

## **Doping Athletes Should Be Banned For Life, Says Michael Johnson**

Retired American sprinter Michael Johnson has remarked [doping athletes](#) should receive a minimum ban of four years, including the loss of an Olympics, for a first doping violation and a lifetime ban for a second violation.

Johnson commented that he would like to see a lifetime ban on doping athletes if they are caught a second time. The former sprinter said it does not matter how minor the first anti-doping violation was and also said there are going to be accidents, but you have to have tough rules in these situations. The American sprinter also said he supports the concept of stripping away medals from athletes who have been found, through tests years later, to have made use of [banned substances](#).

Johnson said it is the best we can do but the shame of that is when some athlete who was clean, who was fourth place, never got a medal and never got a chance to get on the podium and even missed out on prize money. The sprinter added he feels bad for "clean athletes" who lose to cheats and therefore missed out on the chance to be able to have their whole country seeing them on the podium and added that is a moment you never get back. Considered one of the greatest and most consistent sprinters in the history of track and field, Michael Johnson added this is the reason why it is so important to not only focus on retroactive punishment, but deterring people from the very beginning and this is not because of the people who cheat, but because of the people who are clean and they have to be protected. Johnson said he believes no sport, Olympic or otherwise, will be clean as people will always try to cheat and this is the reason why sports is a microcosm of society.

If these standards were in place at the Rio Olympics, [Justin Gatlin](#) would not be running against Usain Bolt and there would be no Yulia Efimova of Russia. Johnson however supported Gatlin by saying the portrayal of Gatlin as a villain has been unfair, keeping in mind the rules that govern athletics.

Michael Johnson is the only man to successfully defend his Olympic title in the 400 m and the only male athlete in history to win both the 200 meter dash and 400 meter dash

events at the same Olympics, a feat he achieved at the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta.

The American Olympic sprinter, who currently holds the world and Olympic records in the 400 m, said he did not take any kind of medication during his days. Johnson said he was extra-cautious not to put something in his body that would have resulted in a doping violation. The track legend also commented he does buy that people didn't know what they were putting into their body, but it is their body and they are responsible. The winner of four Olympic gold medals and eight World Championships gold medals also said this is the first thing you learn in international sport and so he buys it, but it is not an excuse.