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Major League Baseball Continues to Balk on Player Drug Use: Drugged World Series Stars?

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By Bob Weiner (/author/itemlist/user/48173) and Florian Prommer (/author/itemlist/user/50205), NJ Star-Ledger
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While the media is covering domestic abuse among NFL players nonstop, an equally big and more widespread sports scandal is ongoing drug use in Major League Baseball as the Playoffs and World Series take place.

The federal investigation of ‘anti-aging’ clinic Biogenesis (providing HGH and testosterone) is “ongoing,” confirmed Mark Trouville, Miami DEA Special Agent in Charge, last month. At least five new players are expected to be named.

In the aftermath of the *Mitchell Report*, the most significant investigation of drug abuse in the history of baseball seven years ago, Commissioner Bud Selig issued “a call for action. And I will act.” What we have seen is MLB inaction despite law enforcement moving forward.

MVP and All-Star Ken Caminiti stated in the *Mitchell Report*, “at least” half of players were using drugs. *The Report* concluded that “each of the 30 clubs has had players involved.”

MLB does not know names or number of drugged players now – in the playoffs and even going to the World Series -- because they do not want to know. Occasional tests do not out most potential players abusing. Testing misses “masking agents” that hide the drugs. MLB has disclosed only three players with positive tests this year. Fifty-four Minor League players have been busted in 2014: the Minors are more serious.

MLB players with first offenses for stimulants like amphetamines only face six additional “unannounced tests”. “Performance enhancing drugs” (PED’s) are acceptable in baseball if there is a “valid, medically appropriate prescription” to receive a Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE). However, TUEs are a loophole abusers can drive a truck through, a point the Mitchell report quoted from us. Just get a doctor on your payroll to prescribe them for any reason, and you’re in! It’s just a matter of submitting the paperwork because there is virtually no enforcement unless and until baseball really investigates each case.

Even the Yankees’ Alex Rodriguez, suspended last summer, could play next year. “We’ve done all we

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for testosterone when he was winning his third MVP award and hitting 54 home runs, in 2007. He was hardly the sickie who needed medical drugs.

According to *Sports Illustrated*, in 2008, Rodriguez applied for a TUE for clomiphene citrate, a testosterone enhancer popular with body builders. In both years, his doctor wrote to baseball that he had a “testosterone deficiency,” and he was granted a TUE both times. Baseball wanted homers. A-Rod stated, “You’ll hear the full story when the time is right.” That time is now.

Baseball acts like an ostrich’s head in the sand for economic reasons: ratings and revenue. Last year’s World Series games had an average of 14.9 million viewers, and the MLB reached an all-time high annual revenue of \$8 billion.

Young fans admire their heroes. Steroid usage among teens quintupled when Mark McGwire admitted using androstenedione. Teenagers who admitted using human growth hormone (HGH) without a prescription increased from 5 percent in 2012 to 11 percent in 2013. An additional 7 percent declared they used steroids.

“My kid died,” said Donald Hooton, father of Taylor Hooton who committed suicide at 17 due to depression after taking steroids.

In 2007, Jason Giambi, former Yankee player, AL MVP and five-time All-Star, went public with his PED confession: “I was wrong doing that stuff.” Giambi wasn’t disciplined and still plays, now for Cleveland.

It’s not just baseball that hides heavy hitters. Andre Agassi, who won eight Grand Slam tennis titles, in his autobiography admitted taking crystal meth during his tournaments. He wrote, “I snort ... I’ve never felt such energy.” He tested positive but said his explanation was “filled with lies.” Tennis has done nothing.

Suspending 16 players since last summer is a step, but baseball is not clean for dozens and even hundreds of others.

There is a way forward: Baseball could test each completing player in the playoffs in the future and the World Series this year, ask likely witnesses for evidence, and protect informers. Baseball should announce this process, so the public is informed.

Then we will have a clean World Series.

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