

FROM THE OFFICE OF  
CONGRESSMAN HARLEY O. STAGGERS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASHINGTON, D. C. -- Hon. Harley O. Staggers (D., W.Va.), Chairman of the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce and of its Investigations Subcommittee, today announced that the Investigations Subcommittee staff has completed an in-depth study into the use of illegal and dangerous drugs in sports at all levels of competition. The investigation has disclosed that such drug use exists, in varying degrees, in all sports and levels of competition with few exceptions. In some instances, the degree of improper drug use -- primarily amphetamines and anabolic steroids -- can only be described as alarming.

In determining the best course of further action by the Subcommittee, Chairman Staggers stated: "I am most reluctant to parade witnesses in a public hearing who will give testimony on widespread drug use in the athletic world. This may very well lead to greater drug experimentation by youngsters engaging in competitive sports. Our investigation confirmed the high degree to which aspiring young athletes emulate the actions, habits, and even superstitions of their sport heroes. I have discussed the problem and our findings with the commissioners of the major professional sports leagues. Based on the constructive responses and assurances I have received from these gentlemen, I think self-regulation will be intensified, and will be effective."

Chairman Staggers noted that he intends to hold similar conferences in the near future with representatives of amateur sports organizations. Here again, Mr. Staggers observed that the investigation disclosed an urgent need for more aggressive action.

According to Chairman Stagers, professional teams should be required to file complete copies of all drug bills and to file reports of any drug incidents involving team personnel with league headquarters. All players should be required to notify their team physician of any drugs or other medication which they are obtaining from other than team sources. And moreover, stringent penalties for illegal use, i.e., fines, suspension or even barring for life, if warranted, should be administered. Similar disciplinary action must be taken against team physicians, trainers, coaches or other personnel if involved in either making such drugs available or condoning their use. Other recommendations and suggestions were communicated to the officials during the meetings.

The Subcommittee intends to follow closely the efforts which will now be made by the sports organizations involved and if any action on the part of Congress appears necessary, Chairman Stagers assured that it will be initiated without delay.

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