

Paralympic Sprint Medalist Banned For Doping Violation

US [Paralympic](#) and world medalist Blake Leeper has been banned by the US Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) for an anti-doping rule violation.

The 25-year-old Leeper tested positive for [Benzoyllecgonine](#) from a sample collected on 21 June 2015 at the US Paralympic Track & Field National Championships.

Benzoyllecgonine is a metabolite of cocaine, a substance in the class of Stimulants prohibited under the USADA Protocol for Olympic and Paralympic Movement Testing and the International Paralympic Committee Anti-Doping Code, both of which have adopted the World Anti-Doping Code (“Code”) and the World Anti-Doping Agency Prohibited List.

Benzoyllecgonine, the compound tested for in most [substantive cocaine urinalyses](#), is the primary pharmaceutical ingredient in Esterom, the investigational drug, which is a not FDA approved or on the market in the United States. Esterom is a topical solution used for the relief of muscle pain. Chemically, it is ecgonine benzoate, a primary metabolite of cocaine. Benzoyllecgonine can be found in the urine for significant longer than the cocaine itself that is generally cleared out within five days.

The US Anti-Doping Agency determined that the use of cocaine by Leeper was not intended to improve performance. Leeper, in consideration of other mitigating factors, was deemed eligible for a reduced sanction of one year. His one-year period of ineligibility began on 21 June 2015, which was the date of his sample collection. The US Paralympic and world medalist has been disqualified from all competitive results obtained on and subsequent to June 19, 2015, the date he first competed at the US Paralympics Track & Field National Championships, including forfeiture of any medals, points and prizes.

In a statement, Leeper said he made a mistake and he is deeply sorry for his behavior and for letting all the people who believed in him down. The Paralympic athlete from United States added he is taking full responsibility for the bad choices he had made in his life. Leeper also said in the statement that he can overcome his mistakes and become a role model Olympian which he is working hard to prove in Rio Olympics just as he overcame the monumental obstacle of being born without legs to become a world-class

athlete. Leeper will regain his eligibility in time to attempt to qualify for the 2016 Summer Paralympics in Rio de Janeiro. Leeper also said he apologizes to his fans, sponsors, friends, and family and he is grateful to have this opportunity to prove that anything is possible with or without legs.

Born in Tennessee, Leeper has worn prosthetics since nine months of age. He was born with both legs missing below the knee and studied medicine at the University of Tennessee. In 2009, Leeper made his international debut at Rio de Janeiro and won a silver medal in the World Championships 4 x 100m Relay T42-46 classification with a time of 42.84 in 2011. He won an individual silver medal in the 400 meter T44 event and a bronze medal in the 200m T44 event with a time of 22.46 in the 2012 Paralympic Games.