

Barron Blackford

Mrs. Tasha Bowlin

ENG 100 Writing I

15 Mar. 2013

The Unfair Advantage

Baseball is America's pastime; it is one of the most respected games in the world. Literally millions of kids start playing baseball at a young age. All to reach their dreams of becoming a professional baseball player, but some professional baseball players find ways to improve their abilities illegally. Steroids have shamed the game of baseball and it is the most negative thing to happen to baseball. Steroids can cause serious injuries, they are illegal to use, and they can cause better stats but the stats are considered tainted.

It is a proven fact that steroids can improve your performance, but there are reasons they are banned substances. They can cause serious life threatening injuries, some of these include: strokes, heart attacks, kidney disease, cancer, and septic shock (Muscle & Strength pg. 1). They can also lead to infertility in men and shrinking of the reproductive organs (Muscle & Strength pg 1). This does not even cover dirty needle use; most athletes who take steroids inject the steroids into their bodies using needles. Sharing needles with people, especially individuals with a disease that travels via blood, increases the possibility of having that illness. These kind of diseases include: all strains of hepatitis, HIV, and other rare blood diseases. Not only do steroids affect the inside of your body, but they also affect the outside. In young adults it stops growth; these teens on steroids will not reach their full height. Humans produce natural testosterone in our body, however, steroids increase our hormone levels. This causes excessive amounts of

testosterone, resulting in the muscle cells to rapidly reproduce (Muscle & Strength para. 3).

Despite this sudden unnatural growth, after taking this drug the structure of the human bones begins to break down (Men's Health pt. 3).

There have been literally hundreds of professional baseball players in the past 15 years to come out and admit to using steroids, some of these players are future hall of famers, former all stars, and were on teams that won the World Series. These drugs are proven to improve your results both in the weight room and on the field. The definition of cheating is: acting disorderly to gain an unfair advantage. Since using steroids is giving these athletes an upper hand it is cheating. "The use of performance enhancers is cheating because it violates constitutive rules of the activity. Since such use is cheating, it is wrong and we should expect the disqualification of competitors who are caught doping" (Fairchild pa 1). The only way to stop players from using these drugs is to implement a death penalty. Which means that if a professional baseball player tests positive for a banned substance, his stats should be marked as tainted and he will no longer be allowed to compete in the MLB. It's a harsh penalty but all of the penalties in place right now aren't working. The current penalties are: one failed test equals a 50 game suspension; two failed test is a 100 game suspension; then after that the 3rd failed test is a lifetime ban from the game (Baseball-Almanac). I believe that two failed tests is too many. Players are randomly selected and there are ways to get around failing a test. So a player might fail a test in 5 years. That's a lot of playing time and over 5 years MLB players can attain a lot of success, but if players fail once and receive the death penalty, they don't have time to accumulate tainted stats. This will prevent them from winning games, setting records, and getting positive publicity from such a negative harmful substance.

When you take steroids you experience unnatural growth both in muscle size and weight. Melky Cabrera, for the first six years of his career didn't hit above .250 once, but in 2011 and 2012 he posted averages over .300. In each of the last two years, one year he batted .350 and won the NL MVP. Everyone wondered where these numbers came from, then the news came out that he had taken illegal performance enhancers which made his reaction time a lot better, a better reaction time means easier hits, easier hits means awards, awards mean pay checks. He went from making 1 million dollars a year to making over 14 million dollars a year; it's that old saying, " money is the motivation." Barry Bonds, the home run king, his dad had a great career and his son Barry inherited his all-star ability.... and more. When Barry hit his first home run in 1986 he was 185 lbs. by 1997 he was 220 lbs. and a home run hitting machine, but not only his weight changed, he also experienced massive gains in muscle. Today he is known as the tainted home run king, so here's the question: why would a natural all-star take these drugs to become that much better? People said that without the steroids he still would have hit 600 home runs. Which is one of the hardest feats to do in sports only 5 other people have done it. But he ended with with 755 home runs, new record. The greatest record in baseball is now tainted. It is proven that he used steroids and HGH. The difference is he was naturally an all star. The question is why would a player in his prime take the drug when they are already one of the best in the world? He had it all in a foolish attempt to be the best that ever lived, something he could have done naturally.

"The players and owners disagree on most things, but when it comes to making money, they're on the same page" (Canseco). This is a quote from Jose Canseco another former slugger who has admitted to using steroids. His quote says it all making money and winning is the goal.

If a player has to use an unfair advantage to get it management is usually going to turn the other way. Even if it is hurting the athlete and the game itself. As long as people are getting paid it doesn't matter. "The national past-time is juiced" (Canseco). Canseco has appeared before congress multiple times to talk about steroids and the people who use them, he has written books about himself and the players. He has informed a lot of people about steroids and the players he has seen taking the drug. He is another former all-star who has taken steroids, and now he writes books about the other people who have taken steroids. He has lost many friends because of this.

Now it's time to talk about the players who don't cheat, the all natural players and what they think about steroids. Back in 2007, a future hall of famers career was beginning to wind down. He wasn't the biggest or strongest, he just got the job done. He said that " when he faces a pitcher who has used steroids and I don't get hits against him that's money taken from my family"(Biggio). This is Craig Biggio, the only record he holds is getting hit by the pitcher more than anyone else in the history of the game. A 7-time all-star multiple defensive awards and 5 MVP awards, he did all of this at 5'11 185 pounds. He is who I look up to, he represents everything good about baseball, hard working, tough, resilient, reliable. He was a player who was built to last; his last game was when he was 41 years old, a fantastic career. Another all-star who hasn't taken steroids is Jeff Kent, this is what he had to say about steroids: "Do I feel cheated?... All the non-users feel cheated. I think in a silent way, a lot of people who hadn't cheated over the years are happy with the way the media exposed the problem, and they're happy we're making progress toward evening the playing field" (Kent). He isn't a hall of famer but he's the kind of player who shows up everyday, puts the time in to be as good as he can be, and makes a solid living for him and his family.

Baseball is America's pastime; it is one of the most respected games in the world. Literally millions of kids start playing baseball at a young age. All to reach their dream of becoming a professional baseball player, but some professional baseball players find ways to improve their abilities illegally. Steroids can cause serious injuries, they are illegal to use, and they can cause better stats but the stats are considered tainted. This has been a huge issue in baseball because it is the hardest sport to play consistently; think about it, they give you a round bat, they throw you a round ball, and they tell you to hit it square. America's pastime is tainted but it doesn't have to be in the future if we can stop it now.

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