

Running head: BASEBALL AND STEROIDS: WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL, HISTORY, AND EFFECTS

Baseball and Steroids: What's the Big Deal, History, and Effects

Joshua Ferro

Submission to the School of Liberal Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies

Purchase College

State University of New York

May, 2020

Abstract

A steroid is also classified as a performance-enhancing drug, which basically defines itself in the word. It enhances your performance when playing sports, making you bigger, faster, and stronger. Athletes around the world have been using performance-enhancing drugs for decades to gain that edge against their competitors. The athletes have even taken it to the point of using them during their season or competition, and have been caught doing so. So, the purpose of this informational paper is to understand what a steroid is on the chemistry aspect of it and why do the athletes feel it is necessary to take these drugs to boost performance. The main focus was on baseball players because they out of all sports have been caught using more performance-enhancing drugs than any other sport. I asked 15 baseball players on their views on steroids in the sport and if it was bad for the sport and the reputation of it. 12 of them said the steroids are what helps the baseball players get through a season and is good for the sport and reputation and 3 of them disagreed. The steroids in baseball are completely your decision to decide whether it is unjust of the athletes, or it helps them. Most of the players asked said it helped them get through the vigorous 162 game season.

Chapter 1 Introduction

Steroids have been part of baseball for a very short amount of time. Only a few studies have shown the effects of steroids in baseball, but performance-enhancing drugs have been in sports since Ancient Greece! Athletes will do anything to get an edge over somebody else especially in the competitive world of sports. In baseball, it is very common now for a player to be suspended for using Performance Enhancing Drugs (PED). Whether that is Human Growth Hormones (HGH), steroids of different kinds, certain stimulants such as cocaine and caffeine in high doses, or some sort of herbal supplement. In the game of baseball, players rely a lot on steroids to get them through the grueling 162 regular game season and it seems to have a positive effect on their game when they are on them. The study of steroids in baseball is very intriguing because we really see if they are affecting the sport positively or negatively. The goal of this literature review is to see how steroids have affected the game of baseball, what are steroids, who has taken them and have gotten caught with them in Major League Baseball (MLB), and the effects of the potent drug on your bill of health either positively or negatively.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

What is a Steroid?

Although many people know what a steroid is, they do not know the certain compounds and different types that athletes take in professional sports. Maravelias, Dona, Stefanidou, & Spiliopoulou (2005) explained what a steroid is and how it chemically affects an athlete. Anabolic-androgenic steroids (AAS) are used as ergogenic aids by athletes and non-athletes to enhance performance by augmenting muscular development and strength. High and multi-doses of AAS used for athletic enhancement can lead to serious and irreversible organ damage. Among the most common adverse effects of AAS are some degree of reduced fertility and gynecomastia in males and masculinization in women and children. (Maravelias, Dona, Stefanidou, & Spiliopoulou, 2005). There have been numerous studies to investigate the different types of anabolic steroids and they conclude that there are 30 altogether both orally and injectable (Staudohar, P. D. (2005). Both forms of the steroids have the same effect on the athlete such as increased muscle mass, increased strength, decreased recovery time (Maravelias, Dona, Stefanidou, & Spiliopoulou (2005). But, with all these positives, there are definitely negatives about anabolic steroids.

Anabolic steroids can cause a variety of side effects, such as heart enlargement and disease, liver tumors which may become cancerous, kidney failure, smaller testicles and infertility, muscle-tendon injuries, skin acne, hair loss, depression, and increased aggression known as roid rage(Staudohar, P. D. (2005). These side effects are present in women but previous studies have emphasized that anabolic steroids affect menstrual cycles, fertility, and breast atrophy. (Maravelias, Dona, Stefanidou, & Spiliopoulou, 2005). Anabolic may seem like a miracle drug for athletes, but they sure do have their side effects and they can be irreversible.

History of Steroids in Baseball

Cheating has always been a part of sports. Cheating is generally more common in baseball than in other sports. The phantom double play, doctored balls, corked bats, and stolen signs are ageless features of the game (Staudohar, P. D. 2005). Steroids have not always been a part of baseball and one man introduced the drugs to the sport, thus creating a very long and controversial scandal. This player was Jose Canseco and he changed the way people view baseball as a whole. Starting in the 1990s and up to today, baseball has seen a dark cloud covering the sport. Performance-enhancing drugs became a part of the game (Hodges, W. A. (2014). After the strike in 1994, baseball was a dead sport and none of the fans showed up to any games. Players were upset about a salary cap, fans were upset at the players for leaving the game they love, and MLB lost millions of dollars.

Players like Barry Bonds, Jose Canseco, Sammy Sosa, and Mark McGuire sparked up the love and passion people once had for baseball by breaking records and crushing home runs. Jose Canseco estimated that 80 percent of the players used steroids (Staudohar, P. D. 2005). He also wrote a book called *Juiced* in which he describes his experiences with his different teams and how long he used steroids. He also “snitched” on his fellow teammates using steroids and other players being speculated. He caused a lot of controversy in the player’s community and ultimately in baseball itself. Jose Canseco was then outcasted from professional baseball due to his unpopularity because of using performance-enhancing drugs. The fans of Major League Baseball felt he cheated the other players by mentioning their names in his book *Juiced*, but in the end, he was only telling the truth. Shortly after the book, an independent investigation was handed to the commissioner of baseball called *The Mitchell Report*, which was 409 pages long and named 89 active players using performance-enhancing drugs. Baseball players were not safe

Baseball And Steroids: What's The Big Deal, History, And Effects

and everybody was required to take a drug test and anybody that tested positive would be subjected to an in-game suspension for a certain amount of time.

Chapter 3 Methods

The procedure used to find my data was searching on different scholarly databases used at my school, Purchase College. The keywords that worked best for me were *performance-enhancing drugs, steroids, baseball players, athletes, Mitchell report, testosterone, Winstrol, Dianabol, peptide, Jose Canseco, and steroid era*. The words that gave me the best results were *performance-enhancing drugs, Jose Canseco, testosterone, and the Mitchell Report*. This study to me is very important because I am a baseball player myself and steroids and cheating have always lingered on people's minds for a very long time. Once a baseball player is doing well they immediately think it is steroids, or he is on something because he is doing so good. They tend to look past the hard work and countless hours in the batting cage or weight room trying to improve their game because of the steroid thought on their mind. I collected my results by asking questions to my fellow collegiate baseball players on their views relating to steroids in the game of baseball and it can give it a bad name and reputation, or if they think it helps the game gain publicity.

I do have a bias towards the topic because I am a collegiate baseball player myself, so I tend to think differently than the fan who just watches baseball. The citations I have mentioned are all in APA format and the research question is Baseball and Steroids: What's the big deal, history, and effects.

Chapter 4 Results

When approaching the athletes and asking them about their views on steroids in the game of baseball, they all were very intrigued in the conversation and some spoke with for about 20 minutes. They had a lot to say because everybody has certain views on this topic since they are all baseball players.

I asked the baseball these conversational questions, “ What are your views on steroids in baseball, do you think it is alright if the athletes use the performance-enhancing drugs when there are some who are all-natural, does it give baseball a bad reputation?” Out of the 15 baseball players, 12 of them said that almost all players in Major League Baseball are on some sort of performance-enhancing drug, so the players who you think are not taking any are probably taking them. Mostly all of them said we really do not know if it gives baseball either a good or bad name because there are many sports who have athletes who take them as well.

Three athletes were against steroids. They all said that they are wrong to do because it takes away the authenticity of the game by injecting yourself with an oil to make you a better player. They said that it is unfair for the athlete to achieve greatness in the game, only to be downsized by an athlete who is better than them due to the drug. They also do not like how the game of baseball has changed from a witty game to a homerun derby. The athletes have turned into wrestlers and they see no type of athletic build on them. They also said that the athletes are risking their lives taking the drugs and not knowing the long-term effects, something that the pro steroid group did not even mention. Something that as in common with them all is the knowledge they had of the subject. They were very well knowledgeable of the topic and had very good views and facts stated as well.

Chapter 5 Discussion

Based on the discussion I had with the players on the steroids, I can tell they were very aware that the topic is hot right now. It is being spoken about within the baseball community and you can tell that people are either ticked off about it or love it. Personally, I do not love it or bring it down. The baseball players are in control of their bodies. They have to know what is good and what is not. If they cannot make this distinguish, they should not be a professional athlete. Almost anything can injure us, and that is how you have to think as an athlete. Performance Enhancing Drugs do have many side effects, and the athletes should be very aware of this.

I believe that to do things few people can do, you need to take some risks and hope they turn out for the better. Nobody really knows the long-term effects on steroids because a longitudinal research study was never conducted. We do know it can put on as much as 50 pounds of muscle based on your needs, diet, and workout regime, but baseball players do not need to put on 50 pounds of muscle. They need to be fast-twitch athletes and be very flexible in order to steal bases, track down a fly ball, and hit a 400-foot home run.

Now, some baseball players are bigger than others, but we cannot automatically think that they got like that because of steroids. We need to look past that and look at their work ethic and their passion for the sport of baseball. I do not hold any personal grudge with any player who is on steroids, because they are trying to get to the next level and they feel the drug will help them. I also support the athlete who wants to be all-natural and feels there is no necessity to take any type of drug to make it to the top. It all depends on the person and what their personal goals are.

References

Hodges, W. A. (2014). Performance Enhancing Drugs in America's Pastime (dissertation).

Maravelias, C., Dona, A., Stefanidou, M., & Spiliopoulou, C. (2005). Adverse effects of anabolic steroids in athletes. *Toxicology Letters*, 158(3), 167–175. doi: 10.1016/j.toxlet.2005.06.005

Staudohar, P. D. (2005). PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING DRUGS IN BASEBALL. *Labor Law Journal*, 56(2), 139-149. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.purchase.edu:2048/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/195058471?accountid=14171>