



NJSIAA STEROID TESTING POLICY

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

On June 7, 2006, New Jersey became the first state in the nation to require steroid testing for high school athletes. The testing policy was developed by the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA), a private, nonprofit association of public, parochial and private high schools that organizes high school sports in New Jersey. These frequently asked questions address common questions and concerns about the policy.

1. How did the NJSIAA's steroid testing policy come about?

In 2005, then-Governor Richard Codey convened a Governor's Task Force on Steroid Use and Prevention. The task force was chaired by Monsignor Michael E. Kelly, Headmaster of Seton Hall Preparatory School, and included physicians, attorneys, school administrators, coaches, and athletic trainers. The task force reported the following: "According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, 3.4% of high school seniors have used anabolic steroids at least once, and 1.9% of eighth graders admitted to trying steroids. Numerous studies have shown the use of steroids and steroid precursors to be on the upswing. Unfortunately, the compulsions to achieve a desirable body image, to succeed in athletics, or to obtain a college scholarship are strong motivators and influences. These influences cause some young people to risk their long-term health by using performance-enhancing substances as a short cut to meet their goals." (Task Force Report, page 26.) Based on the task force's recommendations, on December 20, 2005, Governor Codey signed Executive Order 72, which directed the New Jersey Department of Education to work in conjunction with the NJSIAA to develop and implement a program of random testing for steroids.

2. Why test for steroids?

First, using steroids without a prescription can cause serious, adverse health effects. **Second**, using steroids and other performance-enhancing drugs can give athletes an unfair advantage over their competition, and is cheating. **Third**, testing for steroids can help deter their use among high school students. **Finally**, steroids are drugs that should be used to treat medical conditions. Possession or use of most steroids without a prescription is illegal. The NJSIAA recognizes that it will take a community-wide effort by parents, coaches, athletes, teachers and physicians to attack this growing challenge. Random steroid testing is one tool that can be used to help discourage athletes from taking steroids.

3. What are some of the specific health problems associated with steroid abuse?

The Governor's Task Force found that steroid abuse can result in a host of serious health problems. The following is a partial list of health problems associated with steroid abuse: severe acne, excessive hairiness in both sexes, male pattern baldness, deepening of the voice, abnormal permanent enlargement of the clitoris, loss of female body contour, altered menstrual cycling, increased libido in women, testicular atrophy, elevated blood pressure and other adverse cardio-vascular effects, thickening of the blood, liver disease, increased aggressiveness, obstructive sleep apnea, enlarged breasts in men and women, impotence, blood clots, diabetes, elevated fats in the blood, premature closure of the growth plates resulting in reduction of height, migraine headaches, premature puberty and infertility.

4. How did the NJSIAA develop its steroid testing policy?

In early 2006, the NJSIAA staff worked with a specially appointed "Steroid Committee" and with its Medical Advisory Committee to develop a list of banned substances and a policy for testing student-athletes. The policy was formally adopted by the NJSIAA Executive Committee on June 7, 2006.

5. What does the steroid testing policy say?

The NJSIAA steroid testing policy states, "It shall be considered a violation of the NJSIAA sportsmanship rule for any student-athlete to possess, ingest or otherwise use any substance on the list of banned substances, without written prescription by a fully licensed physician as recognized by the American Medical Association, to treat a medical condition." **In short, use of performance-enhancing drugs by student-athletes in New Jersey is considered to be cheating and will be penalized.**

6. What is the penalty for violating the steroid testing policy?

Any student-athlete who tests positive in an NJSIAA-administered test, refuses to provide a testing sample, or reports his or her own violation, will immediately forfeit his or her eligibility to participate in NJSIAA competition for a period of one year from the date of the test. Any such student-athlete will also forfeit any individual honor earned while in violation. No student-athlete who tests positive, refuses to provide a test sample, or who reports his or her own violation will resume eligibility until he or she has undergone counseling and produced a negative test result.

7. What is the consent form?

Before participating in interscholastic sports, all student-athletes and their parents or guardians must consent, in writing, to the random testing. Failure to sign the consent form renders the student-athlete ineligible to participate in interscholastic sports until the form is signed.

8. Who will be tested?

Under the policy, any student-athlete who qualifies for a state championship tournament can be tested. This means that if a team qualifies for a state tournament, any student-athlete on the team can be tested, or if a student-athlete qualifies for a state championship in an individual sport like track and field or wrestling, that individual can be tested.

9. When will the testing take place?

Testing began with the Fall 2006 sports season. Student-athletes may be tested before, during or after any phase of state championship competition.

10. How many tests will be done?

The NJSIAA will test 500 student-athletes during the 2007-2008 school year.

11. What sports will be tested?

Sixty percent of the tests will be from football, wrestling, track and field, swimming, lacrosse and baseball. The remaining 40% of the tests will be from any of the other NJSIAA sports.

12. Who will administer the testing program?

The NJSIAA has contracted with Drug Free Sport International to administer the testing program. Drug Free Sport International is the official administrator of drug-testing programs for organizations like the NCAA, NFL, Minor League Baseball and many others.

13. What laboratory will test the samples?

The NJSIAA will utilize the UCLA Olympic Analytical Laboratory to test samples from high school student-athletes in New Jersey. The UCLA laboratory is accredited by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).

14. What type of test will be used?

The test will analyze a urine sample. The NJSIAA policy does not allow for blood tests.

15. How will athletes be selected for testing?

Selection of the individuals to be tested will be done by Drug-Free Sport International, using computer-generated random numbers.

16. What drugs will the NJSIAA test for?

The NJSIAA has adopted a list that includes performance enhancing substances, patterned after the NCAA's banned substance list and contains the same types of substances that are banned by the International Olympic Committee and WADA. **Using any substance belonging to a banned class violates the rules of sportsmanship, can be detrimental to the student's health, and is considered cheating.**

17. Why is caffeine on the list of banned substances?

Caffeine is a stimulant and is currently banned by the NCAA. The amount of caffeine needed to result in a positive drug test is the equivalent of drinking approximately 12 cups of coffee over a two-hour period.

18. Are nutritional and dietary supplements on the list of banned substances?

No, they are not on the list of banned substances; however, all student-athletes must be aware that many nutritional and dietary supplements contain NJSIAA banned substances. In addition, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration does not strictly regulate the supplement industry, and therefore purity and safety of nutritional dietary supplements cannot be guaranteed. Impure supplements may lead to a positive NJSIAA test. **The use of supplements is at the student-athlete's own risk.** Student-athletes should contact their physician or athletic trainer for further information.

19. How can I find more information about dietary supplements and banned substances?

The NJSIAA has contracted with Drug Free Sport International to offer a subscription service called the AXIS to principals and athletic directors of NJSIAA member schools. AXIS provides accurate and confidential information about dietary supplements and banned substances.

20. What assurances are there that the results of the steroid test will be accurate?

The NJSIAA has hired experienced professionals to collect the samples and will utilize the top laboratory in the country to perform the tests. In addition, every urine sample will be split into sample A and sample B. If sample A is positive, the student-athlete and the student-athlete's parents or guardian will be notified. They then have the right to have sample B tested. No result is considered positive unless both samples A and B are positive.

21. What if a student-athlete has a health condition that requires him or her to take a drug that appears on the list of banned substances?

If a test result is positive for a banned substance, the testing company will notify the NJSIAA's Medical Review Officer, who is a medical doctor with experience in the field. The Medical Review Officer will contact the student-athlete and their family, and, if necessary, review the student-athlete's medical records to determine whether there is any medical reason for the positive result. If the Medical Review Officer determines that there is a medical reason for the positive result, no further action will be taken and the NJSIAA will not consider the test to be a positive result.

22. Will the results of the tests be confidential?

Yes. Results of all tests will be considered confidential and will only be disclosed to the student-athlete, his or her parents, and his or her school.

23. Can a positive result be challenged?

Yes. If the laboratory reports that the student-athlete's sample has tested positive, and the Medical Review Officer confirms that there is no medical reason for a positive result, the student-athlete can still challenge the result by proving that he or she bears no fault or negligence for the violation. Appeals will be heard by an NJSIAA committee consisting of two members of the Executive Committee, the Executive Director or his designee, an athletic trainer and a physician. Further appeal of the committee's decision would be to the Commissioner of Education (for public school athletes) or to the Superior Court (for non-public school athletes).

24. What happens if a student-athlete tests positive under a school's testing program?

Many schools have their own drug testing programs. Some of those schools test for steroids and other performance-enhancing drugs. NJSIAA violations found as a result of a school test will be penalized in accordance with the school's policy and will not be reported to the NJSIAA.

25. Will a team be penalized if an individual tests positive for a performance-enhancing substance?

No, a team will not be penalized if an individual tests positive. The NJSIAA has decided that only the individual user will forfeit his or her eligibility.

26. The penalty for violating the steroid testing policy is for the student-athlete "to immediately forfeit his or her eligibility to participate in NJSIAA competition for a period of one year from the date of the test." What does this mean?

A student-athlete who violates the steroid testing policy will be ineligible to participate in interscholastic competition for one year. That means the student cannot participate in competitions against other schools. The student may otherwise participate in sports, including practices and scrimmages, at the school's discretion. The period of ineligibility is one year from the date the urine sample is taken.