

## Star Skier Linked To Notorious East German Doping Doctor

Olympic star Lindsey Vonn, who has been seeing golfing legend Tiger Woods, has become embroiled in controversy after it emerged that she has paid a number of visits to a sports facility overseen by a notorious former 'doping doctor'.

Lindsey has visited the Red Bull-owned Diagnostics and Training Centre in Austria that is run by German doctor Bernd Pansold, 71, according to an investigation by the *New York Daily News*.

The doctor was one of hundreds of doctors at the forefront of a doping epidemic in the former East Germany that "forced" unwitting young athletes into [hardcore performance enhancing drugs](#) like anabolic steroids in what was a state-sponsored program in the 1970s and 80s. Pansold is believed to be at the heart of a program which plied female competitors with highly dangerous muscle-strengthening drugs like Oral Turinabol. Pansold was convicted of aiding and abetting assault for his part in the program in 1998 and was hired by Red Bull in 2000 and is now a specialist in analyzing physical testing data to see how on-field performances can be improved and there is no suggestion that he continues to be involved in doping.

Athletes from East Germany experienced severe side effects such as deepened voices, cancer, ruined ovulation cycles, and an increase in the growth of facial and body hair.

While it is still rumored that the Alpine Ski champion has ever taken performance enhancing drugs and has never failed a dope test, her visits to the lab in the village of Thalgau, shows how vulnerable the Olympic stars of today are to the murky past of doping. The publicist of Vonn initially denied that Vonn has been a visitor to the facility but later acknowledged that Lindsey had undertaken tests at the lab and had exchanged nothing more than pleasantries with the doctor.

In an interview in March, Pansold had confirmed Vonn had visited his facility twice a year and called her a 'very nice girl'. The 28-year-old poster girl for the US team has been sponsored by the energy drink company Red Bull since 2005 and is given a number of perks, including other state-of-art training facilities at the company-sponsored [Salzburg football](#) team's headquarters.

The World Cup alpine ski racer who competed with the United States Ski Team has won four overall World Cup championships – one of only two female skiers to do so, along with Annemarie Moser-Pröll. Lindsey won the gold medal in downhill at the 2010 Winter Olympics and has also won six consecutive World Cup season titles in the downhill discipline (2008–2013), four consecutive titles in Super G (2009–2012), and three consecutive titles in the combined (2010–2012). She has become the most successful American skier in history with her Olympic gold and bronze medals, two World Championship gold medals in 2009 (plus three silver medals in 2007/2011), and four overall World Cup titles. The alpine ski racer received the Laureus World Sports Awards Sportswoman of the Year for 2010 and was also honored again as the USOC's sportswoman of the year for 2010.