

Worldwide Life Bans Required To Stop Athletes From Doping

Former Olympic hurdles champion [@Sally Gunnell](#) has remarked that doping bans of four years are not enough and tougher worldwide sanctions are needed to deter athletes from doping in the future.

The World Anti-Doping Agency recently detailed plans for a minimum suspension of four years for athletes found guilty of using drugs such as anabolic steroids to enhance their performance. Gunnell said though she believes that an increase from the present suspension of two years to four years is a step taken in the right direction, but a life ban with rules applicable across the globe is required to deter athletes from doping.

The 1992 Olympic 400m hurdles champion said I have always had strong views about a life ban and she believes that the ban of two years was never good enough as people think that using drugs to win is worth the gamble as they will only miss the two years and can come back. Gunnell remarked this is the reason why she supports a life ban and doing this will mean people will start saying doping is not worth it. She further added that she hopes the whole of the world would have the same rules as we do. Gunnell, speaking in a week which has seen Russian discus thrower [Darya Pishchalnikova](#) set to be stripped of her London 2012 silver medal after a second doping offense, said a two-year ban is worth the gamble in many countries as cheats can actually go away, train hard, and come back out a better athlete. The anti-doping message needs to be a strong one when you are trying to encourage youngsters to get involved in sport, Gunnell reinforced.

Born on 29 July 1966 in Chigwell (Essex), Sally Jane Janet Gunnell OBE also worked as a television presenter, predominantly for the BBC until January 2006. She started as an accomplished long jumper and pentathlete in athletics with the Essex Ladies club before turning to the sprints and hurdling. At the 1992 Summer Olympic Games in Barcelona, Gunnell won the 400 m hurdles and set the world record in the same event when she won gold in the 1993 World Championships. She remains the only woman to have held the European, World, Commonwealth, and Olympic 400 meter hurdles titles at the same time and is now involved as one of the ambassadors for McCain's Track & Field partnership with UK Athletics. Gunnell was made an MBE (Member of the [Order of the British Empire](#)) and in the 1998 Queen's Birthday Honors, she was made an OBE (Officer of the Order of the British Empire) in the 1993 New Year Honors and was appointed Deputy Lieutenant of West Sussex in 2011.

Sally Gunnell is married to fellow-athlete Jonathan Bigg and was a celebrity showjumper in the BBC's Sport Relief event *Only Fools on Horses* in summer 2006, won a Weakest Link Sporting Heroes Special, first broadcast on Saturday 25 July 2009 on BBC One, and took part in a celebrity version of TV show *Total Wipeout* that aired on 2 January 2010.