

## Doping In Esports Is Rampant, Says Industry Insider

The temptation to dope can be huge with millions of dollars at stake and tens of thousands of fans watching every move, says Bjoern Franzen – a consultant and marketer formerly with one of the world's largest esports companies.

Franzen publicly declared that [doping in esports](#) is rampant. In a lengthy [blog post](#), Franzen said media and gaming firms are turning a blind eye to the substance use right under their noses. Franzen added he had seen players pop a pill, even an hour before important games either to calm them down or push themselves. The consultant remarked he had seen players taking a lot of drugs, including Ritalin that improves concentration and the beta-blocker Propranolol that helps players stay calm under pressure and blocks the effects of adrenaline and even Selegiline, a drug used for treating Parkinson's disease and having a potential to improve mood and motivation during tournaments.

Franzen also remarked one of the Industries best kept secrets is neuroenhancement for cyber-athletes and in electronic sports in general. The term “neuroenhancement” refers to improvement in the emotional, cognitive, and motivational functions of healthy individuals by using drugs that are known as pharmaceutical neuroenhancers (or “smart drugs”). Franzen said neuroenhancement for cyber-athletes is primarily facilitated by the use of drugs such as Piracetam, Methylphenidate, Modafinil, Selegiline, and [Propranolol](#).

According to an article in May 2014 about the Potential consequences of cognitive enhancers by Kimberly R. Urban and Wen-Jun Gao, the main classes of drugs used for cognitive enhancement include psychostimulants (methylphenidate (MPH), amphetamine), but wakefulness-promoting agents (modafinil) and glutamate activators (ampakine) are also used sometimes.

Alexander Müller, Managing Director at German esports giant SK Gaming, said the company does not allow any kind of doping and has never had to deal with it among their players. Müller remarked we establish close to very close relationships with our players and added drugs have never been a factor in our history with players whatsoever.

One of the main benefits of doping in esports is that it allows players to train harder and longer. Brandon Harris, a law student and gamer at the University of New Hampshire, said it is common to see a range of stimulants used during competitions. Harris, who writes on legal issues in esports, remarked and if you're using a broad definition of doping – i.e. 'taking any substance in an attempt to improve gameplay' – the use would be extremely widespread and also added that caffeine, energy drinks, ginseng supplements, all sorts of over-the-counter stuff is heavily and excessively used.

Professional gamers shy away from using illegal drugs, Harris said according to his experience but added he has encountered the use of medication usually prescribed for Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or depression to gain an edge.

Brendon Boot, a neurologist at Harvard Medical School in Boston, said the real danger here is the temptation to escalate. Esport players could end up on ever higher dosages, by using drugs in risky ways such as snorting or injecting them, or mixing them. Boot added for example, taking Selegiline with an antidepressant can lead to something called serotonin syndrome: headache, confusion, hyperthermia, muscle spasms, tremors and sometimes death, and remarked these guys are playing with fire.