



National Athletic Trainers' Association Official Statement on Steroids & Performance Enhancing Substances

The National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) is concerned with the issue of anabolic steroids and other performance enhancing substances in sports today. NATA recognizes the myriad of problems presented by steroid use – including legal, ethical and sportsmanship boundaries that are jeopardized. NATA's biggest concern, however, is the health and safety of all athletes, which NATA considers compromised by the use of such substances.

NATA supports any and all secondary school, collegiate conference, professional or amateur sports league, international committee or governmental regulations or bans on steroids and other controlled substances not prescribed by a physician for therapeutic purposes. NATA also supports more severe penalties for those who violate imposed regulations or bans. NATA considers this one of the most important issues facing the sports world today. As health care professionals, NATA's members focus primarily on the health and well-being of the athletes and patients they serve. Therefore, due to the health risks associated with steroids and other performance enhancing drugs, NATA can never justify their use to improve athletic performance.

NATA's 35,000 members, many of whom work with secondary school or collegiate students, are especially concerned with steroid use among young athletes. The long-term, irreversible, negative effects of banned substances on a young athlete's growing body are a frightening repercussion not worthy of improved athletic performance. While a broad ban on such substances is a start, an equally important weapon in the battle against steroid use is more thorough education of our athletes and parents. Increased research on the dangerous side effects of steroids, combined with more intense dissemination of the facts about the extreme health risks – to athletes of all ages, coaches at all levels and parents of all young athletes – will solidify the message that no on-field victory is worth serious health problems later in life.