

AFFFRMATIVE CASE

Drug Testing

BY Jim Ryan

"The importance of deterring drug use by all this nation's children cannot be doubted."

Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia

Nobody wants children to use illegal drugs. However, children, young athletes in particular, are sent mixed messages where commercials tell them to just say no while their favorite athlete may have a number of drug convictions as points. As sports become more and more competitive, the children are under far greater pressure to perform. Frequently, athletes feel the need to use drugs such as steroids to remain competitive or use drugs to escape the pressure placed upon them. These are some of the dangers of these unlawful substances and so I stand Resolved: That random testing of student athletes for illegal drug use is justified.

To further clarify the resolution, I present these definitions taken from Webster's dictionary:

random- lacking a definite plan, purpose or pattern

testing- a critical examination, observation or evaluation

student athlete- one who attends a school and is trained in exercises, sports, or games

requiring physical strength, agility, or stamina

illegal- not authorized by law

drug-something that causes addiction or habituation

The value I will assume in this round is safety. Drugs are unsafe and unlawful.

Safety is a necessary condition for achieving all other objectives.

The most appropriate criteria with which to judge this issue is **cost benefit analysis**.

In this objective method, I weigh the issue's cost to its benefit. Cost benefit analysis helps us measure the relationship between safety and privacy objectively without having to refer to conflicting moral codes.

In supporting my position for the common concern of safety, I offer these three contentions: **drugs threaten the safety of athletes; the cost of random testing is minimal; and random drug testing of student athletes benefits everyone.**

My first contention is, **drugs threaten the safety of athletes;** they do so in three ways: drugs threaten the health of the individual abuser, they threaten the safety of those that come into contact with the athletes, and, as role models, drug-abusing athletes threaten the safety of those that look up to them. In order to protect the safety of the individual, random drug testing is a necessity. Clearly, drug-abuse directly compromises the health of the user, for the physical, mental, and emotional repercussions of drug-abuse are devastating. Steroids, primarily used to enhance physical performance, also are related to heart disease, stroke, liver damage, and lowered sperm counts. In addition, other athletes that come into contact with the addicts are in danger of being physically harmed. Steroids have been known to cause violent behavior, and amplify any emotional expression. As sports are dominantly physical, students making athletic contact with a steroid-user are jeopardizing their physical safety. Finally, athletes are perhaps the most revered of all high-school students; they are, so to speak, the "movie stars" of high school. Athletes, therefore, have a significant influence on many of their peers. It is then logical to assume that the spread of drugs owes much of its success to its presence on the athletic "scene." If we randomly test athletes for illegal drugs, then the popularity of these drugs for all groups would be radically reduced.

My second contention is **the cost of random drug testing is minimal.** In this there are two points: the privacy issue and the monetary issue. First I will address the privacy issue: the cost of privacy is minimal because athletes already give up a large amount of privacy. Athletes change and shower together. They are also required to have physical examinations as well as vaccinations. Supreme Court Justice Scalia said, "Legitimate privacy expectations are even less with student athletes. They require "suing up" before each practice and event, and showering and changing afterwards." Additionally, athletes already have different expectations on them in terms of grades and in their status as role models. Since athletes already voluntarily

give up a huge amount of privacy anyway, it makes a simple drug test seem relatively unimportant. My second point is the monetary cost of the drug test is also minimal in the long run. The Dublin Ohio Board of Education recently approved the following drug testing policy: parents of the athletes will pay \$26 for the initial test. The district budgeted \$30,000 to pay for a random weekly test, every week, for up to 10 percent of the schools 1,900 athletes. \$30,000 appears to be a dramatically smaller sum when compared to the lifelong cost of drug dependency. Even if only one athlete is deterred from using drugs, we have gotten our money back

My 3rd contention is random drug tests benefit everyone.

Random drug testing benefits 4 major groups: the athlete using the drug, the innocent students in the school, the school and its reputation, and finally society in general. The student that is abusing drugs and is tested positive would be effected most of all. The athlete's safety should take priority over his privacy. However, the athlete also brings potential danger to other athletes even though they may not use drugs, which brings me to my second group of people who benefit: the innocent students. Judge Scalia stated the importance of athletes when he said, "...in small-town America, school sports play a prominent role in the town's life, and student athletes are admired in their schools and in the community." An athlete under the influence while participating in sports can be harmful to himself and to the others around him. The students off the playing field will also be protected from the athlete once they learn the star they once looked up to has a harmful addiction. The third group of people that benefit is the school and its reputation. Athletes serve as ambassadors from their schools, representing them across the country. Schools are represented by a specific group of athletic students and therefore, these students must adhere to certain values to keep the school and its reputation safe. Finally, the fourth group is general society. People will take pride in their community's schools and children as schools and society work hand-in-hand to eliminate drug abuse in our school systems.

In conclusion, I have given you three specific reasons for affirming the resolution. They are that drugs threaten the safety of the students and the athletes, that the cost of random drug testing is minimal, and random drug testing benefits everyone.

"Performance-enhancing drugs have penetrated college, high school and junior high/middle school athletics," explains Dr. Andrew Ferko, associate professor of Pharmacology, Allegheny University of the Health Sciences. Philadelphia. "What can be perceived as a way to excel in sports or every day life can easily ruin that life," Dr. Ferko says "When the ultimate goal of the drug-taking athlete is to win at any cost, those costs may be greater than the athlete realizes. He or she may literally be dying to win." That's why an affirmative ballot is the only morally correct choice.