

# Students write about the dangers of steroids

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The dangers of steroid use by athletes were demonstrated violently when Nancy and Daniel Benoit were killed in 2007 by pro-wrestler Chris Benoit, a steroid user, who took his own life after murdering his wife and son.

To keep these dangers on the minds of young athletes and students, Nancy Benoit's parents, Paul and Maureen Toffoloni, representing The Nancy and Daniel Benoit Foundation, recently staged an essay contest at Southwestern Middle School in DeLand.

Students were asked to write about steroid use by athletes, and the effects on athletes' bodies and brains.

Four students were honored for their essays. They are Chase Prewain, sixth grade; Tevin Frederick, sixth grade; Lisa Marie Garren, sixth grade; and Daezya Birch, seventh grade.

On this page are excerpts from the winning essays.

## By Chase Prewain

There are many people in the United States and all over the world who use and abuse steroids to help improve their appearance or help them in sports. In the United States it is illegal to use steroids for this type of reason.

If you are found to be using steroids in sports, then you can be banned from playing in the games or punished. A lot of times, athletes lose their fans when the public becomes aware of the problem. They can be kicked off of the team that they are playing for and people end up not liking the athlete anymore. It ruins their reputation and it is a form of cheating also.

There is some steroid use that is acceptable. In the medical community, steroids are used to treat some medical problems. This is acceptable and is allowed.

There have been young children or teenagers that have been tested and found to be positive for the use of steroids.

A lot of teenagers and adults think that it is okay to use steroids to help improve their body images or increase the size of their muscles. Some people think that it will help improve their game. The best way to improve someone's game is with lots of hard work and practice.

Taking illegal drugs can only make matters worse. It can cause serious problems with your health and is very dangerous to take.

... Steroids are not the solution and they can also lead to other illegal drug use.

— Prewain is a sixth-grader at Southwestern Middle School.



PHOTO BY GWEN MONROE COURTESY NANCY AND DANIEL BENOIT FOUNDATION  
**Learning the dangers of steroids** — Award-winners, from left in front, Lisa Marie Garren, Daezya Birch, Chase Prewain and Tevin Frederick, all students at Southwestern Middle School in DeLand, display certificates they received for essays entered in The Nancy and Daniel Benoit Foundation Essay Contest. The students wrote about steroid use by athletes, and the effects of these substances on the body and the brain. Looking on, in back, are Paul and Maureen Toffoloni, the parents and grandparents of Nancy Benoit and her son, Daniel, along with Debra Perry, executive assistant at the Volusia/Flagler Family YMCA Metro Office.

## By Daezya Birch

Steroids (also known as "juice" or "roids") are a group of powerful compounds that are very dangerous if they aren't taken properly. If steroid use is abused, then they can affect your heart, appearance, and mood. They are also illegal to use without a prescription.

... Steroids are also addictive. The most common us-

ers are young male football players and body builders. Some want to be strong, so they overdose, and that's when all the trouble starts. Instead of thinking of the consequences, they just think about how much better their playing will improve, or how much stronger they will be after taking the drug.

... Teenagers and young adults are at the most risk because they think that the steroids just cause more

strength and enhance physical appearance. That is just an assumption because they don't read the labels or warnings.

I think that if young adults and teenagers like me took the time to read the warnings and ingredients in steroids, there would be fewer users because they would know what they are at risk for.

— Birch is a seventh-grader at Southwestern Middle School.

## By Lisa Marie Garren

When I think about or see someone using steroids, I think why would anyone want to use such a deadly drug. ... I say if you are working toward something, you should go through it even if it's hard. I rather do it the hard way than go the easy way and almost kill myself when using steroids.

... There's a couple of things I would like to say to the people that are using steroids.

1: stop using and lis-

ten to the people that care about you more than your friends do.

2: listen to your family, and go get help if you can't stop using.

3: don't just sit there — apologize to the people that you hurt on your steroid journey.

4: if you don't apologize to the people that you hurt, they're not going to help you through your tough time unless they really love you and care about you.

The places that I got my information for the steroids essay are www.justthinktwice.com and

the knowledge I got from reading about it in my reading class and the fitness magazine that I read of my brothers. But most of all I owe all this knowledge to my big brother, John Garren.

— Garren is a sixth-grader at Southwestern Middle School.

## By Tevin Frederick

... Steroids can increase endurance, strength, muscle mass, but can cause high blood pressure, severe mood swing, liver tumors, and more in a short term. Conditions like kidney disease, hypertension, heart damage, high cholesterol, and stunted growth in a long term.

Symptoms and signs of steroids are acne flare-up, rapid weight gain, fluid retention, rapid muscle development, and lots more.

In recent years, it has become too easy to achieve greatness with steroids in sports. Athletes use steroids but what they don't know is that it gives your body problems. Steroids are banned and illegal from mostly all

major sports, because if you're using them it's considered cheating and imposes many health risks on players. The steroids give athletes an unfair advantage when they use them in sports. Steroids affect your mood because steroids can make you angry and hostile for no reason.

... "Roid rage" is a term used to [describe] people who act in very aggressive or hostile behavior. ... Steroid use is illegally bad, and prolonged use of steroids is still bad and life is worth too much to risk it, and I can go on and on and on about steroids.

— Frederick is a sixth-grader at Southwestern Middle School.

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