

Essendon Coach Under Doping Siege

The role of coach James Hird in the [doping scandal of Essendon](#) is set to come under fresh scrutiny after the former sports scientist of Bombers, Stephen Dank, alleged he injected Hird with a substance which is prohibited by the World Anti-Doping Agency.

The ex-sports scientist, who has done only one other media interview since the Essendon scandal broke, confirmed some of the substances he said he administered to players and coaches during his time at the club. Dank alleged that he injected Essendon coach with [Hexarelin](#), which is banned by the World Anti-Doping Agency since 2004 despite detailed discussions between him and the coach about it that can promote the levels of human growth hormone in the body.

In a statement, Hird said he had no idea of what he was asked to take and said Dank was 'determined to destroy my reputation.' The statement said, the coach of Essendon have at all times fully adhered to, and promoted the WADA code and the AFL ruled, and the code of ethics of the Essendon Football Club. Hird has not broken the WADA code by taking Hexareline, even if Dank's allegations are true, as he is a coach and not an athlete but he maintains that no league rules have been breached by him. Hird remarked that he just can't wait to get in and talk to ASADA (Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority) and the AFL and cannot wait to clear his name once he has gone and talked to ASADA and the AFL.

A club source said the allegations were outrageous and the club would not rest until the reputation of the high-profile coach was cleared. In a recently-released report, it was also revealed under the claims of Dank that players were administered AOD9604, an anti-obesity drug that WADA says should be classified as banned. However, the legal team of the club insisted that it wasn't on any banned list when it was part of Dank's controversial program.

AFL chief Andrew Demetriou said allegations that Hird was injected with a drug were "very serious" but added that speculation over whether Hird would stand down should be put off until the ASADA investigation was complete. Essendon chairman David Evans remarked James Hird is a person of great respect of this club and indeed the football community, and the board will not be making decisions on the next steps until the process of the review and the investigation take their course.

Meanwhile, former ASADA chief executive Richard Ings has called for coaches to be subject to the same WADA code as athletes and remarked that coaches under the World Anti-Doping Agency code are not banned from the use of any performance enhancing drugs, which would be

banned for the use by their players. He added that when one looks at this case, it is a question as to whether those in a position of leadership who are asking players not to be involved in the use of taking performance-enhancing drugs should, even if allowed to, be using performance enhancing drugs themselves and went on to say that so that's certainly an ethical issue but from a rule perspective, there is nothing to stop a coach from using performance enhancing drugs.