



## Doping and Other Methods of Cheating – Why?

*“A person may cheat at a game or compete at it, but it is logically impossible to do both. To cheat is to cease to compete.” -Edward Delattre, Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*

Whether they are sprinters taking banned performance-enhancing drugs, a hockey coach handing a goalie an illegal stick to use or a baseball pitcher tossing a scuffed baseball, there are always those who will seek that extra edge – a way to bend or break the rules for their own advantage. It is sad that the actions of these few who cheat demean the efforts of the vast majority who do not.

In many cases, cheating is motivated by material greed. Sport, amateur as well as professional, has become highly commercialized. Professional hockey, baseball, basketball and football players are negotiating multi-million dollar contracts. Superstars are paid thousands of dollars to promote products or services. And, in international amateur competitions, the lure of big money has increased enough to offer athletes substantial appearance fees for their efforts. The world amateur track and field championships now offer automobiles to all Gold medal winners.

For sprinter Ben Johnson who tested positive for anabolic steroids or for marathoner Rosie Ruiz who completed the Boston marathon by covering much of the distance riding the subway, the difference between first and second place meant thousands, if not millions, of dollars in corporate sponsorship.

Money is not always the culprit. Coaches, trainers and others may participate in or encourage cheating because their jobs next season depend on having a winning athlete or team. A moment of glory or a trophy on a shelf may be enough to make an individual want to win at any cost. For sport to exist, athletes and the people they work with must abide by the rules and not seek unfair advantages by using drugs or other aids. Cheating, regardless of the method, is a clear rejection of the principles of fair play: honesty, integrity and respect.

Think about this – if you win by using drugs or another form of cheating, is it truly you who won or was it the drug or method of cheating that made you win? I guess you'll never know, will you. What satisfaction is there in that! There are many natural ways you can improve your athletic ability. How? Through hard work, excellent coaching as well as utilizing the knowledge and expertise of organizations like the Sport Medicine and Science Council of Saskatchewan.