

“Why It’s Time To Legalize Steroids in Professional Sports.” Web. 9 Jan. 2014

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/chris-smith/2012/08/24/why-its-time-to-legalize-steroids-in-professional-sports/>.

The primary reason why performance enhancing drugs (PEDs) are outlawed in professional sports is that they give users an unfair advantage over the rest of the field. Various professional sports leagues have attempted to set a level playing field by testing for drug use and suspending those found guilty. It’s a noble effort, but it’s clearly not working. Stiff punishments have done little to reduce the number of cyclists caught cheating every year; Major League Baseball also hands down suspensions each season to players caught using outlawed substances, and it’s absurd to think those players are the only ones guilty of juicing.

So if we really want to level the playing field, it may be time to head in the other direction: legalize performance enhancers.

Not only would the playing field suddenly be even for all players, it would be at a higher level. A huge part of watching sports is witnessing the very peak of human athletic ability, and legalizing performance enhancing drugs would help athletes climb even higher. Steroids and doping will help pitchers to throw harder, home runs to go further, cyclists to charge for longer and sprinters to test the very limits of human speed.

It also makes sense for professional sports to allow steroids from a business standpoint. One needs only look to the late 1990s, when Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa put on two of the most memorable baseball seasons in 1998 and 1999. Even cursory fans became invested in the home run races, especially in 1998 when McGwire shattered Roger Maris’ 37-year-old single season home run record. Jerseys flew off the shelves, games sold out and baseball was so exciting that some have gone so far as to claim it ruined post-steroid baseball.

At the same time, legalizing PEDs would make life much easier for professional sports organizations currently tasked with managing convoluted anti-doping policies. There is a blurry line, for instance, between what is and isn’t an improper performance enhancer. Major League Baseball has strict limits on stimulants like ephedrine and methamphetamine, but no restrictions on caffeine use. Athletes are also barred from human growth hormone, which reputedly helps with injury recovery, but they have free use of muscle-building creatine. Not only would legalized PEDs help avoid the murky area of deciding what might be “too enhancing,” but they would save the bureaucratic trouble and possible embarrassment that accompanies disputed tests like Ryan Braun’s last December.

Detractors will argue that steroids and doping can pose health risks to the athletes involved, but athletes undertake serious health risks by simply walking onto the field or straddling a bike. Just last year, a media car ran Johnny Hoogerland off the road during the Tour de France, sending him headlong into barbed wire. Redskins quarterback Joe

Theismann famously had his leg broken and career ended mid-game, and the devastating long term effects of concussions are rapidly becoming apparent. Plus, if performance enhancers were made legal, then they could be safely distributed and regulated so that players aren't forced to rely on shady back alley transactions for untested drugs.

In baseball, legalized steroids could go a long way toward solving the contentious issue of Hall of Fame voting. Barry Bonds, Roger Clemens and Sosa will all be on next year's ballot, and none are expected to earn entry because the Hall's voters have so far kept out players found guilty or even suspected of using steroids. It's a problematic approach, however, because a player who isn't suspected of steroid use could be just as guilty as one who is.

Synthetically-inflated statistics may no longer be comparable to historical records but, while it's nice to look back on what players accomplished decades ago, it's important to note that historical statistics are already antiquated. Baseball has changed over time, so records set by Babe Ruth or Roger Maris are obsolete. Rule changes radically modified baseball at the end of the dead-ball era, and the talent pool widened considerably when the league was racially integrated in the 1940s. Hitters gained a huge advantage when the mound was lowered five inches in 1969, and nutrition and training regimens have turned modern baseball players into physical specimens that were unheard of decades ago. Simply put, professional sports have evolved so much over the years that it's mostly nonsense to directly compare statistics across eras, regardless of steroid use.

Athletes are going to take steroids and turn to doping regardless of the rules. Drug use in cycling is seemingly as old as the sport itself, and baseball players have tried to cut corners wherever possible, whether it be with spit balls, corked bats, stimulants or steroids. It doesn't justify the actions of Armstrong, Cabrera or Colon – they knew the rules and chose to break them – but the current system has continually failed to establish a level playing field for the world's most talented athletes. Legalizing steroids, doping and other performance enhancers would finally set an even bar, and that would just be the first of many benefits.

“Why Performance Enhancing Drugs shouldn’t be Allowed in Sports.” Web. 9 Jan. 2014. <http://www.sportinglife360.com/index.php/why-performance-enhancing-drugs-shouldnt-be-allowed-in-sports-54167/>.

Why Performance Enhancing Drugs shouldn’t be Allowed in Sports
By: Sammy Stein
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Imagine a competition where everyone started equal and then one or two were given extra help, tuition, sponsorship and care. Other competitors would be up in arms and say this was unfair. It is, and taking performance enhancing drugs is wrong. Using performance enhancing drugs in any sport is cheating – no argument with that. Cheats should not be allowed to participate- no argument with that either. The fact is, if you use drugs which improve your performance at any time during your training you may benefit in the long term because the body mass built up during your period of drug use may stay and so you will be using the benefits of your cheating for most of your career.

Another reason why drugs – performance enhancing or otherwise- should not be used in sport is that in a sport we expect competition to be fair. We expect all participants to be playing from a level field. They will all have different physiques, they will have different trainers, motivation and methodology but at the end of the day, strip all this away and you have the athletes and the sport-and what should be fair competition.

If one or two are using performance enhancing drugs, they may not win but they may come higher placed than if they had not used the drugs, so they are cheats. If they win and go on to get medals, sponsorship, be shown as an example to youngsters, then that makes it far worse and they have kept out more worthy athletes because they cheated.

If performance enhancing drugs became permissible then athletes who used them may also do damage long term to their bodies – who knows the long term effects of some of the drugs?

A recent TV program showed East German swimmers who had won medals in the 1980s Olympics and had used performance enhancing drugs. Now they are only in their mid forties but look emasculated and much older. The drugs have had devastating long term effects on these athletes, who should still be looking fit and healthy.

Some argue that performance enhancing drugs, if not openly allowed will go underground and still be used but this is going to happen in any case. If drugs are allowed , some cheats will find another tool to enhance their performance over honest

competitors. You cannot stop cheats but you can reduce the likelihood of them getting away with it by banning drugs, performing regular tests and imposing life bans on those who cheat.

Some drugs can be taken inadvertently and have been proved to have some effect on performance like those in nasal sprays and the precise ingredients can change from country to country according to the legislation that dictates drugs in over the counter medicines and foods but athletes and trainers need to be aware of this.

The incentives to cheat are many and it must take will power and a huge test of moral values not to try something but do it once and you may do it again so avoidance is the key here and a good coach will make sure their charges know and are aware of the consequences of taking any drugs.

For athlete's health, the good name of sport and long term benefits, cheating of any sort should be banned and drugs in particular.

“The Use of Performance Enhancing Drugs is Cheating.” Web. livepage.apple.com10

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Using performance enhancing drugs is cheating. Sport, by its very definition, is the combination of physical exertion and skill governed by rules. It takes very little effort to swallow a pill and not much skill to stick yourself with a hypodermic needle. Before athletic competition was invaded by Medical Science the rules only had to apply to the actual performance of a specific discipline. Now, they've had to be expanded to define the chemical composition of a competitor to determine if he is only using his natural combination of talent, skill and hard work. Medicine is for making ill people well. It is morally reprehensible to use it to make healthy people stronger, faster or capable of greater endurance.

Even though there's a ton of money involved in professional sports and entire nations' take enormous pride in their athletes' achievements, the use of performance enhancing drugs destroys the souls of its athletic users. Sporting achievements are earned, not bestowed, and deep down participants have to feel that they have deserved the accolades they've striven for or their mental health will suffer. No athlete has ever started at top. Overnight sensations have traveled long hard roads to reach their moments of glory, if they make it at all. From the start, any athlete can say to himself, “I did it.” When chemicals are introduced into the system that “I” is no longer alone.

Never is a medical study 100% accurate, and no drug, no matter how commonly used, is totally safe for everyone. When dealing with exceptional physical specimens of humanity it's downright dangerous to experiment. Besides the unpredictable side effects, there are also the unknown long term effects that ingesting any foreign matter can induce. It's just too risky for an activity that is basically an entertainment providing no quantifiable help to humanity or the world in general. Sporting events have gained such popularity in the world because they are a straightforward and primarily visual oases in this crazy, mixed-up world which we have made for ourselves.

If winning is now more important than the competition itself then it would be better for everyone on this planet to eliminate sports all together. Otherwise, we might as well just allow the guys in the lab coats a spot on the field and the podium. After all, since what those scientists are supplying is responsible for an extraordinary performance, they might as well take the credit. Then, instead of teams or countries, the athletes can represent drug companies, belittling what they were born with and the work they've put in making themselves better as they attribute their success to what was supplied to them in a pill or syringe.