

Marion Jones Admits to Steroid Use

By Amy Shipley
Washington Post Staff Writer
Friday, October 5, 2007

Track star Marion Jones has acknowledged using steroids as she prepared for the 2000 Summer Games in Sydney and is scheduled to plead guilty today in New York to two counts of lying to federal agents about her drug use and an unrelated financial matter, according to a letter Jones sent to close family and friends.

Jones, who won five medals at the Sydney Olympics, said she took the steroid known as "the clear" for two years beginning in 1999, according to the letter. A source familiar with Jones's legal situation who requested anonymity confirmed the relevant facts that were described in the letter.

"I want to apologize to you all for all of this," Jones said. "I am sorry for disappointing you all in so many ways."

Jones's admissions could cost her the three gold and two bronze medals she won in Sydney while enlarging the cloud of doubt hovering over Olympic and professional sports, which have been tarred in recent years with accusations of performance-enhancing drug use, steroids busts and positive drug tests by prominent athletes.

In December 2004, the International Olympic Committee opened an investigation into allegations surrounding steroid use by Jones, once considered the greatest female athlete in the world. In the past, Jones has vehemently denied using steroids or any performance-enhancing drugs.

Advertisement "This is a shame," World Anti-Doping Agency Chairman Dick Pound said in a telephone interview yesterday. "This was America's darling at the 2000 Summer Olympics. . . . I hope this will have a deterrent effect. It's not merely cheating in sports, but now she has lied her way to exposure to penal sanctions."

In the letter, Jones, who will turn 32 next Friday, said her former coach, Trevor Graham, gave her the substance, telling her it was the nutritional supplement flaxseed oil and that she should take it by putting two drops under her tongue. Graham, contacted by telephone yesterday, declined to comment.

Jones said she "trusted [Graham] and never thought for one second" she was using a performance-enhancing drug until after she left Graham's Raleigh, N.C.-based training camp at the end of 2002. "Red flags should have been raised in my head when he told me not to tell anyone about" the supplement program, she said. She also said she noticed changes in how her body felt and how she was able to recover from workouts after she stopped taking the substance in 2001.

The clear, also known as THG, or tetrahydrogestrinone, is a powerful anabolic steroid that was at the center of the federal investigation into the Bay Area Laboratory Co-operative, or Balco. More than a dozen track and field athletes have faced punishments for their use of the clear, which drug-testing authorities were unable to detect until Graham sent a sample of it to the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency in 2003.

Baseball players Gary Sheffield and Jason Giambi admitted during grand jury testimony to using the clear, according to reports in the San Francisco Chronicle. Outfielder Barry Bonds also admitted using a substance that he said he had been told was flaxseed oil by his personal trainer, the Chronicle reported.

The federal probe surrounding Balco, a nutritional supplements company based in Burlingame, Calif., has resulted in five criminal convictions. Jones, however, would be the first athlete, joining Balco founder Victor Conte Jr. and vice president James Valente; Bonds's personal trainer, Greg Anderson; track coach



Marion Jones, who won five medals at the Sydney Olympics, says she took the steroid known as "the clear" for two years beginning in 1999, according to a letter Jones sent to close family and friends. (Arne Dedert - AFP)

TOOLBOX

[Resize](#)
[Print](#)
[E-mail](#)
[Reprints](#)

Advertisement

Remi Korchemny; and chemist Patrick Arnold, who designed the clear.

Jones's coach, Graham, was indicted last November on three counts of lying to federal agents connected to the investigation. He has pleaded not guilty and his trial is scheduled for November.

CONTINUED 1 2 [Next >](#)

© 2007 The Washington Post Company