

## Another 19,000 steroids tests, 7 positive

By **JIM VERTUNO** AP Sports Writer © 2009 The Associated Press

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AUSTIN, Texas — The second round of steroid testing for Texas high school athletes found only seven positive results in nearly 19,000 tests, about the same outcome as the program's debut last year.

The latest results, released by the University Interscholastic League on Friday, came from random tests on male and female athletes from September through December.

The initial round of testing in the nation's largest high school screening program found only four cases of steroid use in 10,000 athletes. With such tiny numbers, some state lawmakers have questioned the value of the \$6 million program. Gov. Rick Perry, a Republican, has suggested it may need to be scaled down.

A spokesman for Texas Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst, a Republican who pushed the plan through the Legislature in 2007, said the few numbers of positive tests show the program "is clearly working as a deterrent."

"The lieutenant governor believes the program is working as intended to keep young people from destroying their bodies and their lives by using steroids," spokesman Rich Parsons said.

Texas, New Jersey and Illinois are the only states testing high school athletes for steroids and the Texas program is by far the biggest, aiming to test up to 50,000 by the end of the school year.

Florida recently decided to scrap its smaller program with one steroid user caught in 600 tests. State officials said they couldn't justify the \$100,000 cost in a tough economy.

Texas state Sen. Dan Patrick, a Houston Republican, had previously criticized Texas program as a "colossal waste of taxpayer money." His office declined comment on the results released Friday.

The Texas program is supported by prominent testing advocate Don Hooton, whose 17-year-old son Taylor committed suicide while battling depression doctors believe was brought on by steroid use.

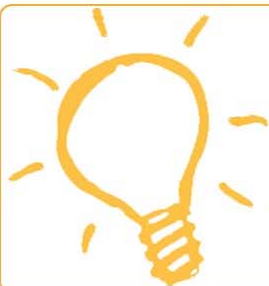
Hooton, who has testified before Congress on the dangers of steroid use, said testing is designed to prevent drug use, not to measure how many kids are doing it.

The small number of athletes caught should not discourage more testing, he said. It could be geared more toward sports that are known to draw users such as football, baseball and softball.

"They don't stop testing Olympic athletes just because most of them don't test positive," Hooton said.

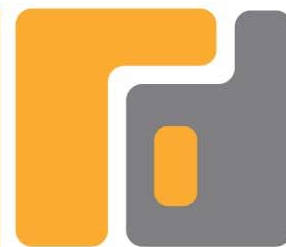
Testing is conducted by the National Center for

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Drug Free Sport, which also tests athletes for the NCAA. Athletes from all sports are eligible, but testing last fall was tilted heavily toward football.

Along with the seven confirmed cases of steroid use in the most recent round, 10 more students require more testing because their tests showed elevated testosterone levels, the report said.

Another 48 were deemed "protocol violations" because the students either refused to provide a urine sample or had unexcused absences the day they were selected for testing.

Of the 18,817 tests, 4,535 were football players. Females were tested most often in volleyball (1,089). A positive test brings a 30-day suspension from play for the first offense.

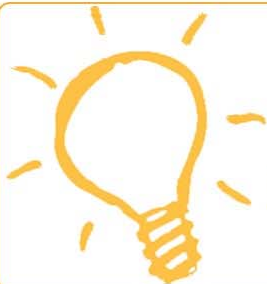
The most common substance found in the seven positive tests were metabolites of boldenone, an anabolic steroid. It was found in four cases.

All of the athletes testing positive were males. Five were identified as football players and one played football and also participated in track and field. The seventh played baseball and golf.

The seven positive tests were four juniors, two seniors and one sophomore. Six were in Class 5A, the highest division of competition, and the seventh was in Class 4A.

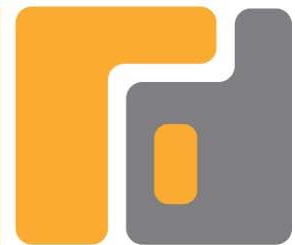
Freshman and sophomores were tested most often, with 11,386 exams.

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