

# Wiggins slammed for 'unethical' use of drugs

Was sport better before doping took hold? Until recently, Bradley Wiggins was a cycling hero. In an increasingly familiar turn of events, he has now been accused of misusing medical drugs.



**On yer bike!** Wiggins won eight Olympic medals and the Tour de France. He is retired. © Getty

Ever since Bradley Wiggins's medical records were **leaked** in 2016, a cloud of suspicion has hung over the achievements of Britain's most successful Olympian. Yesterday, a **committee of MPs** said what many fear: that he took performance-enhancing drugs.

The furore centres on Wiggins's use of triamcinolone, a substance that he received permission to take to treat his asthma. According to the MPs' report, however, he used it in quantities that suggest a less honest motive.

Wiggins "strongly refutes" the allegations. In any case, the report makes it clear that he has not broken any rules, but simply "crossed the **ethical line**".

Doping is as old as sport. The Ancient Greeks ate sesame seeds to boost their energy. But it has only become a major issue in recent decades, as medical technology has improved and skyrocketing prize money has raised the stakes in sport.

Penalties have become harsher. But the sheer variety of doping methods makes it hard for the authorities to keep up.

The world was reminded of a more innocent age on Sunday, when Sir Roger Bannister died. Bannister found fame by running the first **four-minute mile** in 1954. Not only did he not cheat, he barely trained, and subsisted on a diet of pilchards and stew. He became a neurologist and helped to create the first test for anabolic

steroids in athletes.

Were sports better in Bannister's day?

## **Dope for the best**

For sure, say some. Athletes like Bannister just wanted to demonstrate their talent and strength of character. Now, it's impossible to tell skill apart from medical enhancement. People are losing faith in the system.

That's nonsense, reply others. Doping is bad. But it happens for a good reason: today's athletes are desperate to win. This makes sport more competitive and exciting, even if you take out the dopers.

## **!** Q & A

### **Q: What do we know?**

A: Wiggins got permission to take triamcinolone three times. An anonymous source said he

used the drug to boost his performance. MPs think Wiggins may have used it without permission too.

### **Q: What do we not know?**

A: How honest Wiggins is being. He doesn't

mention asthma in his 2012 autobiography. That said, he must have convinced a panel of experts to give him permission to use the drug.

## **!** YOU DECIDE

Are sports getting better or worse?

## **!** ACTIVITIES

Imagine you are interviewing Bradley Wiggins today. Come up with five questions for him. (They do not all have to be about this scandal.)

## **!** SOME PEOPLE SAY...

"If you have *nothing to hide*, why not show it?" *Bradley Wiggins*

WHAT DO YOU THINK?



## WORD WATCH

**Leaked** – A Russian hacker group named Fancy Bear stole confidential data on athletes' medical records and substance use from the World Anti-Doping Agency.

**Committee of MPs** – The Digital, Culture, Media and Sport committee. Its report also questions the integrity of other major sports figures, like runner Mo Farah.

**Ethical** – Ethics are the moral guidelines that individuals follow in order to lead a good life.

Laws are based on ethics, but the two do not always overlap.

**Four-minute mile** – Bannister's time was 3:59.4. The current record is 3:43.13.



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Notes

