

HITTING THE ~~BULLSEYE~~ BOWL

SOME ATHLETES LOOK FOR ALTERNATIVE METHODS TO RELIEVE PAIN



BY KATIE ARCHER

When in pain, athletes are faced with the decision to take prescription pain pills or live with agony. The negative side effects of pain pills are leading athletes to look elsewhere for relief. Marijuana seems to be the next best option but is a banned substance.

Future pot business people gathered at Cannabis Collaborative Conference on Feb. 4 which featured former NBA star Cliff Robinson as a speaker.

Uncle Spliffy Sports Cannabis is Robinson's new marijuana business.

Robinson told KGW, "I don't think it's a big conversation right now, but as more states continue to come online and more athletes continue to voice their opinion in a positive way, the conversation will get bigger and bigger."

Even though pot is legalized, in Oregon, it's still a topic of debate. Add in whether or not athletes should use marijuana and athletes, doctors and fans will all be sharing their stance in the debate.

ESPN Special Section featured an eight-week series about drugs and athletes. One week, Dr. Gary Wadler talked about how weed affects athletes.

Anyone who is against athletes using marijuana will probably like the story because pot only got negative reviews from Dr. Wadler.

According to Wadler, marijuana negatively affects an athlete by impairing concentration, hand-eye coordination and reaction time, increases fatigability and more.

In short, weed is not a performance enhancing drug.

Why would athletes want to light up with weed if it would impair their performance?

Athletes who are in favor of marijuana argue that pot consumption is less addictive and less harmful than prescription drugs. Many retired professional players, who are now dealing with the pain of their playing days, are using pot or addicted to prescription pain meds.

Former NFL player Nate Jackson used marijuana instead of painkillers because he didn't want to be addicted to the prescription drugs like other players. In early March of last year, Jackson was a speaker at the Cannabis Business Executive Breakfast.

In an Associated Press story about the cannabis breakfast, a couple of points that Jackson shared was players' striking their heads repeatedly is a bigger problem than marijuana and if fans want the game of football to continue they should be more compassionate about health care approaches.

Jackson said he used it to help with recovery and didn't use it before a game or practice and doesn't know of anybody who did.

Athletes usually used marijuana to help them recover, focus and relax and if they are a pro they should know how to manage their usage.

A professional athlete needs to care for

their body in the best way that they see fit. I think whatever method athletes chose to use to help them should be legal and kept between them and their doctors.

If marijuana is illegal in the state where the athlete resides, then the athlete should not be using it until it becomes legal. Athletes need to follow the law just like everyone else.

If prescription pills are only making things worse for athletes, then it's time to find a better solution. I don't know if marijuana is the answer or not.

For more on the miss use of pain medications check out ESPN Outside the Lines writer John Barr's story "Painkiller Misuse Numbers NFL Pain."

A policy manager for the Drug Policy Alliance, Amanda Reiman, told Sports on Earth, "If we could show that marijuana grows hair, helps you lose weight or helps you maintain an erection it would be legal in 24 hours."

She's right.