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Abstract

Drugs have plagued the world of athletics for many years. They have existed since the early Greek games and continue to play a major role in today's athletics. The use of banned or illegal substances to enhance performance is known as doping. The drugs used for doping are often referred to as performance enhancing drugs. In this paper, the issue of doping is viewed from the perspective of track/field as a business enterprise. People are often quick to point a finger at the athlete in cases where drugs are pertinent. Looking at the whole scenario, at the whole "business" behind track/field paints a much clearer picture. From this angle, the stakeholders, those parties with an interest in USA Track/Field (the governing body for track/field in the United States) and its athletes, can be determined and their respective roles examined. USATF's stakeholders range from corporate sponsors to the athletes' themselves and all of them, like all stakeholders are profit oriented and consequently want to represent and be part of a winning business. To have a profitable track/field business, one must have winning athletes and achieving this goal often entails going through all possible means, including doping.
Introduction:

Throughout history, athletics has been a significant aspect of every society’s culture. Sports have performed a number of functions in society, ranging from serving as an opportunity for enhancing one’s physical and psychological well-being, to reflecting important social and cultural values, and more recently, as a practical business enterprise. Sports have been studied in a number of social science areas such as history (e.g., Roberts & Olson, 1989), sociology (Frey & Eitzen, 1991), psychology (Kahn, 1990), education, and economics (Vrooman, 1995); however, limited or little attention has been directed on the athletics industry from a business perspective. One possible reason for this lack of attention is the contradictory nature of professional sports as both games and businesses (Nixon & Frey, 1996).

Athletes face enormous pressure to excel in their competition. There is pressure coming from coaches, the public, agents, and sponsors. Athletes also understand that winning is more than just gaining a gold medal; winning also entails gaining financial and social rewards. Athletes are aware that their bodies can only perform well and give them the optimum results for only a couple of years. They recognize that their bodies can only perform at a peak level for a short period of time. Although training is the most important thing for an athlete, some drugs, supplements and other practices can increase an athlete’s efforts, enhance his/her athletic performance and give him/her a shortcut to victory while many times damaging the athlete’s health and athletic career.

Historical Background of “Doping.”
“Doping” is defined by the International Olympic Committee as “administrations or use of substances in abnormal amounts with abnormal methods by healthy persons with the exclusive aim of attaining an artificial and unfair increase of performance in competition.” (www.psychedonline.org/Articles/Vol12Iss2/DrugUse1.htm). Doping has been very prevalent in today’s headline news since the development of a new drug test which can now detect the steroid tetrahydrogestrinone or THG which until then was undetectable.

The word doping is probably derived from the Dutch word “dop”, the name of an alcoholic beverage made of grape skins used by Zulu warriors in order to enhance their skill in battle (http://www.asda.org.au/media/history.htm). The term became current around the turn of the 20th century, originally referring to illegal drugging of racehorses. The practice of enhancing performance through the use of foreign substances or other artificial means is as old as competitive sport itself. As far back as ancient Greece, athletes have been wiling to take actions that would improve their performance. They are known to have used special diets and stimulating potions to fortify themselves. Strychnine (formerly used in small quantities as a stimulant of the central nervous system), caffeine, cocaine, and alcohol were often used by cyclists and other endurance athletes in the 19th century. Thomas Hicks won the Olympic marathon in 1904 with the help of raw eggs, injections of strychnine and doses of brandy administered to him during the race (http://www.wada-ama.org/).

In 1928, the International Amateur Federation (IAAF) became the first International Sport Federation to ban the use of doping. Many other federations followed suit, but they all remained unsuccessful because of the lack of drug tests. The problem
was becoming worse with the invention of synthetic hormones and the increase of doping during the 1960’s (Hoberman, 1992). The death of Danish cyclist Knud Enermark Jensen during competition at the Olympic Games in Rome in 1960, whose autopsy revealed traces of amphetamines, increased the pressure on sport authorities to establish drug tests. In 1966, the UCI (Cycling) and the FIFA (football) were the first international federations to introduce drug tests in their respective world championships. In the next year, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) instituted its medical Commission and set up its first list of prohibited substances. Drug tests were first introduced at the Olympic Winter Games in Grenoble and at the Olympic Games in Mexico in 1968. Most international sports federations established drug testing by 1970. The use of anabolic steroids was becoming widespread and there was not a reliable way of detecting them (Waddington, 2000). A reliable test was finally introduced in 1974 and the IOC added anabolic steroids to its list of prohibited substances in 1976. For this reason many athletes were disqualified in world events in the late 1970’s, especially in areas such as throwing and weightlifting.

The drug tests proved to be effective against steroids and stimulants, but another type of doping was surfacing in the 1970’s, blood doping. “Blood boosting” is the removal and subsequent re-infusion of the athlete’s blood in order to increase the level of oxygen-carrying hemoglobin. The International Olympic Committee banned blood doping in 1986. Another way to increase the level of hemoglobin was by using erythropoietin (EPO). An EPO detection test was introduced at the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000.
The biggest track scandal that dealt with a big name athlete was with Canadian sprinter Ben Johnson. He won the 100 meters at the 1988 Seoul Olympics in a world record time, but was later stripped of his gold medal and banned for two years after testing positive for an anabolic steroid. In March 1993, he again tested positive for another drug and was banned for life.

In 1998 a large number of prohibited medical substances were found by the police in a raid during the Tour de France. This scandal illustrated the need to have an independent international agency which would set unified standards for anti-doping work and co-ordinate the efforts of sports organizations and public authorities. The International Olympic Committee decided to convene a World Conference on Doping. It was held in Lausanne in February 1999. This conference led to the creation of the Lausanne Declaration on Doping in Sport. This document provided for the creation of an independent international anti-doping agency to be fully operational for the Games of the XXVII Olympiad in Sydney (http://www.wada-ama.org). The World Anti-Doping Agency was established on November 10, 1999 following the Lausanne Declaration. Its purpose was to promote and coordinate the fight against doping in sports internationally. The WADA was set up as a foundation under the initiative of the IOC with the support and participation of intergovernmental organizations, governments, public authorities and other public and private bodies fighting against doping in sports. During its first years of existence, WADA reached agreements with 34 International Sports Federations governing Olympic summer and winter sports and conducting unannounced, out-of-competition tests. Sports outside the scope of the Olympic Movement are still a problem,
like professional sports in the USA because they operate under their own anti-doping rules, which many times are not as strict as those of the WADA.

**Performance-Enhancing Drugs and how they work**

Athletes may have several reasons for using performance-enhancing drugs. These reasons may include:

- Build mass and strength of muscles and or bones
- Increase delivery of oxygen to exercising tissues
- Mask pain
- Stimulate the body
- Relax
- Reduce weight
- Hide use of other drugs (http://entertainment.howstuffworks.com/athletic-drug-test.htm/)

The International Olympic Committee has created five different doping categories that are banned from athletic competition. They include anabolic androgen steroids, stimulants, narcotic analgesics, beta-adrenergic blockers, and diuretics. Substances that sedate the central nervous system and serve to reduce anxiety (alcohol, barbiturates and sedative hypnotics), local anesthetics, anti-inflammatory drugs are not listed on the IOC list, but are tested for at certain competitions. Those drugs not specifically banned because they do not enhance performance include alcohol, diet regimens, amino acids and vitamins.

Here is a detailed description of each doping category (http://uk.geocities.com/sandomenicorre/drugs.html).
Anabolic Steroids: Used to increase an athlete's muscle strength and power by encouraging new muscle growth. Anabolic steroids build muscle and bone mass primarily by stimulating the muscle and bone cells to make new protein. They allow the athlete to train harder and longer at any given period of time. Steroids increase the male hormone androgen and decrease the female hormone estrogen. This enhances the male reproductive and secondary sex characteristics such as increased masculine strength and bulk, increased facial and body hair and thickening of the vocal cords. Steroids only improve athletic performance when strength is of primary concern and when the drug is combined with an intensified training program. Side effects of this drug include jaundice, liver damage, mood swings, depression, and aggression.

Stimulants: are generally used to help athletes stay alert, reduce fatigue and maintain aggressiveness. They increase the rate and capacity of the heart, central nervous and respiratory systems. There are three groups of stimulants, psychomotor (cocaine, diet suppressants, amphetamines), sympathomimetic amines (enhance alertness, and reduce physical and mental exhaustion), and hallucinogens (marijuana, LSD, PCP, and cocaine). In general hallucinogens inhibit rather than enhance performance.

Narcotic Analgesic: These drugs include codeine, heroin, morphine, and opium. They are often referred to as anti-inflammatory drugs. They are used to reduce pain, inflammations of tissue and create a sense of psychological well-being. With these drugs, athletes can continue playing even though they have sustained muscles and tissue damage. Some of the side effects of these drugs include sedation, psychological dependency/addiction, depressed respiration, and gastrointestinal disturbances.
**Beta-Adrenergic Blockers**: These drugs are mainly used to lower blood pressure and treat heart disease. They do not however induce dependency. They are banned by the IOC because they can enhance performance in sports that require steady hands in competition such as archery, bowling, golf and javelin. The side effects include infertility, bronchial problems, hypotension and fatigue.

**Diuretics**: These drugs increase the flow of urine, thereby helping the body to get rid of water and salts. They are used by athletes in events where weight is critical or is restricted, such as distance running, weightlifting and wrestling. Athletes also use diuretics to help mask other drugs. This is because diuretics will help the banned drugs pass through their system faster because of increased urine. Possible side effects of these drugs include heart arrhythmia, nausea, heat exhaustion, blood clotting, kidney failure and muscle cramps.

The majority of banned drugs used by athletes can be detected in samples of urine. For some though, blood samples may be required.

**The THG Scandal**

Tetrahydrogestrinone or THG is a banned steroid which has been chemically altered by chemists to make it undetectable by normal drug tests. This steroid like all anabolic steroids can improve the body’s capacity to train and compete at the highest level. The drug reduces fatigue associated with training and the time required to recover after physical exertion. THG also promotes the development of muscle tissue in the body and increases strength and power (http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/athletics/3210876.stm).

The discovery of this designer drug this past October, has been creating a lot of “buzz” in track/field and in the athletic world in general. It is a story that can possibly
damage the careers of many professional athletes. The story began when a disgruntled track/field coach, who to this day remains anonymous, contacted the United States Anti-Doping Agency and revealed that several top track athletes were using THG. This coach also provided the agency with a syringe containing the drug. The syringe was then taken to the University of California-Los Angeles, where Professor Don Catlin was able to identify the chemicals used in the drug and also develop a test to detect those chemicals.

The reason why this drug is making such a “buzz” in the track/field world is because several professional athletes, especially American athletes have been allegedly using this steroid. Some of the names include Regina Jacobs, the first woman to run under four minutes in the 1500m indoors event and a 15 times US national champion, Kevin Toth, the US shot put champion, and John McEwen, who came in second in the hammer throw at the US championships in June. In Great Britain, “Europe’s fastest man,” Dwain Chambers has also admitted to using THG (http://stacks.msnbc.com/news/985219.asp?0sl=-11&cp1=1).

Another drug that has been tied in with the THG scandal is modafinil. US sprinter Kelli White who won the 100 and 200 meter events at the World Championships this past June has tested positive for modafinil. (http://www.sacbee.com/24hour/sports/track_field/story/984007p-6907702c.html). Modafinil stimulates the central nervous system and is used to fight fatigue and sleepiness. The International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) is aware that modafinil can also be used for the purpose of performance enhancement. In the case of Kelli White, the fastest US sprinter this year, she claimed that her positive test was a result of taking a prescription medicine for narcolepsy, a disorder that runs in her family.
Two other US athletes have allegedly tested positive for modafinil in the past couple of months. Christe Gaines, another American sprinter allegedly tested positive for the drug at the US championship in July. Olympic and world gold medalist Calvin Harrison also admitted to having tested positive for modafinil at the US Nationals. Chris Philips, a US hurdler also tested positive for the drug. Modafinil does not appear on the IAAF’s list of banned drugs but it is viewed as a related substance. In these cases, the athletes and their agents claim that it was not their fault because the drug is not a steroid, and was not specifically listed on the list of banned substances. They also claim that it was only used to help them fight fatigue from all their travels.

The newly detected designer drug THG is linked to BALCO, a high tech nutrition company in California. Balco is the acronym for the Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative, a company that makes nutritional supplements. The United Stated Anti-Doping Agency has identified Balco as the source of THG. The disgruntled coach who blew the whistle on this drug also named Balco as the source of THG. Balco has a variety of professional athletes as clients, including Kelli White, Marion Jones, and Tim Montgomery in track/field, Barry Bonds and Jason Giambi in baseball, Bill Romanowski in football and Shane Mosley in boxing. All these athletes and many others have been subpoenaed to testify in court in regards to this drug (http://sports.bostonherald.com/otherSports/otherSports.bg?articl Eid=31).

Balco helps its clients by analyzing blood and urine samples from the athletes and then prescribing a series of supplements to compensate for vitamin and mineral deficiencies. Victor Conte who is the founder of Balco can be traced back to the CJ Hunter drug scandal at 2000 Olympics. US shot putter CJ Hunter, was discovered to
have 1,000 times the allowable amount of the steroid nandrolone in his system prior to the 2000 Olympics (http:newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/sport1). Mr. Hunter pointed to Victor Conte who took the blame and claimed that the positive test was the result of contaminated iron supplements he had supplied to Mr. Hunter.

The WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency) has taken action in view of this possible scandal which US Anti-Doping Agency chief Terry Madden claims “...appears to be intentional doping of the worst sort. This is a conspiracy involving chemists, coaches and certain athletes.” (www.stacks.msnbc.com/news/). The association has written to all international sports federations and all national anti-doping agencies, encouraging them to analyze currently stored samples for the presence of THG. The IAAF is to retest all urine samples given at this year's World Championships for THG. Different countries have taken different approaches to this situation. USA Track & Field has proposed tougher drug rules which could include lifetime bans for first time steroid offences instead of the normal two-year ban. The United Kingdom Sports has set up a phone hotline for tip-offs about suspected use of illegal drugs by athletes and coaches.

Track and Field as a Business Enterprise

USA Track & Field (USATF) is the National Governing Body for track and field, long-distance running and race walking in the United States. USATF encompasses the world's oldest organized sports, the most-watched events of the Olympics, the #1 high school and junior high school participatory sport and more than 50 million adult runners in the United States (www.usatf.org). This organization is a volunteer-driven, not-for-profit organization with a staff of professional program administrators at the National
Headquarters located in Indianapolis. The mission of USATF is to provide vision and leadership to the sport of track/field in the United States, and to promote the pursuit of excellence from youth to masters, from grassroots to the Olympics Games. USATF is responsible for many programs including:

- Establishing grassroots programs such as the “Junior Olympics.”

- Developing, selecting and leading Team USA, the world’s #1 team, at the Olympics, World Championships, and more than 12 other international events each year.

- Promoting programs of training and competition for men, women, boys and girls of all ages

- Establishing and enforcing the rules and regulations of track/field (www.usatf.org)

Organizations that are part of USATF include the U.S. Olympic Committee, NCAA, NAIA, Road Runners Club of America, Running USA and the National Federation of State High School Association.

Even though the roots of the sport of track/field date back to ancient Greece, this sport has not been at the forefront of the athletic and many times does not get the publicity needed. One of USATF’s missions is to put track/field at the cutting edge of the 21st century sports athletic scene. The organization is using such medians as the Golden Spike Tour, a series of elite competitions held in the U.S., and the help of sponsors including Verizon, General Motor, Nike and Xerox.

During the twentieth century, sporting activity has gradually evolved into a “big business” providing a significant, world-wide source of entertainment, revenue and
employment (Waddington, 2000). Sport has also developed into a significant social institution and to succeed in sport has become highly valued. This has placed pressure on athletes to become not only successful, but the best. This pressure has contributed to the rise in the incidence of drug taking and the number of drug related deaths within the sporting community.

In his book, Waddington stated that “while the winning of an Olympic medal has undoubtedly been considered an honor ever since the modern Olympics were founded in 1896, it is indisputably the case that in recent years the non-honorific rewards, in particular financial rewards, have increased massively” (Waddington, 2000). This statement is absolutely correct. Financial rewards associated with particularly Olympic success, has created a whole business in of itself. In the United States in particular, Olympic gold winners are able to demand very high appearance fees for competing in major meets, but more importantly, they can earn huge incomes form sponsorships, television commercials and product endorsements. As the rewards to be gained from sporting success have increased, so has the emphasis placed on winning which in turn has prompted athletes to adopt this “winning by any means possible” attitude which of course includes doping.

Stakeholders

USATF Sponsors

As noted above, USATF, the governing body for track/field in the United States has many corporate sponsors. These sponsors along with coaches, agents and the general public can be viewed in this “business” as the principal stakeholders. A stakeholder is a person, an organization or a group that has interest in the outcome of an organization.
The importance of stakeholders may vary over time and over changing environments. In these next sections we will look at the importance of stakeholders for USATF, the expectation of those stakeholders and their influence on USATF, which in consequence influences the athletes. Corporate sponsorships have led to USATF being able to nearly double its revenues since 1997, when the organization’s annual budget was less than $7 million, to $13 million today (www.runningnetwork.com/news/usatfniikepartners.htm). These sponsorships have helped USATF expand its programs at all levels, to host induction ceremonies for the National Track and Field Hall of Fame and to endorse more than 4,000 events each year.

Nike is an official National Team Sponsor of USATF. Nike has served as the National Team Sponsor for USATF since 1991, and their contract has been extended until 2009. Nike is the world’s leading creator of authentic athletic footwear, apparel, equipment and accessories. The company has designed uniforms for USATF at the 1992, 1996, 2000 and will most likely do the same for the 2004 Olympic Games. It outfits all USATF teams in international competitions, including the World Championships, the World Cup, the Pan American Games and the World Junior Olympics among other meets. Under the contract, Nike is the exclusive sponsor and supplier of products to the World’s #1 Track/Field Team while working with USATF and a range of marketing campaigns (www.runningnetwork.com/news/usatfniikepartners.htm). USATF CEO Craig Masback explains that “Nike is a true partner in working with us to put on the best track and field meets in the world, and to promote the sport of track and field in the United States and around the world.”
Another USATF sponsor is Verizon. Verizon has been serving as the telecommunications sponsor for USATF since April 2001 and will continue to do so for the next four years. With this sponsorship, Verizon has promotional category exclusivity in cable, Internet, local and long distance, wireless, DSL and telephone directory services. It has sponsorship of the televised broadcast of the USA vs. The World event, at the Penn Relays. It also has title sponsorship of the Verizon Millrose Games in New York City, which is heralded as the oldest invitational track/field event in the United States and generally regarded as the world’s greatest indoor track meet (http://www22.verizon.com/about/community/sponsorships/usatrackandfield/). Verizon also has sponsorship rights of USATF’s elite Golden Spike Tour series and the US National Team. The Golden Spike Tour is a series of track/field meets around the countries. It provides Team USA’s top athlete’s with the opportunity to compete on home soil and earn substantial prize money in front of a nationally televised audience. Last but not least, Verizon has entitlement to the Verizon Youth Series, as it supports USATF’s developmental program which helps identify up and coming talent in the sport.

Xerox Company as a sponsor of USATF participates in the Jesse Owens award dinner and Xerox Hall of Fame which inducts three new track/field athletes into the National Track/Field hall of Fame. Xerox has been involved with the Hall of Fame for five years. At the 2000 U.S. Olympic trials Xerox provided awards to athletes who set World, American or Olympic Trials records. The awards, WorkCentre 480cx all in one products, were given to 11 athletes who set records at the trials. Xerox also sponsored the Xerox Century of Champions Salute Dinner at the 2000 Olympic trials which
honored many of the great American track/field athletes of the 20th century (http://groups.yahoo.com/group/racewalking/message/1398).

General Motors rounds up the sponsors of USATF. GM brands support the television broadcasts of the Golden Spike Tour meets. In addition, a few track/field Olympic hopefuls can benefit from GM's "The Team behind the Team" program. This program donates 100 vehicles to the families of aspiring Olympians over 18 months. They are chosen by an Athlete Advisory Panel which consists of former Olympians like Carl Lewis and Bob Mathias (http://www.runnersworld.com/dailynew/archives/1999/May/990512.html).

These companies are first and foremost corporations with the goal of making a profit. When these corporations sponsor an athlete or an organization, their reason for doing so is to be associated with "winners." Nobody wants to be associated with losers. Therefore elite athletes in particular representing the USA through USATF have the pressure to win in order to keep their sponsorships with these corporations.

General Public

The general public, otherwise known as the customers or target market, is worldwide and is interested in the entertainment value of the track meets. It also provides legitimacy to USATF overall. The individual athletes also provide a sense of affiliation for the fans. Fans, including adults and children, can chose an athlete with who they affiliate, and support that athlete through their efforts by attending games, buying paraphernalia, and "talking up" the athlete. The athletes are seen as role models, especially for young kids, and are also seen as stars in their community. For these reasons, athletes feel the need and the obligation to remain on top of their game and come
out as winners all the time. All athletes enjoy and perhaps thrive on all the attention they receive from the hundreds of fans who support them and especially, the little children who look up to them. This scenario is only possible though with victorious athletes. When at big track meets, the majority of fans come out to see Marion Jones, Stacy Dragila and other such Olympic winners, not the ones without a medal. Everybody wants to associate with winners. Therefore those athletes who are victorious and are characterized as winners are the ones the general public admires and emulates.

Coaches/Agents

"Pound, the head of the World Anti-Doping Agency, insisted that athletes’ entourages [including coaches, agents, and managers] must take responsibility alongside their charges for any illegal substances found in their systems"

(http://news.bb.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/sport2/hi/front_page/3210275.stm). This statement is very important when it comes to drugs and athletes because many times an athlete’s coach and agent is their most trustworthy companion. That is to say that a coach’s advice is usually taken by an athlete without much thought or disagreement. The circle of people around athletes who advises the athletes on how to better their careers are just as guilty as the athletes’ themselves when it comes to illegal drugs. Those coaches, agents and managers are more often than not making the drugs available and actively encouraging their athletes to use them. This entourage has just as much to gain from representing a successful athlete as the athlete himself. Fame, money, reputation and world recognition are the benefits obtained by a winning athlete’s coach and agent. For example the Olympic and world gold medalist Calvin Harrison who tested positive for the stimulant modafinil, prescribed to treat narcolepsy, claimed that a "coach in
California” gave him the pill so he would stay up and not be too fatigued. (http://sport.guardian.co.uk/print/0,3858,4783262-108365,00.html).

**Athletes:**

Athletes themselves are also major stakeholders in USATF and its teams (Olympic team, world team...). Athletes who are part of USATF can be regarded as employees of the association. The relationship between the association and the athletes involves the most important “actors” who provide the “entertainment” offered by the association and these relationships are often well-documented in the news media. Athletes understand the wealth, glory and fame that are associated with winning. A vast “majority of athletes would do anything, and take anything short of killing themselves to improve their athletic performance” (Wadding, 2000).

**Media**

Perhaps one of the leading influences of the growth of professional sports has been the media, particularly television. The interest of television companies in pro sports is due to the evolution of sports from purely competitive to spectator-oriented events. The sports industry has also recognized television’s ability to facilitate their commercial development and popular success (Lobmeyer & Weidinger, 1992). USATF’s Golden Spike Tour series meets provide a strong product for television. The Golden Spike Tour series of four indoor and five outdoor meets each year feature all of America’s top track/field stars. These meets were among more than 40 nationally televised track shows in 2001. Nielsen ratings for track and field broadcast on network television have averaged above a 2.0 rating since 1999, including several that showed 15-35 percent increases in ratings in 2001 (www.runningnetwork.com/news/usatfnikepartners.htm).
As a stakeholder, television’s expectations are motivated, much like those of the players, by economic success. It seeks highly attractive meets from USATF, which means competitive meets with top USA and world track athletes. Those meets that are televised usually only include Olympic or world class athletes who are among the best in the sport. This is because these athletes are the ones who the public and viewers are interested in seeing compete and their appearances do nothing but increase TV ratings.

USATF also benefits from the relationship with the media. It uses TV to promote its meets as well as promoting the overall image of the association and its athletes. Several public service announcements featuring prominent athletes with themes such as “Stay in school,” “Reading is fun” and such, demonstrate the association’s concern for social issues and help the association and its athletes gain support from fans and society.

**USATF Stakeholder Management:**

USATF’s long-term well-being is significantly linked to the basic social expectations of its many stakeholders. These expectations are critical to achieving economic and financial success. An underlying truth to this statement is that the sports industry and the entertainment industry in general depend heavily on maintaining consistent social performance to achieve top financial performance.

Maintaining a strong positive image is one of the main concerns of USATF and its athletes because image is a major portion of the product its consumers are purchasing. Given that track/field is not as popular as other sports in the USA and is not a necessity in one’s life, consumers can and will redirect their money towards other forms of entertainment if they are displeased with the quality and overall attractiveness of the product (the athlete’s performance). While USATF and elite track athletes have been
already struggling for recognition and respect, the drug scandal in the recent headlines, have worsened the association's image not only with its stakeholders, but also with world sports organizations. "The U.S. Olympic Committee's executive panel has set a November 17 deadline for USA Track and Field to plan for cleaning up doping issues, athlete conduct problems and the image of the organization" (http://news.yahoo.com).

The committee gave the United States national track governing body a month to deal with doping and athlete conduct issues or face possible decertification. Threatened with decertification and confronted with new evidence that its athletes are using banned substances, USATF has proposed tougher drug rules that could include lifetime bans for first time steroid offenses instead of the normal two-year ban.

The association understands the extent of this drug scandal and the possible disastrous consequences. Drug usage has been around the world of athletics for many years. Coaches, athletes and the chemists and doctors they work with are always willing and able to create undetectable designer drugs for that additional edge over the competition. As long as the rewards of sporting success continue to rise and play the most crucial role in athletics, there will always be athletes willing to go through all possible means to make it happen. The rise in the use of drugs can also be attributed to the prevalence of drugs today. In recent years, more and more effective, performance enhancing drugs have been produced and are made readily available. One doesn’t have to do much to obtain them.

A successful USATF does not just entail success for its athletes; it also means success for its shareholders. Athletes are therefore faced not only with inner pressure from themselves, but most importantly, with outside pressure coming from every group
with an interest in USATF. A win doesn’t just benefit the athlete; it means bigger endorsements, better image, a bigger fan base and more sponsorships for the association. In this “business,” not only do the athletes gain, but USATF and its stakeholders also gain from a “profitable athlete.” As a consequence of this business, top-level athletes are less and less able to be independent and to play for fun, and are increasingly required to be “other-directed” and serious in their approach to the sport. Athletes are less able to play for themselves and are ever more indebted to represent wider social units such as cities, counties and countries who can also be considered as stakeholders (Waddington, 2000). In return for the financial, social, and other support they receive from those stakeholders, “athletes are expected to produce high-quality sports performances which, particularly through the achievement of sporting victories, reflect favorably on the social units which they represent” (Waddington, 2000). That is, athletes are expected to be victorious in their sport mainly for the social entities they represent; and many times these athletes go through all means possible to achieve this goal. For many of these athletes, predominantly at the elite level who have the resources and rapport (relationships with chemists and scientists especially), doping or the use of banned substances is the easiest and quickest way to ascend to victory.

Conclusion

I interviewed a few track and field coaches and agents to get their input on the issue of drugs in the track and field world. Below are the questions and answers that were provided.

1. Should this recent “drug scandal” in track/field be viewed as an opportunity to “clean up” the sport? So you even believe that it is possible to completely clean
up the sport or is it only a matter of time before someone else comes up with a new “designer drug?”

- Coach and agent Greg Harger of the Indiana Invaders, an elite track/field club based in Indianapolis, had the following to say: “The fact that there is widespread attention due to reports in the media and statements issued from governing bodies and various governments is an opportunity for the sport to add momentum to efforts that are on-going to “clean itself up” but it will not stop the never ending competition and conflict between those that create, keep, and set rules and those who search for the means and methods to cheat without detection.”

- Coach Sue Parks, head coach of the Ball State women’s track/field program responded by saying “The recent drug scandal in Track & Field is extremely disappointing. I guess that most of us in the Track world have known that drugs were out there, but now we are finding out exactly the magnitude of the problem. Now that so many of the top athletes have been caught, it makes you suspect anyone who is at the top and that certainly taints our sport. Personally, it was very disappointing to me that a number of top Americans were caught. Like many people, I wanted to believe that the problem was mostly with other countries and that the majority of our athletes were clean but that is turning out to simply not be true. I would hope that the recent drug scandal is a wake-up call and that some steps will be taken to clean up the sport. However, I just don’t know if that is realistic. Now that we are finding out that many of the top athletes are working with scientists, I feel that some of these athletes will still be able to stay one step ahead of the drug testers.”
- Coach Bethea, associate head track/field coach at Indiana University had this to say: "I think the athletes, as well as USA T&F have really gotten black eyes with all this drug stuff. I don't know if I would call it a scandal. Athletes have been using drugs and the organization has known about it for years. It is more like a cat and mouse game. The problem is it comes at a bad time with the Trials (Olympic trials) coming up. It also blemishes track and field as far as fans are concerned. Who are the track and field role models? Athletes know better. I think the whole thing stinks. We are so use to hearing about other countries and other athletes, this hits pretty close to home. The likelihood of getting control of this is minimal. If athletes want to cheat they will, and when a lot of potential money is involved it is going to happen, and until you can prove that all the other countries have stopped I don't believe we will either. Some countries are defined by what they do in sports, a lot is at stake. Science is for the most part keeping up with the changing times. Also, the athletes aren't making the drugs and someone is profiting by providing the drugs. I think there are a lot of factors involved; too many to think that it [the sport] is going to be cleaned up. I also think we (USA) have been pretty lax about trying to control drug use and our athletes for that matter."

2. What are your views on the International Olympic Committee’s banned substances list and the related substances that are not spelled out yet ‘included’ in that list (like in the case of Modafinil used to treat narcolepsy, which several American athletes have tested positive for)? Where do we draw the line? What happens when an athlete really does need a “banned substance” as in the above case for medical purposes?
- Coach Harger, "The governing bodies in general have not come close to taking enforcement too far. The degree to which the governing bodies have gone in recent years and the degree to which athletes have been involved in setting the rules and procedures is such that there is no excuse for any athlete to misreport the use of any substances whether innocent or accidental in exposure. It is very clear to all participants (athletes) and their representatives (agents and coaches) that the list of banned substances is not an all-inclusive list of substances. Procedures and rules are in place for athletes with specific medical needs such that no athlete should find themselves in a situation such as that which you suggest."

- Coach Sue Parks, "I believe in a "zero tolerance" policy. The top athletes know that they are going to be tested and it is their responsibility to find out what medications they can and can't take. Some of them with special needs are just going to have to be that much more careful. The fact that so many athletes have been caught proves that we are simply not doing enough and I just don’t think that we can approach the problem with any kind of a lenient attitude."

- Coach Ed Bethea, "I think the banned substance list is a good thing. Athletes know well ahead of time if they are going to be competing at the international level; so in the case of Kelli White for example [tested positive for modafinil], if she in fact has this condition [narcolepsy] she had plenty of time to get documentation from a doctor, or to declare any medication she was taking to the officials. My understanding is that she did neither of these things, which as it turns out would not have mattered anyway. I don't know where the line should be drawn, but I think the USA has to start doing something here, before we get to international competitions and get embarrassed. I do believe some
cases are different, but that is what the committee is for. If athletes have a question on something it is not hard to find out the answer.”

My personal thoughts and opinions on this issue as an athlete are like the ones from the coaches above. Although I do understand the immense pressure and sometimes subtle obligation that they are faced with, athletes are more often than not blinded by the many rewards of winning and forget the old saying “It’s not whether you win or lose, it’s how you play the game.” The concept of winning is overemphasized and overvalued in today’s society and is the driving force behind the increase in doping. Winners are held on such a high pedestal that it is very easy for all athletes to fall into this trend. The ever-increasing competitive and financial rewards are the leading causes of this corrupt use of doping in sports. Profits and the financial rewards to be gained from being or representing a successful athlete are very large, especially in the United States. Gains from a successful athlete are shared by many “interest groups,” including sponsors, representatives (coaches and athletes), one’s country and the fans identifying with that particular athlete (in an indirect way).

My hope is that this recent THG drug scandal, and especially the fact that it came from an anonymous tip will prompt the governing bodies to double their efforts in cleaning up the sport and making it more equitable. Some efforts already in place include drug testing and the plea by Craig Masback, CEO of USATF, for all those who know anything about athletes’ doping to come forward. These actions should be emphasized and implemented more stringently. For example instead of just testing a few athletes at major international competitions, officials should require all athletes to undergo drug tests before participating in an event. This would require athletes to be tested and the
results given the day of or the day before they actually compete; rather than waiting after the competition, where by then, only event winners are tested. In this manner, there will be no “discrimination” and everyone, potential winners or not, would be required to undergo drug testing. The system would make a lot more sense and become more unbiased. Another factor to be considered is USATF’s CEO Craig Masback’s plea for “tattle tells” to come out and point the finger at those athletes they know are “cheating”. Great Britain has already set up a national hotline for anyone to call and give anonymous tips about those suspected of doping. I think the U.S. might benefit from having such a system. As wrong as some might think it is, it may be beneficial and have athletes and their entourages actually think twice about intentionally doping. When you know people are watching your every move and are ready to bring you down so they can rise up, you become much more careful about the decisions you make. Such a hotline might help USATF in its efforts to clean up the sport.

The fact that THG was discovered “by accident” shows that drug usage is a much bigger issue than believed. It illustrates the extent some athletes are willing to go to in order to win, and the numerous available parties willing and able to help these athletes in their pursuit of victory. As long as there are athletes willing to cheat the system in order to gain an unfair competitive advantage over others, and scientists coming up with better, more efficient and undetectable ways of doping, this problem will persist and linger on for a very long time.
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