

Nike Criticized For Justin Gatlin Deal

Nike's decision to sponsor [Justin Gatlin](#) has stirred controversy in elite running circles with many top athletes criticizing the deal.

Recently, Nike gave a new sponsorship deal to U.S. sprinter Justin Gatlin who has served a doping ban of four years from 2006 to 2010. In 2006, Nike dropped its initial sponsorship of Gatlin.

Last year, the 33-year-old was the fastest man in the world but many doubted that he will get such a lucrative contract after twice being banned for doping. The American sprinter, who is an Olympic gold medalist in the 100 meters, ran the fastest-ever time for a man over the age of 30 when he ran a time of 9.80 in June 2012 at the US Olympic trials. He went on to become the world leader in the 200 meters on July 18, 2014 when he won his race in 19.68 seconds at the Diamond League event in Monaco.

Jason Gardener, who helped Great Britain to the 4×100-meter relay title at the 2004 Athens Games, remarked nothing surprises me but this another bad message being sent by our sport. Jason pointed to mounting evidence that systematic dopers reaped long-term residual benefits from their cheating and they therefore should receive harsher punishments.

Olympic silver medalist Steve Backley questioned message of Nike to young athletes. Former heptathlete Kelly Sotherton hit out at the deal and remarked what sort of a message is that from Nike signing new sponsorship with multiple drugs cheat [Justin Gatlin](#).

Paula Radcliffe, the world record holder in the women's marathon who is sponsored by Nike, also expressed her displeasure and said she is very disappointed to hear this news and added that she does not believe it truly reflects the core values of the Nike she is proud to represent, nor the integrity and ideals of the people there that she works with on a daily basis.

In 2001, Justin Gatlin received a brief suspension for an amphetamine contained in an attention deficit disorder drug he had been taking since childhood. On appeal, his suspension was shortened. Gatlin received an eight-year sentence for using "[testosterone](#) or its precursor" in 2006 though the athlete denied ever using such a substance. It was claimed by Gatlin's coach, Trevor Graham, that the athlete had been sabotaged by a massage therapist who rubbed a cream containing testosterone onto Justin Gatlin. His ban was later reduced to four years as he cooperated in providing information to doping authorities and the "exceptional circumstances" of his first ban.

Travis Tygart, the head of the United States Anti-Doping Agency, had remarked Justin Gatlin deserved a second chance after his drug ban. The USADA chief executive refused to read too

much into reports that the use of steroids may have long-lasting benefits in an athlete's body. He had remarked there is some recent science on the effect of steroids on mice, but there is no proof yet it translates to humans and went on to add that if somebody commits a violation, serves a ban and comes back to the sport, part of the rule is this idea of redemption.