

Call for Papers for a Special Edition of European Studies in Sports History
The Dilemma of Sports Doping. The last 100 years
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The essence of sports is a level playing field. What is easy in the case of a false start, is impossible to reach in genetic or environmental circumstances. As soon as winning and losing became of significant importance more and better training and a special diet was included to improve the chances of winning. Most money could be made in horse racing where doping was first used. Eventually, performance enhancing drugs found their way into sports. Pilots in World War II use amphetamines to stay alert longer. Athletes started to use it at the same time. Anabolic steroids helped to improve strength and power and were therefore used soon after its synthetic production. The 1968 Olympic Games in the high altitude of Mexico City paved the way for altitude training, blood doping and eventually EPO. For amphetamines a urine test after the event is sufficient. For the others a more invasive blood test, and out of competition testing are necessary. To achieve complete transparency the athlete must be 24/7 under surveillance – which has very little to do with the original values of sports. The medical profession resenting being called dopers, claimed that they only made the playing field a little more level by substituting what other athletes had genetically more. Nobody wants doping. It discourages children to do elite sports. It spoils the fun of watching sports. So, something has to be done. But what?

And there you have the dilemma. Altitude training is legal, but as soon as you use EPO to achieve the same you are banned. In some countries animals are beefed up with anabolic steroids, if you eat cheap meat and are tested you are banned for being doped. As it is difficult to define what actually constitutes doping, a list of prohibited substances is published annually. Nevertheless, Prof. Thevis, the leading German expert on doping control, claims that about one hundred performance enhancing drugs are around for which no testing exists yet. Some athletes need certain drugs out of medical necessity; therefore, an elaborate system of Therapeutic Use Exemptions has been introduced. That does not even include gene manipulation which will be the new frontier.

The purpose of this special edition is to explore this dilemma. We are looking for full length 6,000 – 8,000-word papers, just as much as for individual case studies of 1,400 – 1,800 words. Any major European language is welcome, for details please consult www.cesh-site.eu. The original paper should not have been published or handed in for publication elsewhere. Please send a 200 – 250-word abstract and a short CV to Arndkrueger@yahoo.de by October 20, 2026. You will receive a notification within two weeks. The full paper is due March 1, 2027. There will be a two layered review process. The two editors will review for suitability for this special issue and pass it on to the Editor-in-Chief of the ESSH Daniele Sarapiglia (Complutense University of Madrid) who will organize the blind peer review.