

## England Legend Fears Over Doping In Elite Rugby

Former England captain and Coach [Martin Johnson](#) has remarked the use of banned [performance enhancing drugs](#) is a major concern for the Rugby Union.

Johnson blamed the switch from the amateur to professional era for it. The former England captain remarked the game is professional now and we live in a different time where kids can see a livelihood and a good livelihood out of doing it, then you have got to be very careful.

Johnson believes there is a reason to be worried about the increasing use of banned substances with 14 out of 42 athletes banned in the past two years by UK Anti-[Doping](#) coming from Rugby Union in England and Wales. Johnson, who led England to 2003 World Cup victory, remarked he never felt anyone around the international teams was using drugs during his playing days. The former England captain said things are more available today and knowledge of it is more widespread because of the internet. Johnson added people are using drugs, by all account, for vanity reasons.

The former World Cup winning captain's concern is likely to bring the prevalence of steroid use in the club game back into the game's spotlight. The Leicester star, who captained the 1997 Lions on the victorious tour of South Africa, distanced himself from a return to rugby. Johnson said he is presently enjoying having 'a normal life' outside of rugby and added you must have a burning passion to stay in the game.

Johnson won five Premiership titles with Leicester and two Heineken Cups before adding the World Cup with England in 2003. The former No 4 turned out 362 times for the east Midlands clubs and picked up nine trophies in a 17-year career at Welford Road. Considered as one of the greatest locks ever to have played, Johnson became the new England team manager on 1 July 2008 to replace the previous manager Brian Ashton, but left the post in November 2011 after the quarter final defeat of England at the 2011 Rugby World Cup. Regarded as one of England's greatest ever players, Johnson celebrated the first of his 5 league titles in 1995. He was formally appointed Leicester's captain after returning from the victorious 1997 Lions tour. He continued to play for Leicester until 2005.

The former England captain made his test debut against France in January 1993 when he was unexpectedly summoned to replace the injured Wade Dooley. Later, he went on to become part of the side that won the 1995 Grand Slam. Under the leadership of Johnson, England moved away from being a forward-dominated side after Lawrence Dallaglio was caught in a *News of the World* sting operation. Johnson became the only man to captain twice when he was again asked to lead the Lions tour to Australia in 2001. Johnson became the third England captain after John Pullin and Will Carling to beat Australia, South Africa, and New Zealand after beating the All Blacks 31–28 in 2002.

In 2009, former England and Bath prop Matt Stevens was the last high profile player to be banned from the sport when he tested positive for cocaine.