

## **Coaches Have Encouraged Athletes To Use Banned Asthma Drugs, Says Former Anti-Doping Chief**

Former British doping chief Michelle Verroken has remarked coaches have encouraged their athletes to use [banned asthma drugs](#) when there is nothing wrong with them.

Verroken, who was in charge of UK Sport's anti-doping from 1986 to 2004, said there is the opportunity currently for abuse of the Therapeutic Use Exemption system. The ex-British doping chief further commented that is his real frustration that we still have a long way to get a better system in place. Verroken added then there is no suspicion about any athlete who has a genuine medical condition and also remarked there is the possibility that even a treatment as simple as asthma is being misused like we have seen in the past. Verroken, the former director of [Drug-Free Sport](#), said she had been absolutely frustrated to be in the presence of coaches who have recommended their team go to GPs saying they get out of breath when they are training and said who doesn't get out of breath as an athlete.

Verroken, who now runs the Sporting Integrity consultancy, also said we put in place the diagnostic tests but people can use the medication knowing that some of these prescribed substances are only banned in competition, so they use them in training. The former chief of British doping said some of the sports she now works with have come to the conclusion that to have a really robust policy you need to ban everything all the time.

Team GB Olympic stars including Mo Farah, [Bradley Wiggins](#), Chris Froome, and Laura Trott were dragged into controversy recently after their legal use of such drugs were leaked by Russian hackers. All four athletes were granted Therapeutic Use Exemptions (TUEs) for treatment.

SunSport revealed Dick Pound, the Canadian former head of the World Anti-Doping Authority, raised concerns as long as 2006 about the surge in the count of questionable TUEs.

Last year, Alberto Salazar was accused by US athlete Lauren Fleshman of pushing legitimacy to the limits. Lauren accused the controversial of British legend Mo Farah of

encouraging her to have an asthma attack in front of a doctor to get stronger doses of medication that contained steroids. Fleshman was never coached by Salazar but was previously part of a Nike-sponsored team. Lauren accused Salazar — head of the Nike Oregon Project and coach of the 10K gold and silver medalists in the last Olympics — of violating anti-doping and prescription drug regulations. Salazar denied the allegations. Lauren remarked helped her get treatment for asthma but remarked she became squeamish when he suggested that she use medication in a different manner than instructed by the doctor.

Lauren, after more than a decade of influencing the running world on and off the track, recently decided to officially retire from professional running. Fleshman won two national titles in the 5K and finished seventh at the 2011 World Championships. She also qualified to represent the United States on three world track teams. Fleshman won two national titles in the 5K and finished seventh at the 2011 World Championships.