

Doping

Vocabulary

Highlight these words and phrases in the text and work out their meanings from their context.

Supplements – to improve performance - drug abuse – to gain in weight - forbidding the use – to ease the strain – to detect a steroid – prohibited substances

Find the following information in the text:

- A) the substances used by athletes in ancient times
- B) the first known death due to drug abuse
- C) the substance used in weightlifting in the 50's and 60's
- D) the introduction of testing
- E) details of Ben Johnson's case

Drugs in Sports

Taking supplements as a way of improving physical or mental performance in sports is probably as old as sports themselves. Competitors in the ancient Greco-Roman games were known to eat animals' parts, such as horns, which they thought would give them the strength of bulls, for example. It is also probable that Greeks used plants and mushrooms to help performance.

The first known death of an athlete, which was related to drugs, was after a cyclist had taken a "speed ball" of heroin and cocaine. The most famous early case of drug abuse, however, occurred in the 1904 Olympic Games in St. Louis. Marathon winner Thomas Hicks, of the USA, collapsed after the race as throughout the race he was repeatedly given doses of strychnine and brandy.

After returning from the 1952 Olympics, US weight-lifting coach Hoffman started searching for a hormone that would help gain in weight and strength as he was convinced that the successful Soviet team had used some "hormone stuff". The product he got was Dianabol, an anabolic steroid first produced in 1958 and used during the 1950s and 1960s as there were no rules forbidding the use of pharmaceuticals.

In 1967 Tommy Simpson, aged 29, collapsed and died during Tour de France. He was taking amphetamines to ease the strain of long-distance cycling. Simpson's death prompted the introduction of testing, which came into being at the 1968 winter Olympics.

The case that changed interest in drug use to hysteria was the case of Canadian sprinter Ben Johnson from the 1988 Seoul Olympics after he had won the 100 metres in a world record 9.79 seconds. An anabolic steroid was detected in his urine sample; he was stripped of his gold medal and his time was erased from the records. Following the Johnson affair, lists of prohibited substances lengthened so that even many products that are normally purchased in drug stores were banned.

Questions:

1. Do you know about any other doping affairs?
2. How do you see the future of supplements in sports?

BANNED SUBSTANCES

Match the substances with their description below.

Anabolic steroids

Stimulants

Narcotic analgesics

Beta blockers

Diuretics

- 1) Painkillers are used normally in life, but in sports especially tolerance to pain is needed and injuries are common.
- 2) These substances relieve stress by controlling the level of adrenaline and lowering the heart rate. They are used by showbusiness performers.
- 3) A compound which is considered to be responsible for the construction of muscle mass.
- 4) These substances cause the kidneys to produce more urea and speed up waste disposal process. They are used for reducing fluid levels by competitors in weight-controlled sports.
- 5) The basic effect is to stimulate the nervous system, speeding up heart rate and raising blood pressure.

What sports are the substances associated with?

Assignment

Imagine you are producing a television documentary on drugs in sport. You have three telephone calls to make. Whom do you call? What questions do you ask? What answers do you think you get?