

Topic: “That we should legalise all performance enhancing substances in sports”

Context:

Currently, in elite sports, doping is rampant among top athletes across sports. [20 of 21 podium finishers in the Tour de France from 1999 to 2005 were embroiled in doping scandals](#) and a [WADA survey found 44% of athletes admitted to doping, while tests only picked up 0.5%](#). [Psychologists have also shown the lower the risk of being caught, the greater the number of cheats. The greater the number of perceived cheats, the more likely people are to join them.](#) Unfortunately, these show the hardline approach isn't working and won't ever work unless testing is more efficient, especially as athletes find newer substances that cannot be detected and ways to mask others.

Set-up:

Performance enhancing substances (PEDs) as defined by WADA will be allowed to be used in elite and professional level sport for adults aged over 18. As part of this athletes will:

- Have a doctor who will administer all substances to athletes and record dosages
 - Submit to regular health checks, which will be used as part of studies to see the effects of PEDs on athletes
- be educated on the risks of taking substances as well as signs to watch for

PEDs exclude highly addictive substances such as cocaine and methamphetamine due to their illegality internationally and limited medicinal benefits.

Summary:

We will prove the legalisation of PED's will make sport more fair, safe and will fulfil the purpose of elite sport. We will prove it provides a net benefit for the important stakeholders of athletes; those who do and don't dope or are trans or intersex, fans, younger athletes and aspiring athletes and the wider community.

Substantive:

1.1 Equality

- Currently, doping is rampant throughout sports, creating vast unfairness between athletes
 - All sportspeople, especially those who follow the rules, shouldn't have to face this disadvantage
- By allowing all athletes to use performance enhancing substances, this will no longer disadvantage them, as everyone will be able to access and use them
 - While there is supposed “equality”, this isn't the case due to the large amount of athletes doping
- We advocate for the right for equality and fairness across sport, considering this is a workplace
 - How would we view this if it were another workplace where workers were given an unfair advantage at their job over others due to not following the rules?

1.2 Safer for athletes

- Due to the prohibition of PEDs, athletes must resort to self-administering and purchasing through illegal methods
 - This often leads to substance abuse/misuse as athletes don't understand how much they can take or recognise when side-effects become serious etc.
 - Also, athletes must buy them illegally
 - This means no quality controls or guarantees, posing a risk to a large number of athletes
- Under our model, these will be administered by doctors and must meet certain standards
- Athletes conditions will be monitored by professionals and athletes educated on risks and how to identify side-effects, increasing safety
- Will produce more data thus allowing researchers to properly see their effects on athletes

Why do we care?

- Because these are often younger athletes being taken advantage of by coaches, and are people with families, friends etc.
 - Also often when making the jump from lower level to professional, believe "they must dope in order to be competitive [at elite sport]" and are at risk of substance abuse
- They represent a large amount of contestants and range across all sports

2.1 Trans + Intersex Athletes Inclusion

- When trans and intersex athletes compete in professional competitions they're unnecessarily scrutinised and face stigma from the public and sporting community.
 - Stems from misguided assumptions trans women "cheat" because of higher testosterone levels than fellow competitors.
 - Trans men face discrimination for taking testosterone to maintain healthy hormone levels and some wrongly assume this is a "cover" for doping.
- Despite adhering to [TUE guidelines](#) ; [trans weightlifter, Laurel Hubbard has faced significant discrimination](#) .
- Caster Semenya throughout her career has been scrutinised due to being intersex and is now barred from competing in the olympics.
- This response greatly impacts the trans and intersex community
- However, legalisation would alleviate the stigma surrounding as athletes taking PEDs eliminates the argument of "unfairness" due to a difference in hormones
 - Creating an inclusive and positive environment for all athletes and positive representation of Trans and Intersex people.

2.2 Promotes interest

- Athletes using PEDs will make sport more entertaining by resulting in records to be smashed, races to get faster, skills to be greatly improved and games to become higher scoring
 - Competitions will become higher in intensity and skill level and will be more exciting to watch
- This result in more interest generated towards sport

- Example: [When Barry Bonds began playing major-league baseball, he broke records. Attendance at home games for his club increased greatly, generating massive interest.](#)
- More interest will also generate more money due to more people watching/attending
- May also result in the introduction of more sports to the mainstream Australian audience, encouraging more people to get involved and play sports.

Pre-emptive rebuttal:

It goes against the spirit of sport

- The spirit of sport is about fair play, and under the status quo, sport isn't fair at all, PEDs will help this.
- The purpose of elite sport is to showcase the highest level of sport, which PEDs will do by allowing athletes to become faster, stronger etc.

PEDs are dangerous and could cause harm to a large amount of athletes

- The effect of PEDs on athletes hasn't actually been well-researched so long-term effects are largely unknown
- Furthermore, not all PEDs are dangerous, there are many different types and some have very limited side-effects
- Under our model athlete's health will be closely monitored while on PEDs, meaning if something is affecting their health, intervention can occur.

Concluding remarks:

The legalisation of PEDs is safer and fairer for athletes than the status quo. Doping remains rampant despite testing efforts and due to its prohibition is very unsafe. While through regulation, doping would become safer, break down stigmas surrounding trans athletes and restore the spirit of sport.