

Eugene's Slaney loses medal

By Andreas Evagora
The Associated Press

MONTE CARLO, Monaco — Mary Slaney was stripped of her silver medal from the 1997 world championships after track authorities determined Monday she failed a drug test three years ago.

A lawyer for the premier U.S. distance runner said the ruling by the International Amateur Athletic Federation was based on "legal fiction."

"It is sad that the worldwide governing body for the sport of track and field would choose to prop up its sham drug-testing program at the expense of one of its greatest athletes," lawyer Doriane Coleman said.

Slaney is free to compete since the IAAF said she had retroactively completed her two-year ban.

A three-man IAAF arbitration panel said the 40-year-old runner tested positive for high testosterone levels before the 1996 Olympics.

The IAAF imposed a ban on Slaney that ran from June 1996, when the test was administered, to June 1998. Thus, Slaney loses the medal she won at Paris in the 1,500 meters.

"Let them come and try to get the \$20,000 [in prize money] that she won in Paris," lawyer Jim Coleman, Doriane's husband, said. "They don't say they're going to ask for it back, but the order

suggested they might. ... They'll never see the money."

He called the test "bogus." "What they should have been doing is trying to find a way to prove when a female athlete has used testosterone. Rather than doing that, they've been trying to find a way to save a test that doesn't work."

Added Slaney's husband, Richard: "According to the IAAF, you're guilty until you prove your innocence."

Slaney repeatedly has proclaimed her innocence. Earlier this month, she sued the IAAF and the U.S. Olympic Committee, which administered the original test.

She claims the testosterone-epitestosterone test is unreliable for women who take birth control pills in their late 30s or 40s.

The IAAF disputes that argument and said the decision by USA Track & Field on Sept. 16, 1997, to clear Slaney was "erroneous." The IAAF said Monday's ruling was "final and binding," with no right of appeal.

"Mary is fine," Jim Coleman said. "She was prepared for what happened in Monaco. It's of no concern to her. She's totally ignored it. It's a nonevent as far as we're concerned."

USATF executive director Craig Masback called the decision

"a tragedy."

"Clearly, she's one of the great athletes in the sport and a pioneer," Masback said.

"T-E testing for women is not supported by scientific evidence ... never mind for her particular test. I think it's unfortunate that the IAAF decided to pursue this case after we exonerated her. They should come up with a legal test, not pursue someone who is innocent."

The IAAF imposed the ban after the arbitration panel said there was "failure to establish by clear evidence that an abnormal T-E test was attributable to pathological or physiological conditions."

Slaney, the 1983 world champion at 1,500 and 3,000 meters, gave a urine sample during the 1996 U.S. Olympic trials that showed a T-E ratio above the 6-1 limit.

The T-E test detects the presence of testosterone, a naturally occurring muscle-building hormone that also is taken in concentrated form to improve performance.

The IAAF suspended Slaney, claiming USATF was slow to investigate.

USATF imposed its own suspension. But Slaney, backed by her sponsor Nike, challenged the ruling, and in September 1997 the U.S. federation cleared her.

Ross

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"ARod's Luscious Lips aren't so luscious, are they?"

"That's too bad about Barry."

But my team isn't the only team to suffer as this season has been marred by injuries to some of baseball's finest athletes — Kerry Wood, Mike Piazza, Moises Alou, Andres Galarraga and the list goes on.

Not only are the injuries bad for "ARod's Luscious Lips," but they are bad for baseball — the sport that has just recently resurrected itself after the strike in 1994.

Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa stole the show last season with their home run derby, but while the two amazed fans everywhere, some pretty great things were going on behind the scenes.

The Yankees won 125 games and lost just 50. ARod joined Bonds and Jose Canseco in the 40-40 club. Woods tied the major league record with 20 strikeouts in his fifth major league start and David Wells pitched a perfect game against the Minnesota Twins.

There were so many positive things going on that when the season began this year, it seemed like it never ended. Talk of what McGwire could do this season or what Wood could do carried over to spring training and opening day.

And the Yankees, with their stunning trade of Wells — the pitcher that practically defined their team — for Roger Clemens kept everyone wondering, "How much more can they do?"

As the season has progressed,

the Yankees have shown that they are human, and some of the all-stars have also shown their vulnerability. Wood is out for the season with an elbow injury that may affect more than just this season.

For young fans who idolize the big-time players, this season has been rocky, to say the least. We still have McGwire and Sosa, but after last season, we have come to expect so much more from this sport.

So, I'll wait for ARod and Bonds to lift "ARod's Luscious Lips" out of the cellar and hope they will also bring excitement back to the Mariners and Giants.

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