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## **Tougher steroid fines for U.S. sport**

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**30 September, 2005**

## **THE ARTICLE**

### **Tougher steroid fines for U.S. sport**

**BNE:** A battle has started in the American Congress between the players' unions of major U.S. sports and lawmakers. The issue is the use of steroids and drug abuse among athletes. The biggest problem is baseball and its lack of tough penalties for the use of performance-enhancing drugs. Baseball legend Hank Aaron, Major League Baseball commissioner Bud Selig and Republican Senator John McCain all want baseball to clean up its act. Their request is for tougher penalties for players who illegally use drugs to boost their power and get a competitive edge over their rivals.

At the center of the debate is the baseball player's union chief Donald Fehr. He does not want to change the present 10-day ban for baseball players caught using steroids. This "fine" would not be seen as a real penalty in most other sports and makes baseball look ridiculous. Several high profile baseball players have recently proved positive in drug tests. However, they will continue their careers and accept the glory and big money. Their ten-day penalty is like a rest break. Lawmakers are worried this will send a message to children that cheating is OK.

## WARM-UPS

**1. SPORTS STAR:** You are a famous sports player. Write down which sport you play and how famous you are. Write down three great things you have done to be so famous. Talk to the other “sports stars” in the class about sports and glory. Talk also about steroids in sport.

**2. CHEATING:** In pairs / groups, discuss how serious these examples of cheating are. Would you ever do these or have you ever done any of them?

- Use steroids
- Use hidden notes in an exam
- Look at a classmate’s paper in a test
- Lie on a resume (CV)
- Do something bad to win a game
- Shout “out” when the ball was in
- Claim “extra” money from an employer
- Download music illegally

**3. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

*Battles / American Congress / American sports / steroids in sport / penalties / bans / drug tests / careers / glory / cheating*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

**4. STEROIDS:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with steroids. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**5. PERFORM BETTER:** Is it OK to use performance-enhancing drugs in the cases below? Discuss each case with your partner(s).

- a. A baseball player who wants to break the home run record.
- b. A baseball player who simply wants to make the first team.
- c. A 100-meter runner who wants to break the world record.
- d. A 100-meter runner who wants to better his/her own personal best.
- e. A bodybuilder who wants bigger muscles.
- f. A swimmer who needs steroids to be able to swim around the world.
- g. A 50-kg guy who needs an extra few kilos to become a sumo wrestler.
- h. An English student who wants to learn 250 new words every day.

**6. WHY CHEAT?** In pairs / groups, brainstorm a list of reasons why people cheat. Discuss these reasons. Change partners and share your reasons and ideas.

## BEFORE READING / LISTENING

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a. There is a problem in U.S. sport about the use of steroids.           | T / F |
| b. Baseball has very strict rules on the use of steroids.                | T / F |
| c. The baseball commissioner said nobody uses steroids in baseball.      | T / F |
| d. Players can use steroids legally to boost their power.                | T / F |
| e. The penalty for steroid abuse in baseball is a one-year ban.          | T / F |
| f. Penalties for using steroids in baseball are ridiculous.              | T / F |
| g. No baseball player has proved positive in a drug test for ten years.  | T / F |
| h. Lawmakers fear stars on steroids will make kids think cheating is OK. | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |               |             |
|---------------|-------------|
| a. battle     | stricter    |
| b. enhancing  | fight       |
| c. tougher    | competitors |
| d. edge       | tested      |
| e. rivals     | current     |
| f. debate     | improving   |
| g. present    | fame        |
| h. ridiculous | discussion  |
| i. proved     | advantage   |
| j. glory      | stupid      |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |                                 |                        |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| a. players' unions of major     | abuse among athletes   |
| b. the use of steroids and drug | ridiculous             |
| c. the use of performance       | of the debate          |
| d. clean up                     | enhancing drugs        |
| e. get a competitive edge       | that cheating is OK    |
| f. At the center                | over their rivals      |
| g. makes baseball look          | U.S. sports            |
| h. players have recently proved | big money              |
| i. accept the glory and         | its act                |
| j. send a message to children   | positive in drug tests |

## WHILE READING / LISTENING

**SYNONYM FILL:** Place the number of the synonym group in the correct gap (It is not important to guess a correct word - any of the synonyms from each group could be put into the correct gap).

### Tougher steroid fines for U.S. sport

**BNE:** A \_\_\_\_ has started in the American Congress between the players' unions of major U.S. sports and lawmakers. The issue is the use of steroids and drug abuse among athletes. The biggest problem is baseball and its lack of \_\_\_\_ penalties for the use of performance-enhancing drugs. Baseball legend Hank Aaron, Major League Baseball commissioner Bud Selig and Republican Senator John McCain all want baseball to clean up its \_\_\_\_\_. Their request is for tougher penalties for players who illegally use drugs to boost their power and get a competitive edge over their \_\_\_\_\_.

At the center of the debate is the baseball player's union \_\_\_\_\_ Donald Fehr. He does not want to change the \_\_\_\_\_ 10-day ban for baseball players caught using steroids. This "fine" would not be seen as a real penalty in most other sports and makes baseball look \_\_\_\_\_. Several high profile baseball players have recently proved positive in drug tests. However, they will continue their careers and accept the \_\_\_\_\_ and big money. Their ten-day penalty is like a rest break. Lawmakers are worried this will send a message to children that cheating is OK.

1

tough  
strict  
strong  
firm

2

present  
existing  
current  
present-day

3

rivals  
competitors  
opponents  
challengers

4

glory  
fame  
honor  
kudos

5

act  
business  
affairs  
activities

6

chief  
boss  
head  
leader

7

ridiculous  
stupid  
silly  
absurd

8

battle  
fight  
argument  
struggle

## **AFTER READING / LISTENING**

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words **'tough'** and **'penalty'**.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. SYNONYM FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the synonym fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. STUDENT "CHEATING" SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about cheating and the use of steroids in sports.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

**6. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- |          |              |
|----------|--------------|
| • battle | • chief      |
| • abuse  | • present    |
| • tough  | • ridiculous |
| • legend | • positive   |
| • act    | • glory      |
| • edge   | • children   |

## **DISCUSSION**

### STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What did you think when you read this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. What do you know about steroids?
- d. What do you think about the use of steroids in sport?
- e. Do you think players who use steroids are cheats?
- f. Do you think baseball officials would like players to use steroids to make the game more exciting?
- g. Have you ever cheated?
- h. Do you think a baseball player who uses steroids should get a million-dollar salary?
- i. Would you cheat to get a million-dollar salary?
- j. Do you think there are any sports in which players do not use performance-enhancing drugs?

### STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Are you surprised about anything you read in the article?
- d. Do you think world records achieved by players on steroids are worthless records?
- e. Why do you think baseball authorities don't take a tougher approach towards steroids?
- f. What do you think of baseball?
- g. What kind of example should sports stars set children?
- h. Should athletes caught using steroids be banned for life?
- i. In what other areas of society should cheats be banned for life (or put in prison)?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

**AFTER DISCUSSION:** Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

## SPEAKING

**BETTER BASEBALL:** In pairs / groups, discuss how you can make baseball more exciting. How can players break more home run records and take part in higher-scoring games? Discuss the ideas in the left hand column. Write down arguments for and against these ideas and your final decisions in the three other columns.

IDEAS	FOR	AGAINST	FINAL DECISION
All baseball players use steroids.			
Make the baseball pitch smaller.			
Increase the number of strikes to four.			
Change baseball bats so hitters can hit the ball farther.			
Give a bonus point for every three home runs scored in a game.			
Ban for life anyone who uses performance-enhancing drugs.			
Set a salary cap of \$1,000,000 a year on all players.			

Change partners and tell each other the good ideas you heard.



## **LISTENING**

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### **Tougher steroid fines for U.S. sport**

**BNE:** A \_\_\_\_\_ has started in the American Congress between the players' unions of major U.S. sports and lawmakers. The issue is the use of steroids and drug \_\_\_\_\_ among athletes. The biggest problem is baseball and its lack of tough penalties for the use of performance-\_\_\_\_\_ drugs. Baseball legend Hank Aaron, Major League Baseball commissioner Bud Selig and Republican Senator John McCain all want baseball to clean \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_. Their request is for tougher penalties for players who illegally use drugs to \_\_\_\_\_ their power and get a competitive edge over their \_\_\_\_\_.

At the center of the debate is the baseball player's union \_\_\_\_\_ Donald Fehr. He does not want to change the present 10-day ban for baseball players \_\_\_\_\_ using steroids. This "fine" would not be \_\_\_\_\_ as a real penalty in most other sports and makes baseball look \_\_\_\_\_. Several high profile baseball players have recently proved positive in drug tests. However, they will continue their careers and accept the \_\_\_\_\_ and big money. Their ten-day penalty is like a rest break. Lawmakers are worried this will send a message to children that \_\_\_\_\_ is OK.

## **HOMEWORK**

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find more information on steroids in sport. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

**3. SPORT FOR KIDS:** Make a poster showing how your favorite sport is great for kids. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

**4. LETTER:** Write a letter to baseball's commissioner Bud Selig. Tell him what you think he should do for baseball to clean up its act. Read your letter to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T      b. F      c. F      d. F      e. F      f. T      g. F      h. T

### SYNONYM MATCH:

- |               |             |
|---------------|-------------|
| a. battle     | fight       |
| b. enhancing  | improving   |
| c. tougher    | stricter    |
| d. edge       | advantage   |
| e. rivals     | competitors |
| f. debate     | discussion  |
| g. present    | current     |
| h. ridiculous | stupid      |
| i. proved     | tested      |
| j. glory      | fame        |

### PHRASE MATCH:

- |                                 |                        |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| a. players' unions of major     | U.S. sports            |
| b. the use of steroids and drug | abuse among athletes   |
| c. the use of performance       | enhancing drugs        |
| d. clean up                     | its act                |
| e. get a competitive edge       | over their rivals      |
| f. At the center                | of the debate          |
| g. makes baseball look          | ridiculous             |
| h. players have recently proved | positive in drug tests |
| i. accept the glory and         | big money              |
| j. send a message to children   | that cheating is OK    |

### SYNONYM FILL:

#### Tougher steroid fines for U.S. sport

**BNE:** A ---8--- has started in the American Congress between the players' unions of major U.S. sports and lawmakers. The issue is the use of steroids and drug abuse among athletes. The biggest problem is baseball and its lack of ---1--- penalties for the use of performance-enhancing drugs. Baseball legend Hank Aaron, Major League Baseball commissioner Bud Selig and Republican Senator John McCain all want baseball to clean up its ---5---. Their request is for tougher penalties for players who illegally use drugs to boost their power and get a competitive edge over their ---3---.

At the center of the debate is the baseball player's union ---6--- Donald Fehr. He does not want to change the ---2--- 10-day ban for baseball players caught using steroids. This "fine" would not be seen as a real penalty in most other sports and makes baseball look ---7---. Several high profile baseball players have recently proved positive in drug tests. However, they will continue their careers and accept the ---4--- and big money. Their ten-day penalty is like a rest break. Lawmakers are worried this will send a message to children that cheating is OK.