

# Wrestling with Death

Friday, September 30, 2011

## A brief history of androgenic anabolic steroids (AAS) and professional wrestling

1889:

- Charles Brown-Sequard, a French neurologist, describes the rejuvenating effects of a self-administered extract from dog testes. (1)

1931:

- Adolf Butenandt, a chemist in Marburg, Germany, isolates the gonadal steroid androsterone. (2)

1935:

- Testosterone is isolated from the testes. (3)
- Testosterone is synthesized. (4)

1937:

- Clinical trials using oral methyltestosterone and intramuscular testosterone propionate begin. (5)

1940's:

- AAS are used to enhance performance in Soviet Union and German Olympian and amateur weightlifters.

1954:

- Bob Hoffman, coach of the United States Olympic weight lifting team learned of AAS use at the World Championship in Vienna.

1958:

- The Food and Drug Administration approves methandrostenolone which is marketed by Ciba Pharmaceuticals as Dianabol.

1960:

- John Ziegler, the appointed physician of the United States Olympic weight lifting team gave AAS to the team at the Rome games.
- It is speculated that William Afflis (**Dick the Bruiser**) may have been one of the first professional wrestlers to use AAS in the early part of the decade. (6)

1965:

- Wayne Coleman (**Superstar Billy Graham**) begins using AAS. (7)

1975:

- Terry Bollea (**Hulk Hogan**) begins using AAS. (8)

1982/83:

- It is estimated that upwards of 80% of professional wrestlers on the WWE roster are using AAS. (9)

1987:

- May 26, **Jim Duggan** and Khosrow Vaziri (**Iron Sheik**) were arrested in New Jersey. **Duggan** for possession of marijuana and drinking while driving. **Sheik** was arrested for possession of cocaine and marijuana.
- Later this year the first WWE drug testing program is instituted. The testing was primarily aimed at drugs such as cocaine, opiates and barbiturates. The first offense resulted in a 6 week suspension without pay. The second offense

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carried with it mandatory rehabilitation. A third violation resulted in termination. It was revealed that wrestlers **Tully Blanchard** and Aurelian Smith (**Jake "The Snake" Roberts**) both were served with suspensions.

**1988:**

- The Anti-Doping Abuse Act is passed. It is now a felony to sell or possess with intent to distribute AAS.

**1990:**

- The Anabolic Steroid Control Act is passed. AAS are now a Schedule III drug. The Act criminalizes illegal drug trafficking.

**1991:**

- In March, FBI agents raided the medical offices of George Zahorian, III, D.O. Zahorian was the longtime WWE ringside physician in Allentown, Pennsylvania. He was subpoenaed for shipping AAS to 43 professional wrestlers. Thirty seven of the wrestlers were actively employed by WWE.
- June 19: Zahorian was formally indicted.
- June 24: The *United States of America v. George T. Zahorian* trial begins. At the trial four wrestlers testified about receiving AAS from Zahorian. **Dan Spivey** reported receiving Deca-Durabolin, Anavar, Anadrol, and testosterone. Roderick Toombs (**Roddy Piper**) testified he received Deca-Durabolin, Anavar, and Stanozolol. Richard Vigneault (**Rick Martel**) and **Brian Blair** both testified to being sold Anavar, Deca-Durabolin, and testosterone.
- June 25: A jury finds Zahorian guilty of 12 counts of illegally distributing steroids and other controlled substances.
- July: WWE announces the start of a new drug testing program that includes testing for AAS. Serving as Medical Director was Mauro Di Pasquale, M.D. Aegis Analytical Laboratories, under the directorship of David Black, Ph.D, did the specimen testing. Wrestlers **David Smith** and Jim Hellwig (**Ultimate Warrior**) are terminated because of violating the policy.
- July 16: WWE owner **Vincent K. McMahon** admits to having experimented with Deca-Derabolin. This same day Terry Bollea (**Hulk Hogan**) appears on the CBS Arsenio Hall show and denies AAS use except for the sole purpose of treating an injury under the supervision of a physician.
- December 27: Judge William W. Caldwell sentences Zahorian to 36 months imprisonment followed by 2 years of supervised release. He was also fined \$12,700.

**1993:**

- November 18, the U.S. Justice Department indicted **Vincent K. McMahon** for conspiracy to distribute AAS and defraud the Food and Drug Administration.

**1994:**

- July 5, the *United States v. Vincent K. McMahon and Titan Sports* trial begins. During the trial Zahorian testifies he sold AAS to WWE wrestlers from 1981/82 to 1989. Wrestlers Randy Cully (**Moondog Rex**), **Tom Zenk**, Terry Szopinski (**Warlord**), **Tully Blanchard**, Rick Rood (**Rick Rude**), Jim Hellwig (**Ultimate Warrior**), Kevin Wacholz (**Nailz**), John Minton (**Big John Studd**), and Terry Bollea (**Hulk Hogan**) all gave testimony about illegal drug use.
- July 22, McMahon was acquitted of all charges.

**1996:**

- October 25, drug testing in the WWE ceases.

**2000:**

- August, the Indiana Medical Licensing Board suspends Joel Hackett, M.D. for providing controlled substances to 11 professional wrestlers. Wrestlers linked to Hackett include **Brian Pillman**, Louis Muccciolo (**Louie Spicolli**), Tony Norris (**Ahmed Johnson**), Jim Hellwig (**Ultimate Warrior**), **Scott Hall** and Del Wilkes (**The Patriot**).

**2006:**

- February 26, WWE institutes the Talent Wellness Program.

**2007:**

- March 19, SI.com reports 11 professional wrestlers linked to an illegal performance enhancing drug distribution network. Specific wrestlers mentioned in the article were **Kurt Angle** (trenbolone and nandrolone from

October 2004 to February 2005), **Eddie Guerrero** (HCG and stanozolol, early 2005), Oscar Gutierrez (**Rey Mysterio**, nandrolone and stanozolol), **Randy Orton** (stanozolol, nandrolone, testosterone, anastrozole from March 2004 to August 2004), Adam Copeland (**Edge**), and Gregory Helms (**Shane Helms/Hurricane**) were reported to have received HGH. (10)

- June, 22-24, The **Chris Benoit** double murder/suicide occurs in Fayetteville, Georgia.
- June 27, the medical office of Phillippe Astin, III, M.D. in Charrollton, Georgia is raided by federal agents. It is learned that during a 3 year period leading up to May 2007 Astin had prescribed **Benoit**, on average, a ten-month supply of testosterone every three to four weeks.
- July: Astin is indicted on 175 counts of illegally prescribing medications. Professional wrestlers linked to Astin included **Chris Benoit**, Oscar Gutierrez (**Rey Mysterio**), **Mark Jindrak**, Michael Durham (**Johnny Grunge**), Nancy Benoit (**Woman**), Lawrence Pfohl (**Lex Luger**), Robert Howard (**Hardcore Holly**), and Marcus Bagwell (**Buff Bagwell**).
- August 30, Sports Illustrated releases the names of 14 wrestlers who were clients of Signature Pharmacy in Orlando, Fl. Names mentioned were **Randy Orton**, **Charlie Haas**, Adam Copeland (**Edge**), Gregory Helms (**Shane Helms/Hurricane**), Mike Bucci (**Simon Dean**), John Hennigan (**Johnny Nitro**), Darren Matthews (**William Regal**), Ken Anderson (**Mr. Kennedy**), Eddie Fatu (**Umaga**), Brian Adams (**Crush**), Shoichi **Funaki**, **Sylvian Grenier**, **Chavo Guerrero**, **Eddie Guerrero**, and **Chris Benoit**. (11) The New York Daily News adds Robert Huffman (**Booker T**), Mike Bucci (**Simon Dean**), and Anthony Carelli (**Santino Marella**) to the list of clients. (12) ESPN.com reported Dave Bautista (**Batista**) and Chris Mordetsky (**Chris Masters**) were also clients. (13)

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Posted by Wrestling Doc at 3:21 PM



### 3 comments:



**Nexus** May 22, 2013 at 1:21 AM

Many anabolic steroids are now allow in wrestling.

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**Anonymous** June 15, 2013 at 12:28 PM

Thanks for the question. To my knowledge an anabolic steroid could be used in professional wrestling with a physician prescription. For example testosterone replacement therapy. Are you aware of other circumstances where anabolic steroids could be used?

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**Alex David** August 20, 2013 at 11:45 PM

Steroids can actually help patients with muscle dystrophy.

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