer and American Olympic Games. According to recent survey both old and seasoned sportspeople and athletes use steroids to enhance their performance. Teenagers also admit to have used the steroids at some point of their life (Paterson, 1998).

A recent poll on US, about 43% of Americans believe that almost half of the athletic professionals and American Olympics athletes in the country use steroids. Since non medical usage of steroids is illegal, amendments have been advanced in the Anabolic steroid control regulations to make possessions of these drugs a federal crime. Anabolic steroids which are testosterone derivatives enable the body to quickly metabolize the ingested proteins thereby enabling quick synthesis and formation of skeletal muscle. Primarily, sports personalities have continually used the steroids in order to delay the feelings of fatigue and ultimately enabling a feeling of euphoria be exhibited. This boosts their performance levels.

This document will highlight the prevalence of the vice amongst the sporting personalities and the kind of punishment advanced to the falters' of the rules. With evidence from the Anabolic steroids governing bodies and major <https://assignbuster.com/steroid-use-in-professional-sports-sport-essay/>

sports associations like the Olympics, NFL, NHL and the NBA, a critical analysis of the rules and penalties will be advanced. An agency referred to as World Anti- Doping has consistently maintained a list of steroids which are deemed to enhance performance like Dianabol, Anadrol, winstrol and oxandrin.

Literature review

Commonly abused steroids

There are generally three types of steroids which are commonly abused by sports professionals. Anabolic, Cortico and androgenic steroids are available in the market though the US Government has banned their usage. Anabolic and androgenic steroids have growth and thickening effects on the users' skeletal muscles, larynx, vocal chords as well as the bones while affecting a considerable loss in body fat. When taken a remarkable transformation in the body of the user is exhibited due to increased muscle bulk and general body strength. This is primarily the reason why many sports people opt to use the anabolic steroids due to increased strength and agility exhibited after continued usage (Rogak, 1992). Without a valid prescription usage and possession of anabolic steroids is illegal. The Cortico steroids are made in such a way that they mimic the function of the naturally occurring cortisone in the human body. Cortisone deals with injuries in the body by regulating inflammation in the body. The Cortico steroids are used in treatment of such illnesses as asthma, allergies and kidney diseases. Common street names advanced for these steroids include pumpers, weight trainers, Arnolds amongst others.

Erythropoietin is commonly used by endurance athletes in a bid to improve on their performance. The drug works to increase the amount of red blood cells present in the body by stimulating the production and release of the red blood cells from the bone marrow. So when there are many red blood cells available in the body, a lot of oxygen is circulated in the body thereby increasing performance.

Steroid use in sports

The prevalence of steroid usage in sporting arena is high and stiff penalties have been advanced to the sports people found taking the drugs. Most athletes who take steroids do so in a bid to push the performance of their bodies past the limit thereby acquire a competitive advantage ahead of their opponents. Continued usage of steroids results to remarkable increase in muscle mass and strength thus giving the user a competitive edge over his opponents. Common usage of steroids is exhibited in those sporting activities which largely require a lot of strength and large size like football, baseball or wrestling as well as those requiring a lot of endurance like swimming and track athletes (Rogak, 1992). Body builders as well as individuals who fancy developed muscles largely fall prey in taking steroids. Except for the increased body strength and mass exhibited after continued usage of steroids, skill and performance of a player is not increased. It is such factors as the body size, age, diet and the frequency of training which determines the general performance of a sportsperson.

Testing and Punishment procedures

Every sporting agency has different procedures through which it administers testing and punishments to the players so as to determine whether they are

under the influence of steroids. Though a lot of politics exists regarding the ways to administer testing of players, all stakeholders in the sporting arena acknowledge the need to test and make public the results thereby reduce the skepticisms associated with usage of steroids (Rogak, 1992). Challenges exist though, especially when players claim that a move to undertake testing will interfere with their privacy and the results may be maliciously influenced through falsely accusing the players of using steroids. Different sports have their testing procedures which they undertake. The minor league baseball players are tested for cocaine, marijuana, steroids as well as androstenedione. The first time offenders undergo education, counseling and treatment and are constantly subjected to random tests. Suspension from the league is affected to repeat offenders.

NFL players are tested during the preseason with random tests being done throughout the season and offseason. A first time offender earns a four game suspension, a second offence earns six games suspension while a third offence earns a complete expulsion. For NBA, the rookies are tested four times each year with penalties of suspensions without pay being advanced to the falters. The US Olympic team has stringent testing procedures with such activities as blood doping, stimulants, alcohol, marijuana as well as mimetic being prohibited. Penalties differ depending on the substance used. Primarily the penalties range from public warnings to suspensions ranging from two to five years.

Benefits of punishing steroid usage

Since the inception of the Steroid control act many sports personalities involved in steroid usage have been stripped off their titles, medals and

records held. Thus through the enforcement of the legislations regarding steroid usage issues of cheating as well as hollow victories have been minimized (Paterson, 1998). By not permitting the steroid users sports personalities to compete with the drug free sportspersons is a show of fairness as no competitor is given a competitive advantage over the other players. Sanctity is reverted to the sporting industry since no pressure is advanced to the drug free sportspeople to use steroids in order to continually remain competitive in their field. Constant drug testing need be upheld by all sporting bodies in order to completely deter sports people from taking the steroids while instilling stiff penalties to people found taking the drugs.

Curbing Trafficking of steroids

Steroids can be obtained from pharmaceutical companies without prescription. Due to the negative effects associated with the drugs most governments have banned their usage and stiff penalties are advanced to the users as well as anyone found in possession of the drugs. There are several proponents of criminalization of individuals found in possession of the drugs. Many people contend that through putting in place stiff penalties, trafficking of the steroids will be deterred (Roberts, 2005). Monitoring the internet selling sources of the steroids will help in reducing instances of influx of the drugs into the market. Relevant Government agencies need monitor such selling avenue so as to determine their source and destination.

Strict controls which limit the substances produced by pharmaceutical companies will ensure that destructive drugs like steroids are not undertaken. The control act states that any individual involved in the

manufacturing, distribution and dispensation of controlled substances should always register with the attorney general office (Paterson, 1998). Although this move helps in curbing the manufacture and distribution of the steroids, the booming trade of counterfeit labs which mimic the legitimate pharmaceutical companies has resulted. The black market of the steroid drugs which are substandardly manufactured has continually frustrated the Governments efforts to kick out steroids from the reach of the users.

Steroids side effects

Anabolic steroids are deadly drugs with massive side effects. Since the sporting personalities self administer the drugs without prescription from the physicians, damage caused on the body of a user cannot be underestimated since the right dosage and duration of medication is not adhered to (Roberts, 2005). The side effects exhibited differ between individuals depending on the length of usage, the type of drug taken, individual sensitivity as well as the dosage administered. “ Roid rage “ is particularly common amongst the steroid users where they portray uncontrollable behavior which is spontaneous and overly aggressive especially after they cease to use the drugs. The function of the liver is inhibited by oral use of AS. Liver Lesions have been exhibited by users of nortesterone as well as testosterone esters.

The hospitalized patients of steroids have other illnesses like anemia, impotence and renal insufficiency. Usage of steroids with the 17- alpha- alkyl group cause liver turmoil (Roberts, 2005). More often than not the abnormalities are asymptomatic especially because peliosis as well as the liver tumors do not cause blood abnormalities. Continued use of steroids elicits structural changes in the formation of the heart while after

discontinued usage ischemic tolerance remarkably decreases. Steroid users are at a greater risk of contracting prostate cancer and susceptibility to getting skin infections. Since the AS is derived from testosterone, negative side effects are exhibited in the reproductive system. Decreased fertility, formation of breasts in men, irregularities in ovulation and menstrual cycle amongst women is exhibited. Thus through continued usage, males develop female characteristics whereas the females develop female characteristics. Growing children demonstrate virilization, stunted growth and gynecomastia. Steroid usage affects the cardiovascular system resulting to increased blood pressure. The immune system is also affected resulting to decreased productivity of the immune system. Some less serious side effects of acne include acne, rosacea, hair loss and increased fat excretion. Instances of glucose tolerance decrease in the bodies of seasoned steroid users while the levels of insulin in the body considerably increase thus symptoms of type 2 diabetes will be exhibited.

Findings and discussions

Issue 1: Marion Jones imprisonment and stripping of records, medal and prizes won after 2000, September. She was an award winning track & field athlete who admitted to taking performance enhancing steroids. Initially Marion Jones had denied any involvement with drugs to the press, sports agencies and grand juries. In October, 2007 it was confirmed that Marion Jones returned the five medals she won during the 2000 summer Olympics as was determined by the Anti doping agency of the U. S. Tim Montgomery was stripped his records after being found guilty of using steroids. He retired from sports immediately after the results were made public. The USA anti

doping agency found him guilty of using the steroids as well as human growth hormones. A four year ban was imposed on him in December 2005 and consequently stripped him all the awards and records held since 2001. In 2008, Tim admitted that he took testosterone during the Sydney relay hence the reason why his team clinched the gold medal.

Rule1: According to the 1990 Anabolic steroid control act, it is a criminal offence to use steroids by sports person in order to enhance athletic and cosmetic performance. Suspension and imprisonment is the ultimate punishment for the defaulters of the rule.

Analysis1: The Anabolic steroid control act has placed the usage of steroids in the same class as such drugs as ketamine, LSD precursors as well as barbiturates. According to this act, Mariah Jones is guilty of possessing and using the steroids especially because she was involved in major competition events hence the reason why arrests, persecution and imprisonment was done. Tim Montgomery public admission that he used performance enhancers is a clear demonstration that the vice is deep-rooted amongst the athletes who wish to remain competitive in their various sports. The enforcement of the stipulated penalties serves to warn the users of the drugs against continued usage of steroids when undertaking major competitions.

Conclusion1: it is vital that the kind of punishment advanced to sports personalities implicated in steroids use is stepped up in order to show other athletes who are already practicing and those aspiring that usage of steroids is totally unacceptable. Throughout the entire career of Marion Jones, accusations that she was involved in the usage of steroids existed but she

always denied until the tests were done in 2007. Thus Marion Jones return of all awards won when she was competing under grand violation of the laid down rules.

Issue 2: Ben Johnson, a well known Canadian sprinter enjoyed intense moments of fame in the 1980's especially after winning two bronze medals and a gold medal during the Olympics. During the 1987 world athletics championships and the 1988 summer Olympics he set world records for the 100m race. When traces of Stanozolol were discovered, he was disqualified thus loosing both records and the Olympic title. He was suspended from the field until 1991. After his comeback, he was again found guilty of doping with high levels of testosterone after which he was banned completely from athletics by the IAAF.

Rule 2: The world Anti doping agency undertakes testing of blood samples as well as urine samples. Testing is a random and unannounced. A penalty for any offence is a two year ban from athletics competitions.

Analysis 2: After the tests done at Seoul, Ben Johnson is reportedly to have denied ever doping. During the 1989 Durbin inquiry, he admitted that indeed he used the steroids under the guidance of his coach Charlie Francis who said that Johnson had always been using the steroids since 1981.

Conclusion 2: The usage of steroids need be put on hold especially with the practicing athletes. If usage of steroids is to be continued, then the legitimacy of athletics will be questioned because the results produced are not naturally acquired. Since testing is random, enforcement of the laws

becomes easy. Professional leagues which exhibit mysteries will be minimized and the credibility of professional leagues will not be questioned.

Issue 3: Barry Bonds who was an acclaimed baseball player was implicated in steroid usage. Through association with steroid usage Barry Bonds awards and achievement in baseball were tainted. He had won seven MVP awards and numerous homeruns and All-Stars. BALCO regulations completely withhold the usage of steroids thus the reason why Barry Bonds was not reassigned to the San Francisco giants during the 2008 baseball season. He played with the Pittsburgh pirates where his prowess was manifested without being revealed he was under the influence of steroids.

Ken Caminiti is another baseball player who publicly admitted to the use of anabolic steroids. He played in the team Atlanta braves and won three awards of Golden Gloves and the coveted 1996 MVP. His admission to the use of the steroids tainted completely the baseball profession where a common belief is held that all baseball players are indeed involved in the vice.

Rule 3: Baseball players who test positive for amphetamines will be automatically tested for the second time with a second offence eliciting 25 game suspension while a third offence will elicit 80 games suspension.

Analysis 3: A controversial career life of Barry Bonds was exhibited as he is notably amongst the major baseball players implicated in the usage of steroids. In the 2007, he was indicted for the evils of perjury especially since he obstructed justice when the case to determine investigation of the case and the outcome of the implications of the case. The case is still ongoing

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even now and it's unlikely that he will be reinstated in the national team. Suspicions are high regarding the baseball players as most people believe that the players are souped with steroids in order to build on their muscles. Baseball players admit that a lot of pressure exists which forces them to take steroids especially in order to compete in the majors.

Conclusion 3: Washington's baseball commissioner has advanced several stringent measures in a bid to counter steroids. Players who fail the steroid tests will be required to miss more than a third of the seasons of the match. Due to the threat of legislations which have been spurred, players who use steroids have been put up for stiffer penalties. Stiff penalties are advanced to the players so as to limit occurrence of instances of steroid usage (Yesalis, 2000). The current penalties which are in existence include a 10 day suspension for the first offensive occurrence , 30 days for the second offence and in case of a third offence 60 days suspension is advanced. Most baseball clubs ensure that they test players during the spring training sessions with random training sessions being advanced throughout the seasons in order to ensure that players do not fall prey to the vice (Taylor, 2002). Off season testing is also advanced to the players. Several bills have been advanced in a bid to intensify punishments for baseball players who use steroids.

Issue 4: An alleged East coast distributor of steroids was arrested with a huge stockpile of anabolic steroids.

Rule 4: Non medical possession of anabolic steroids with the intention of personal use or resale is illegal. A first time possession of steroids attracts a punishment of imprisonment period of more than one year with an option of

a minimum fine of \$1, 000. Possession with previous conviction of drugs will attract a 15 day to two years imprisonment or a fine of \$2, 500. People with more than two instances of charges of steroids will attract an imprisonment term of not less than 90 days and a fine of \$5, 000. A distributor of steroids attracts a \$250, 000 to \$1, 000, 000 with an imprisonment option of up to 5 years.

Analysis 4: The mere possession of steroids is punishable by law. Steroids users need be wary of the usage of the drugs because once police investigations are undertaken and athletes are found in possession of the steroids, stiff penalties are advanced. Legal penalties associate with the vice are massive as they incorporate jail terms of not less than two years. Sports people who self administer the steroids need to have a clue on the possible consequences associated with possession of the drugs.

Conclusion 4: Anyone involved in the usage or in selling of steroids need to reconsider association with the drugs as this is the best way to go about it both medically and legally. The different types of steroids available in the market today do not contribute to improved performance of a sports person (Yesalis, 2000). Health side effects will no doubt result hence the reason stringent measures have been advanced to curb continued usage of the drugs.

Conclusion

The sports figures who are constantly using anabolic steroids to improve their athletic prowess encounter several side effects which ultimately shorten their lives and careers. Thus strict punishments as advanced so curb

the vice especially amongst the teenagers who admit to have use the steroids at one point of their training so as to mimic the elite athletes. While many users admit increased body muscles and strength, an alarming increase in injury levels is exhibited (Taylor, 2002). Tendon and ligament injuries erupt due to the massive stress advanced by the overdeveloped muscles owing to the continue usage of steroids. Baseball players attest to the fact that rotator cuff injuries are on the increase due to the usage of steroids. In order to save the legacy of the sporting industries governments and sporting bodies need uphold the strict punishments in the sporting industry. Players need be sensitized on the dangers associated with taking the drugs as well as undertaking regular testing as it's not a violation of the constitutional rights but a guard against unethical behavior of steroids abuse. Strategies like healthy nutrition as well as strength training programs need be devised to as to prevent the use of steroids amongst the sporting personalities.

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