



An Introduction to **DRUGS IN SPORT**

Addicted to winning?

Ivan Waddington and Andy Smith

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 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

12MB: 296.29

First edition published 2009

by Routledge

2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada

by Routledge

270 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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Typeset in Goudy by

Taylor & Francis Books

Printed and bound in Great Britain by

CPI Antony Rowe, Chippenham, Wiltshire

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Waddington, Ivan.

An introduction to drugs in sport : addicted to winning? / by Ivan Waddington and Andy Smith.

p. cm.

1. Doping in sports. I. Smith, Andy. II. Title.

RC1230.W294 2009

362.29—dc22

2008025173

ISBN 978-0-415-43124-8 (hbk)

ISBN 978-0-415-43125-5 (pbk)

ISBN 978-0-203-88598-7 (ebk)

An Introduction to Drugs in Sport

Why do many athletes risk their careers by taking performance-enhancing drugs? Do the highly competitive pressures of elite sports teach athletes to win at any cost? *An Introduction to Drugs in Sport* provides a detailed and systematic examination of drug use in sport and attempts to explain why athletes have, over the last four decades, increasingly used performance-enhancing drugs. It offers a critical overview of the major theories of drug use in sport, and provides a detailed analysis of the involvement of sports physicians in the development and use of performance-enhancing drugs. Focusing on drug use within elite sport, the book offers an in-depth examination of important contemporary themes and issues, including:

- the history of drugs in sport and changing patterns of use
- fair play, cheating and the 'spirit of sport'
- WADA and the future of anti-doping policy
- drug use in professional football and cycling
- sociological enquiry and the problems of researching drugs in sport

Designed to help students explore and understand this problematic area of research in sport studies, and richly illustrated throughout with case studies and empirical data, *An Introduction to Drugs in Sport* is an invaluable addition to the literature. It is essential reading for anybody with an interest in the relationship between drugs, sport and society.

Ivan Waddington is Visiting Professor at the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, Oslo and the University of Chester, UK. He is the author of *Sport, Health and Drugs* (Routledge, 2000) and co-editor of *Sport Histories* (Routledge, 2004) and *Pain and Injury in Sport* (Routledge, 2006).

Andy Smith is Senior Lecturer and Co-Director of the Chester Centre for Research into Sport and Society at the University of Chester, UK. He is co-editor of the *International Journal of Sport Policy* and co-author of *Sport Policy and Development* (Routledge, 2009) and *Disability, Sport and Society* (Routledge, 2009).

For Ella,
who has brought such joy.

And to Mom, Dad and Jenny,
for their support.

Preface

When we started work on this book our intention was to produce a revised and updated version of Ivan Waddington's book, *Sport, Health and Drugs*. That book had been published in 2000 and, given that the world of drugs in sport is a rapidly changing one, it was certainly due for a revision. However in the course of writing this book, it has changed into something rather different.

Readers of *Sport, Health and Drugs* may recall that it was divided into two related, but rather different, sections. The first section consisted of four chapters which examined different aspects of the relationship between sport and health, while the second part consisted of six chapters which focused on sport and drugs; these different but related issues were appropriately encapsulated in the title of that earlier book. For the current book, we have omitted altogether the four chapters which focused on health issues and these have been replaced by six new chapters on drug use in sport. In addition, the original chapters on drugs in the earlier volume have all been updated and revised and, in most cases, expanded. In several respects, therefore, the new book is considerably more than simply an updated version of the earlier book; with the removal of the entire section on health and the inclusion of the six new chapters, this book focuses exclusively on drug use in sport. We believe that these changes are sufficiently radical and far-reaching to justify the change of title.

Writing a book, as any sociologist will recognize, is a social activity (even in the case of sole-authored books, which this is not), so it is appropriate to thank the many people who, over many years, have encouraged us and contributed, directly or indirectly, to our development as sociologists and to the development of our thought in relation to drug use in sport. Particular mention should be made of former colleagues at the University of Leicester, and especially Eric Dunning, Patrick Murphy, Ken Sheard, Dominic Malcolm and Martin Roderick. We would also like to thank our colleagues at the University of Chester, especially Ken Green, Daniel Boyce, Katie Liston and Chris Platts for their encouragement and support.

Since the University of Leicester, in an act of crass intellectual vandalism, closed the world-ranked Centre for Research into Sport and Society in

2002 (because it was not making enough money!), Ivan Waddington has enjoyed the great pleasure of working as a Visiting Professor at the Centre for Sports Studies, University College Dublin and at the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, Oslo. Thanks are due to all the special friends who have been so welcoming and supportive in both places and particularly to Conal Hooper and Karen Hennessy in UCD and to Sigmund Loland and Berit Skirstad in Oslo. Ivan Waddington would also like to thank his fellow cyclist and clubmate, Peter Witting, who has been assiduous in providing information from appropriate cycling websites on all the information about the latest (and very frequent!) revelations relating to drug use in cycling.

Finally we should like to record our thanks to Dominic Malcolm, now at Loughborough University, who was a co-author of Chapter 9, and to Dag Vidar Hanstad, of the Norwegian School of Sports Sciences, Oslo, who was a co-author of Chapter 10.

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Introduction

It may be useful at the outset to make clear to the reader what this book is about and, equally importantly, what it is not about. It may also be useful to set out some of the conceptual and theoretical issues which underpin this book.

First, we should make it clear that the focus of this book is consistently on drug use in elite sport. We are of course aware of the fact that far more performance-enhancing drugs are consumed outside the context of elite sport, for example, in gymnasiums. We are also aware of the fact that the widespread consumption, particularly of anabolic steroids, by bodybuilders and many others who use such drugs for cosmetic purposes, constitutes a far more serious public health issue than does drug use by elite athletes, partly because of the much larger number of people involved – in 1994 it was estimated that in a city the size of London there may be as many as 60,000 regular users of anabolic steroids (Walker, 1994) – and partly because gym users and non-competitive athletes who use steroids are much less likely than are elite athletes to be using the drugs under medical supervision. We make some reference to the use of anabolic steroids outside the context of elite sport in Chapter 7, but this is not our primary concern in this book. Those who wish to examine these issues in more detail will find excellent starting points in the books by Monaghan (2001) and Lenehan (2003).

Second, we need to draw attention to an important conceptual issue concerning our use of the terms 'doping' and the 'use of performance-enhancing drugs'. Dunning and Waddington (2003: 364) have suggested that 'it may be useful to differentiate between these terms and to apply them to two rather different ways in which drugs may be used to affect sporting performance'. The first of these relates to situations in which athletes knowingly take drugs with a view to enhancing their performance, or in which they inadvertently take them, for example by consuming a legitimate medication which also contains a performance-enhancing substance, such as ephedrine, which is contained in some common cold remedies. In both cases, it is assumed under the rules of strict liability that the athlete can be held responsible for the consumption of the drug and it is on this basis

2 Introduction

that sanctions may be applied. In other cases, however, the assumption of personal responsibility may not be valid, for substances which affect performance may also be administered without the knowledge or consent of the 'competitor'.

Dunning and Waddington deliberately used the term 'competitor' in inverted commas because the most obvious example of drugs being used without the knowledge or consent of the 'competitor' concerns animal sports, where drugs may often be administered to animals not with a view to enhancing, but to hindering, their performance. However, they add that 'there have been situations in which performance-enhancing drugs are administered to human athletes without their knowledge or consent and in situations in which it may not be appropriate to hold the drug-using athletes responsible for their consumption of those drugs' (Dunning and Waddington, 2003: 365). In this regard, they cite the state-sponsored doping system in former East Germany, under which large numbers of athletes, many of them children, were given drugs without their knowledge or consent and they suggest that 'it may be appropriate to regard those who were administered drugs under these circumstances not as criminal or cheats but – especially in view of the drug-related health problems experienced by some former East German athletes – as “victims” or “dupes”' (Dunning and Waddington, 2003: 365).

They suggest that:

In the light of situations such as those outlined above, it might be useful to restrict the use of the term 'doping' to those situations in which drugs which affect performance are administered without informing, or securing the consent of, those who receive these drugs. Such situations may arise because the issues of providing information and securing consent are not relevant because those receiving the drugs are non-human, as opposed to human, animals. However, such situations may also arise, as in the case of athletes in East Germany, because the structure not only of the sport system but also of the wider socio-economic-political system – and in particular, the balance of individual and collective rights – is conducive to the administration of drugs to athletes without their consent. In contrast to these situations, it is our suggestion that, where an athlete him/herself is knowingly taking performance-enhancing drugs, or where he/she may be held culpable for not taking adequate precautions to avoid ingesting such drugs, even accidentally, it is useful to describe such behaviour not as 'doping' but as 'behaviour involving the use of performance-enhancing drugs'. The central rationale for making this distinction is that situations in which people (or non-human animals) are 'doped' involve a very different pattern of social relationships from those in which athletes may be held responsible for their consumption of performance-enhancing drugs. In addition, the legal consequences are likely

to be very different, while the two situations are also likely to be morally evaluated quite differently.

(Dunning and Waddington, 2003: 365–66)

We have, throughout this book, sought to maintain the distinction recommended by Dunning and Waddington. For the most part, we have therefore referred to ‘drug use’ or the ‘use of drugs’ rather than to ‘doping’ in sport. However, where we have referred to the systematic use of drugs in state-sponsored systems such as those which existed in parts of Eastern Europe, we have used the term ‘doping’. We have, of course, also retained the term ‘doping’ where it is used in official titles, such as the World Anti-Doping Agency or the World Anti-Doping Conference, and where we have directly cited other authors who have used the term. Finally, we have also continued to use the term ‘doping’ in relation to a few areas where its use is well established in some aspects of official policy, such as ‘anti-doping policies’.

Third, it is appropriate to say something about the theoretical perspective which underlies this book. The general approach on which we have drawn is that of figurational or process sociology, which has grown out of the work of Norbert Elias (1897–1990). For the most part, this perspective has been used here implicitly in order to limit the more explicitly theoretical aspects of the book and thus make it as accessible as possible to those who have an interest in sport, but who do not have a grounding in sociological theory. The one exception to this is to be found in Chapter 10, where we have found it necessary to provide an outline of Elias’s game models, since we draw on these game models quite explicitly in order to try to understand the circumstances surrounding the establishment of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) in 1999.

With this one exception, however, we have not thought it necessary to describe in detail the central organizing concepts of figurational sociology, such as the concept of ‘figuration’ itself, or the closely related concepts of interdependency ties and power balances or power ratios. Similarly, we have not thought it necessary to describe how Elias’s concept of ‘figuration’ helps us to overcome some of the problems associated with traditional and unhelpful dichotomies in sociology, such as those between the ‘individual’ and ‘society’, or ‘social structure’ and ‘social change’. This has been done elsewhere (Murphy et al., 2000). Readers who wish to find out more about Elias’s general sociological work might usefully consult the excellent works by Mennell (1992) and van Krieken (1998), while those who wish to find out more about how figurational or process sociology and, in particular, Elias’s work on civilizing processes, has been applied to sport might look at any of the sport-related works by Elias and/or Dunning listed in the bibliography to this book. However, it may be helpful to say something about one key aspect of Elias’s work on which we have drawn explicitly and which provides a central integrating theme for the book as a whole. This key aspect relates to Elias’s writing on involvement and detachment.

Throughout this book, we have sought to offer a relatively detached analysis of modern sport. We deliberately use the term 'relatively detached' rather than 'objective' because, following Elias, we believe the concepts of involvement and detachment have several advantages over the more commonly used terms 'objectivity' and 'subjectivity'.

Elias suggested that one of the problems with concepts like 'objectivity' and 'subjectivity' is that they tend to suggest a static and unbridgeable divide between two entities – 'subject' and 'object' – and closely associated with this is the almost ubiquitous tendency, among those who use these terms, to describe research in all-or-nothing terms, that is to describe it as either totally 'objective' or, conversely, as completely lacking objectivity, i.e. as being 'subjective' in an absolute sense.

Clearly such a conceptualization is of little use, for – to stick with these terms for the moment – it is impossible to find an example of thinking which is absolutely 'objective', and it is extremely difficult to find examples, at least among sane adults, of thinking which is wholly 'subjective' in character. Equally, it is not possible in these terms adequately to describe the development of modern science, for this development was a long-term process, and there was not a single, historic, moment when 'objective' scientific knowledge suddenly emerged, fully formed, out of what had formerly been wholly 'subjective' forms of knowledge.

What is required, Elias argued, is a more adequate conceptualization of our ways of thinking about the world, and of the processes as a result of which our present, more scientific, ways of thinking about the world have developed. Elias's conceptualization of the problem in terms of degrees of involvement and detachment is, it might be argued, more adequate than conventional arguments for the following reasons:

- (i) it does not involve a radical dichotomy between categories such as 'objective' and 'subjective', as though these were mutually exclusive categories;
- (ii) this conceptualization is processual, i.e. it provides us with a framework with which we can examine the development, over time, of more scientific (or what Elias called more object-adequate or alternatively more reality-congruent) knowledge.

It is important to emphasize that Elias emphatically denies the possibility that the outlook of any sane adult can be either wholly detached or wholly involved. Normally, he notes, adult behaviour lies on a scale somewhere between these two extremes. Thus the concepts of involvement and detachment 'do not refer to two separate classes of objects ... what we observe are people and people's manifestations, such as patterns of speech or of thought ... some of which bear the stamp of higher, others of lesser detachment or involvement' (Elias, 1987: 4). Clearly, therefore, Elias is not suggesting that it is possible for us to obtain 'ultimate truth', or complete

detachment.¹ It is certainly not our claim to offer in this book anything remotely resembling 'ultimate truth' – whatever that might be – or complete detachment; what we do hope to offer is a relatively detached perspective which helps to advance, in some small way, our understanding of some key aspects of the relationships between sport and the use of performance-enhancing drugs.

But how can we differentiate between attitudes or knowledge which reflect a relatively high degree of involvement, and those which reflect a higher degree of detachment? Why should we, as sociologists, seek to achieve a higher degree of detachment in our work? And what are the processes which, over a long period of time, have gradually enabled people to think, first about the 'natural' world, and then, more recently, about the 'social' world, in more detached terms? These questions can be best explored *via* a consideration of Elias's essay, 'The fishermen in the maelstrom' (Elias, 1987: 43–118).

Elias begins his essay by retelling an episode from Edgar Allan Poe's famous story about the descent into the maelstrom. Those who are familiar with the story will recall that two brothers who were fishermen were caught in a storm and were slowly being drawn into a whirlpool. At first, both brothers – a third brother had already been lost overboard – were too terrified to think clearly and to observe accurately what was going on around them. Gradually, however, the younger brother began to control his fear. While the elder brother remained paralysed by his fear, the younger man collected himself and began to observe what was happening around him, almost as if he were not involved. It was then that he became aware of certain regularities in the movement of objects in the water which were being driven around in circles before sinking into the whirlpool. In short, while observing and reflecting, he began to build up an elementary 'theory' relating to the movement of objects in the whirlpool. He came to the conclusion that cylindrical objects sank more slowly than objects of any other shape, and that smaller objects sank more slowly than larger ones. On the basis of his observations and of his elementary 'theory', he took appropriate action. While his brother remained immobilized by fear, he lashed himself to a cask and, after vainly encouraging his brother to do the same, leapt overboard. The boat, with his brother in it, descended rapidly into the whirlpool. However, the younger brother survived, for the cask to which he had lashed himself sank much more slowly, and the storm eventually blew itself out before the cask was sucked down into the whirlpool.

The story of the fishermen points up very clearly a kind of circularity which is by no means uncommon in the development of human societies. Both brothers found themselves involved in processes – a storm and the associated whirlpool – which appeared wholly beyond their control. Not surprisingly, their emotional involvement in their situation paralysed their reactions, making it difficult for them to analyze what was happening to them, or to take effective action to maximize their chances of survival.

Perhaps for a time they may have clutched at imaginary straws, hoping for a miraculous intervention of some kind. After a while, however, one of the brothers began, to some degree, to calm down. As he did so, he began to think more coolly. By standing back, by controlling his fear, by seeing his situation, as it were, from a distance – in other words, by seeing himself and his situation in a rather more detached way – he was able to identify certain patterns within the whirlpool. Within the generally uncontrollable processes of the whirlpool, he was then able to use his new-found knowledge of these patterns in a way which gave him a sufficient degree of control to secure his own survival. In this situation, we can see very clearly that the level of emotional self-control, of detachment, and the development of more 'realistic' knowledge which enables us more effectively to control both 'natural' and 'social' processes, are all interdependent and complementary.

This same kind of circularity can also be seen in the reaction of the older brother, who perished in the whirlpool. High exposure to the dangers of a process tends to increase the emotivity of human responses. High emotivity of response lessens the chance of a realistic understanding of the critical process and, hence, of a realistic practice in relation to it. In turn, relatively unrealistic practice under the pressure of strong emotional involvement lessens the chance of bringing the critical process under control. In short, inability to control tends to go hand-in-hand with high emotivity of response, which minimizes the chance of controlling the dangers of the process, which keeps at a high level the emotivity of the response, and so forth.

Insofar, therefore, as we are able to control our emotional involvement with the processes we are studying, we are more likely to develop a more realistic or 'reality-congruent' analysis of those processes. Conversely, the more emotionally involved we are, the more likely it is that our strong emotional involvement will distort our understanding. It is this consideration which constitutes the primary rationale for Elias's argument that we should seek, when engaged in research, to maintain a relatively high degree of detachment.

But what, the reader may ask, has this to do with understanding drug use in sport? Participation in sport, whether playing or spectating, has the capacity to arouse high levels of emotion and excitement; indeed, as Elias and Dunning (1986) have pointed out, it is precisely this capacity of sport to generate relatively high levels of (often pleasurable) excitement which accounts, at least in part, for its widespread popularity. However, it is important to recognize that the relatively high level of emotion which surrounds many sporting issues often has the effect of hindering, rather than helping, the development of a more adequate understanding of modern sport, and of the relationships between sport and other aspects of the wider society. One obvious example concerns the use of performance-enhancing drugs in sport, which is the focus of this book; drug use in sport typically generates a great deal of emotion, and this in turn has often been associated

with a tendency to substitute moral opprobrium and condemnation for relatively detached analysis and understanding. However, the former – however emotionally satisfying – constitutes a poor basis for policy formation. The problems of involvement and detachment in relation to drug use in sport are examined in more detail in Chapter 1.

The search for a relatively detached understanding of the complex relationships between sport and drug use constitutes the central objective of this book. Our perspective, it should be noted, almost inevitably leads us to be critical of much of the existing literature and policy in this area, much of which bears the hallmark of ideology and moral indignation rather than scientific detachment. For example, we argue that, if we wish to understand why athletes use performance-enhancing drugs then we have to move away from the individualistic assumptions which have traditionally underpinned policy in this area and move towards a focus on understanding the network of relationships in which drug-using athletes are involved. More specifically, this means that we need to move away from a focus on the individual drug-using athlete – a perspective which has for many years been characteristic of most official thinking in this area – and focus instead on the complex figurations which athletes form with other athletes, coaches, team doctors, officials and others. In this context, the relationship between sports physicians and the development and use of performance-enhancing drugs is, it is argued, particularly problematic. Thus whilst part of the ideology surrounding sports medicine suggests that sports physicians are in the front line of the fight against drug use in sport, the reality, it is argued, is that sports medicine is actually one of the primary contexts within which performance-enhancing drugs have been developed and disseminated within the sporting community.

The book also offers a more general critical evaluation of existing anti-doping policy in sport. It is suggested that a relatively detached analysis of the effectiveness of existing policy would have to suggest that – to put it at its most charitable – existing policy has not worked very well. In this context, the question is raised as to whether it is appropriate to move away from those anti-doping policies – policies which have been based on a ‘law and order’ approach in which the emphasis has been placed on the detection and punishment of offenders – which have been pursued since the 1960s, and which have largely failed, and whether we need to look at alternative policies, particularly those which are being used in anti-drugs campaigns within the wider society. In this context one possibility, it is argued, are harm reduction policies, and it is suggested that sports administrators who have a genuine concern with the health of athletes should be prepared to examine such schemes with an open mind.

Given the critical perspective adopted throughout this book, it is probable that many people within the world of sport will find much with which to disagree. This may be no bad thing in terms of our understanding of the use of drugs in sport, for disagreement and debate are legitimate aspects of science, and one means by which science develops.

In conclusion, it should be stressed that our objective in this book is not to engage in easy expressions of moral indignation about drug use in sport but, rather, to enhance our understanding of that phenomenon. Our primary objective is therefore an academic one – to enhance our understanding of these issues – though it should be noted that a better understanding of the use of drugs in sport is a precondition for more effective policy formation and implementation, whatever our policy goals may be. In this sense, it may be argued that there is nothing as practical as good theory. It is hoped, therefore, that this book will have some value not merely in academic but also in policy formation terms.

1 Drug use in sport

Problems of involvement and detachment

In some respects, public attitudes towards drug use appear curiously ambivalent for, though most people would strongly deprecate both the use of performance-enhancing drugs in sport and 'drug abuse' within the wider society, it is almost certainly the case that, in modern Western societies, we have come to be more dependent on the use of prescribed drugs than at any previous time in history. As we shall see in Chapter 5, the increasingly widespread acceptance of drugs in everyday life provides an essential part of the backcloth for understanding the use of drugs in sport.

Some aspects of the ambivalence surrounding public attitudes towards drug use – and in particular towards drug use in sport – are occasionally brought into very sharp focus. In sport, the use of drugs to improve performance has not only been prohibited under the rules of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for some four decades – and also, since 2003, under the World Anti-Doping Code drawn up by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) – but it is also a practice which normally calls forth the strongest public condemnation, often coupled with a strong sense of moral outrage and with calls for severe punishments for those found guilty of a drug-taking offence. However, such public condemnation and the associated moral outrage can, on occasions, be strangely muted. A particularly clear illustration of this is provided by the case of the American baseball player Mark McGwire who, in September 1998, set a new record for the number of home runs scored in baseball in a single season. It is difficult to overemphasize the significance of McGwire's achievement within the context of sport in the United States. The home run record is arguably the most significant record in American sport and, as McGwire approached the record, news of his latest home run was frequently presented as the top story on TV newscasts across the United States. Writing in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (13 September 1998), Joan Ryan described how she watched on television as McGwire hit his record-setting home run while two children from next door played in her house. Ryan's evocation of the excited atmosphere of triumphal record-breaking and hero-worship is worth quoting at length: