

Increasing Drug Penalties Possible In Baseball

Baseball union head Michael Weiner has announced that there have been talks about increasing the penalties for violating the drug testing program of baseball.

Weiner said baseball already has the toughest penalties of any team sport and a ban of fifty games is more than one can see for the first time in hockey, basketball, and football. The baseball chief also said many players have expressed their desire to increase the penalties for sport cheaters and that may happen in 2014. However, any changes to the drug program must get the approval of both [Major League Baseball](#) and the players' union.

The 51-year-old Weiner succeeded Donald Fehr as union head in 2009 and announced in August he is being treated for a brain tumor.

The Baseball union head added that one area where increased attention helped encourage change was in testing for human growth hormone and remarked that the players approved this change to improve the possibility of detection for the use of HGH and the players at this point have very little patience for players that are trying to cheat the system, and understand that year around HGH testing is an important component. Testing for [human growth hormone](#) began last year but was limited to spring training. Weiner also added that he will have discussions with the players who were named in a report by The Miami New Times as having allegedly purchased performance-enhancing drugs from a defunct Florida anti-aging clinic.

He, however, said reporters should refrain from jumping to conclusions about media reports linking players to the clinic accused of distributing banned performance enhancing drugs and said Major League Baseball is still investigating Biogenesis of America, the defunct anti-aging clinic in Coral Gables, Florida. Meanwhile, Washington Nationals pitcher Gio Gonzalez says tests for performance enhancing drugs that he provided have come back negative. He and other players were listed in a Miami New Times report as receiving performance-enhancing drugs in purported records of Biogenesis of America. Gonzalez said in a brief statement he expected the negative results and reiterated he has never taken any performance enhancing drugs.

Weiner also discussed the agreement with management last month to extend blood testing for human growth hormone into the regular season and the World Anti-Doping Agency laboratory in Laval, Quebec, as part of the change to the joint drug agreement will keep records of each player, including his baseline ratio of testosterone to epitestosterone. He also went on to remark that

players understand it is important to have the strongest program possible, and given both the testosterone changes and the HGH changes, they are very much for it.

In a statement, Rob Manfred, baseball's executive vice president for economics and league affairs, said one of the strengths of baseball's Joint Drug Testing Program is that the bargaining parties have an ongoing dialogue about the program and potential changes that can make it even more effective. Manfred remarked that we are looking forward to discussions with the Major League Baseball Player Association about changes that may be needed to respond to recent developments.