

Don't Be Fooled! Steroid Use Is Not Exclusive to Pro and Collegiate Sports

By DAVID B. CORBIN

Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

It's interesting how professional sports commissioners, owners, coaches, etc. appear to be in the dark about steroid use. It's also interesting how CEO's of major companies like WorldCom (WorldCon), Global (Double) Crossing and ENRON (End Run) seemed to have been unaware of the situation when these giants came crashing to the ground.

Although professional sports has not taken a spiraling financial nose dive like WorldCom, Global Crossing and ENRON, what they all have had in common is that it takes a very intelligent, aware individual to make it to the top perch. These people must also be surrounded by intelligent, aware individuals to keep them informed. In a major crisis, however, these particular intellectuals seem to become naïve or brain dead!

Perhaps many believed that WorldCom, Global Crossing and ENRON CEO's may have deliberately misled their employees and the public - in other words cheated! The same cheating attitude, in a different form, seems to be present with professional and collegiate sports from the top down to the athletes when it comes to steroids. Unfortunately, this attitude sends a message to our youth that "cheating" is OK.

The majority of college and high school athletes may not use steroids but, don't be fooled, many do and the temptation to be lured into the steroid world is enormous to young adults. Having been in the health spa business for many years, including owning a fitness center in the Clearwater, Fla. area for more than four years, I have seen the misuse of steroids and the nearly overwhelming temptation for weight trainers of all ages to follow suit. Even middle school children have used steroids in order to "look big" for the beach.

Because of one's genetic makeup, there are multitudes of ways steroids can affect humans and I have seen most of them.

First of all, steroids can increase the growth of nearly all living tissue, good or bad, in addition to altering attitude in the form of rage. It has been found that its use can grossly increase the

size of muscle tissue in a very short period of time - very appealing to young athletes or weightlifters to get a head start (develop cheaters' muscles). Within three or four months, that 5'8" 145-150-lb teenager has transmogrified into a 210-lb behemoth without growing in height. It's not over. A few months later, still 5'8", the scales are screaming at 235-lbs and huge balloon-like biceps and pectoral muscles and rock-like shoulders yield an "out of whack" appearance - somewhat distorted.

However, the urge to get stronger, be "big" or to get the athletic advantage - cheat - outweighs the possible pitfalls in the mind of that individual.

Some may say, "so what!" Alright, here is the "so what!" Almost every person I have known for a reasonable period of time who has used steroids has been affected, some very early in their usage and some much later, depending on their genetic response.

It seems to me that the best thing that can happen to a young user is to have immediate problems because they usually come in the form of heavy acne, usually around the shoulders, back and face due to the "revving up" of the human machine. Blood pressure will rocket and so will the cholesterol levels. Some experience a "hacking" cough. Emotional edginess usually sets in and, fortunately, most of these users decide to quit before the real damage occurs.

Others, known as the periodic users, would pull disappearing acts when they went off the steroids and would not be seen for two or three months. When they finally returned to work out, they would be 30-35-lbs lighter and depressed. Much of their strength, size and ego would be gone. The depression time can be dangerous! They decide to "juice" again.

For those who seem to be unaffected initially, although the high blood pressure and cholesterol increase still exists, the real danger may be hidden inside. Under the skin, the muscles actually outgrow the tendons disproportionately. The stimulated muscles are able to lift heavier and heavier weights but the tendons are enduring increasing stress. One individual, a Florida state champion power lifter who had managed not to have notice-

able problems for years, literally "blew out" his left pectoral muscle leaving a black and blue bruise the size of a basketball. Worse, after the bruise cleared, a huge concave dent remained - not very appealing.

But that was just a surface wound. He was "rotting" inside! This same individual also developed kidney, liver and heart problems and later was hooked up to a kidney dialysis machine. His weight plummeted from a muscular 285-290-lbs to 220-lbs and dropping in less than a month. His older brother, who also had been a steroid user, suffered a heart attack at the age of 34 and developed skin cancer. His younger brother, who had been using steroids for nearly a year, wisely quit.

More than one male teenage individual I have known did experience rapid muscular size and strength increases but along with that, they developed breasts - somewhat humiliating to the owner and they do not go away. Keep in mind, they also developed acne, flushed faces from high blood pressure and attitude inconsistency.

One individual, a Florida State University student at the time, with a height of 5'7" and weighing 245-lbs with a 29" waist entered my gym. My first impression was, "Oh my God! How grotesque!" His muscles were so filled with fluid that I thought he was going to burst. His skin looked like stretched plastic. Nearly a year later he was escorted into my gym by his fiancé, considerably lighter. He told me a story of how he developed kidney and liver problems and, while in the hospital, lost 70-lbs in two weeks. He nearly died at the age of 21. Also, it appeared that some brain damage may have taken place because he was mentally slow to respond to external stimuli. His fiancé would also pick him up after his workout.

Beauty may be in the eyes of the beholder; however, several young women of college age who began using steroids to get involved in body building contests not only displayed an unusual muscularity but also began growing facial hair. Aside from the other drawbacks of steroid use, these particular young women also developed a weird voice that sounded like an alien from the 1980's TV series "V" - sort of a double quivering.

The sense that it is OK to use steroids, because many professional and collegiate athletes use them, owners look the other way because the extra "bigness" can put a bigger bulge in their wallet and commissioners just give them a hand slap, sends a terrible message that it is OK to "cheat". For the sake of our youth, college provosts should clamp down, professional sports organization owners should shed their greenness of "greed" and commissioners should deal with steroid violations more harshly before more giants come crashing to the ground.

Devil's Den

Spring Is in the Air, And so Is Baseball

By BRUCE JOHNSON

Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times



It's springtime, and an old man's dreams turn to ... baseball, or, more specifically, Westfield High School baseball.

True story. A guy at work says to me, "Who's your favorite baseball team?" And I answer, as I always have, "Westfield High School." He says, "No, your favorite pro baseball team." And I answer, as I always have, "I don't have any interest in the professional teams, in any sport. My favorite teams are Westfield High School."

And among my favorites at WHS are the baseball teams. Maybe it's because I grew up in a baseball house. My dad was a three-year starting catcher at Long Branch High in the late 1930s, and he was my coach (a cross between Vince Lombardi and Bobby Knight) as a youth growing up in North Long Branch. (If you ever saw the movie "The Great Santini," you know what it was like in my house if we lost.)

My senior year at WHS (1963) was the dawn of a great era of baseball in Westfield. The high school was a power for a decade under coaches Norm Koury, Dick Zimmer and Dave Cilo. The Post No. 3 American Legion team was always a state title contender. And Robert Turner's Westfield Merchants were usually among the top teams in the Union County League and Plainfield Twilight League.

Koury became head coach my senior year, after going undefeated as the jayvee coach for several years. He was a tough, old school disciplinarian, and that's how his teams played. They bunted. They stole bases. They hit cutoff men and backed up bases. And they won. When Koury left for Morrisview after the 1967 season, his WHS teams had gone 90-29 and won two Union County Tournament titles.

One of Koury's players on that final team was Bob Brewster, a catcher and team captain. This spring, "Brew" will be starting his 23rd season as the varsity baseball coach at WHS. Only golf coaches Walter Johnson and Gary Kehler, and tennis coach Sam Bunting have had longer tenures in one varsity sport. Brewster's teams have won 369 games, the most of any WHS coach in a single sport. By the time Mike

Murray and Tom Ricciuti graduate in 2006, Brewster should have 400 victories in his rear-view mirror.

This spring figures to bring quite a few W's, with Murray (catcher, .400 average) and Ricciuti (shortstop, .395) back for their third varsity seasons. First baseman Bryan Power hit .361 last spring, second baseman Mike Diaz hit .348, leftfielder Sam Kim was .327 and centerfielder/pitcher Billy Hearon hit .333. (Is it really 35 years since I coached his dad, Bob, in summer baseball?)

Dan Clark, Jan Cocozziello, John Boyd and Ken Wichoski will have to be replaced. But coach Ken Miller's jayvee team went 15-3 and won the county jayvee tournament behind Diego Betancourt (.471), Brandon Cuba (.438, 7-0 pitching), Craig Ellis (.418) and Alex Zieler (.500). And last year's freshman team was 10-1 under coach Joe Marino.

The days are getting longer, soon the birds will be chirping and the trees will be blossoming and it'll be time to join the regulars down the leftfield line at Edison to watch "Brew's Crew" in action. Could a third sectional title (1949 and 1988 were the other two) be in the offering?

This also figures to be a very good spring for third-year coach Tara Pignoli and her WHS softball team. After shocking many last year by winning the school's first sectional softball title since 1990, and nearly reaching the state championship game, Pignoli has a veteran group to try and go a few steps further this spring.

While five regulars - C Lauren Musacchia, RF Jess Guerriero, 1B Jen Frost, DP Danielle Coleman and OF Danielle Palentchar - were lost to graduation, the nucleus of a good season is returning, led by senior left-handed pitcher Lauren Gelmetti, who is also one of the county's top hitters, having hit .453, .368 and .346 in her first three varsity seasons. The infield returns 2B Katie Smith (.352), shortstop Kris Fietkiewicz (.294) and 3B Marilyn Mench (.339), while LF Abby Chazanow (.316) and CF Mary Kate Flannery (.397) are also back. Speedy Brianna Giovanello scored 22 times last year as the courtesy runner.

Last year's jayvee went 12-5 behind pitchers Sam Mooney and Jenny LaSpata, and the freshmen were 9-4.

PUBLIC NOTICE

TOWNSHIP OF SCOTCH PLAINS PLANNING BOARD

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that at the Planning Board Meeting of the Township of Scotch Plains held on March 14, 2005, the Board adopted the following Resolutions of Approval:

E-2 Willow, LLC, for a Waiver of Site Plan for 504 Willow Avenue and 1720 E. Second Street, Block 404, Lot 2.01 to construct a second story addition to a portion of the existing building.

Bill Wilkins, for Minor Subdivision for 1650 & 1640 Fairian Road, Block 14001, Lots 4 & 5, to relocate the existing lot line and construction of an addition to the existing home on Lot 4.

The file pertaining to these applications are in the Office of the Planning Board and available for public inspection during regular office hours.

Barbara Horev
Secretary to the Planning Board
1 T - 3/24/05, The Times Fee: \$22.44

PUBLIC NOTICE

TOWNSHIP OF SCOTCH PLAINS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that at a regular meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Scotch Plains, held on Tuesday, March 22, 2005 the following ordinance entitled:

AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING THE SUM OF \$25,000 FROM THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SAFE STREETS TO SCHOOLS PROGRAM IN CONNECTION WITH THE PROJECT KNOWN AS EVELYN STREET SIDEWALKS

was adopted on second and final reading.

TOWNSHIP OF SCOTCH PLAINS
Barbara Riepe
Township Clerk
1 T - 3/24/05, The Times Fee: \$20.40

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