

March 14, 2003

Gatlin going great guns in the fast lane; America's latest sprint sensation looks for gold in Birmingham

BYLINE: Neil Wilson

SECTION: Pg. 91

LENGTH: 477 words

WHEN MAURICE Greene's engine started to misfire last year, Britain's sprinters saw an opening. Today it may close.

Slamming the door in the faces of Jason Gardener and Mark Lewis-Francis on the opening day of the World Indoor Championships in Birmingham is likely to be Justin Gatlin, the latest model off the U.S. production line of sprinters.

Gatlin, 21, has already run faster than both of his British rivals in his first few weeks as a professional athlete. But he is not so much the next Greene as the next Carl Lewis - Gatlin's talent is multifaceted.

These three-day championships are only his third meeting as a professional but he is the world's fastest this year at 60 metres, ran 200m at college in 19.86secs, a 400m relay leg in 44.1 and 110m hurdles in a time only Colin Jackson surpassed among Britons last year.

Not bad for a man so relaxed as a child that doctors diagnosed Attention Deficit Disorder and prescribed medication that he took until last year to concentrate his mind. 'I was the opposite of hyperactive. I was too laid-back,' he said.

'When I told my parents I was faster than other kids and wanted to do track, they just laughed at me. They thought I was just lazy.' Last year he finally stopped taking the pills but at the U.S. Junior Championships he tested positive for amphetamine, a constituent part of his ADD medication.

Because he had stopped taking it, Gatlin had stopped declaring it to the drug testers. He was banned for two years.

He served less than two months before the IAAF intervened with a pardon.

But if he tests positive again he will face not a two-year ban but one for life. Gatlin knows he was wrong.

'I accepted the suspension. I just broke the rules which were the rules. A lot of people wouldn't come back from something like that but it motivated me to do better.' Motivated also to quit the University of Tennessee a year early, turn professional and team up with Trevor Graham, the coach who shaped the world's fastest man, Tim Montgomery, and his female counterpart, Marion Jones.

He didn't get to train with them before they left to join controversial Canadian coach Charlie Francis but he has adopted Graham's trademark-technique, the long, low, face-down start of Jones. 'Coach has worked on my technique. That's why I'm faster now,' said Gatlin.

For anyone expecting the traditional boastful, buttkicking U.S. sprinter, Gatlin is a disappointment.

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Quietlyspoken and charming, he boasts not of what he will do to the Brits but instead said: 'Mark and I are the same age.'

We're the next generation coming. We're going to have some good races.'

Today, more serious challengers will be Gardener (6.49secs this year) and the second American Terence Trammell (6.48). 'I want a medal. Gold would be nice,' said Gatlin.

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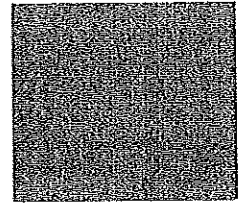
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The Daily Telegraph (LONDON)

July 31, 2006 Monday

Sprinter took early ban in stride

BYLINE: Tom Knight

SECTION: SPORT; Pg. 3

LENGTH: 532 words

LIKE most American athletes, Justin Gatlin is a good talker, and it was often refreshing to listen to an Olympic 100 metres champion devoid of the hyperbole and swagger normally associated with sprinters. He was also different in that he had a perspective on doping that few could match.

Born in New Jersey, Gatlin was an accomplished junior who, after winning the 100m, 200m and 110m hurdles at the 2001 national championships, tested positive for amphetamine. According to the rules, he was banned for two years and stripped of those titles.

It emerged, however, that the drug found in Gatlin's system was contained in medication he was taking to combat attention deficit disorder. It was a condition that Gatlin had been struggling with for several years. When he became an athlete and subject to drug-testing, he claimed that neither he nor his coach realised that he was supposed to register for medical exemption.

The International Association of Athletics Federations took note of Gatlin's condition and reduced his ban, with the warning that another breach of the anti-doping rules would be punishable by a life ban.

It was something that Gatlin appeared to take in his stride. Speaking before the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, he said: "You got to understand that, hey, you're responsible with whatever's going into your body. I always thought I was the good guy. I didn't know it was something banned. But I took it."

The setback did not appear to halt Gatlin's progress as he won the world indoor 60m title at Birmingham's NIA in 2003. But his major breakthrough came in 2004, when he beat the world's top sprinters to win the Olympic 100m title.

In many ways, he was a surprise winner in a field containing the defending champion, Maurice Greene, Asafa Powell and Shawn Crawford, his training partner who was the fastest going into the final. Gatlin followed this by taking the bronze medal in the 200m final and running the second leg for the United States as they claimed silver behind Britain in the 4x100m.

The following year, Gatlin underlined his status as the world No 1, despite the fact that, in June, Powell set a world record of 9.77sec. With Powell missing from the Helsinki World Championships, Gatlin won both sprints.

In June this year, Gatlin set what was believed to be a world record of 9.76sec in Doha, only for the mark to be adjusted to 9.77sec because of a timing error. Gatlin and Powell, the joint world record holders, were supposed to have clashed at meetings in Gateshead and Crystal Palace. Gatlin failed to appear, citing a knee injury sustained while winning the 100m at the US Championships in June.

Until now, Gatlin was among the few athletes who had not been tarnished by their association with the coach, Trevor Graham, the former Jamaican sprinter who runs the Sprint Capitol camp in Raleigh, North Carolina. Graham was the coach who turned whistleblower in 2003, sending a syringe containing a then unknown substance to the United States Anti-Doping Agency.

The substance was revealed to be THG, the designer steroid that sparked the Bay Area Laboratory Co-operative

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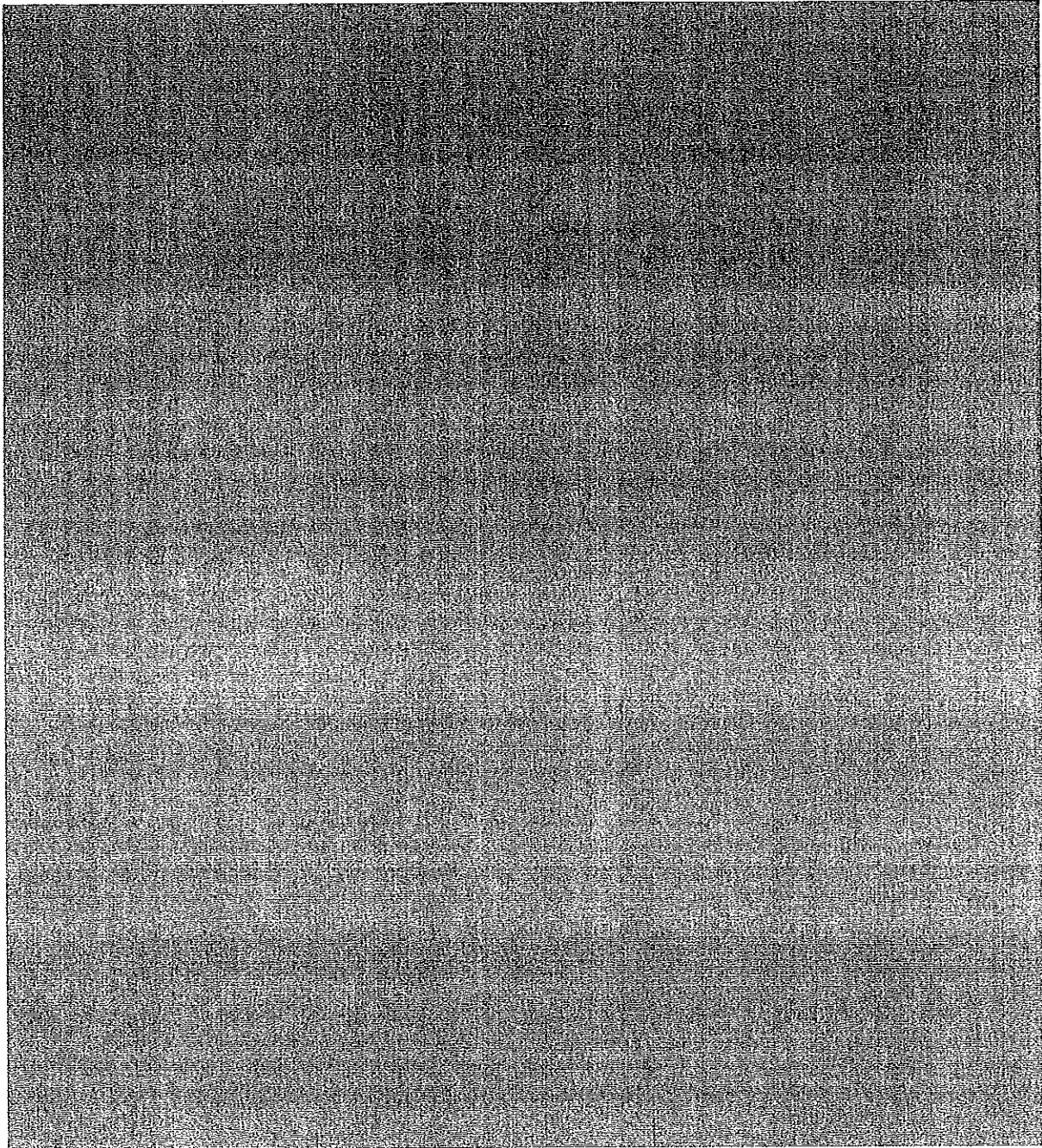
scandal. Gatlin is the ninth athlete coached by Graham to be involved in a doping case.

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The Independent

July 22, 2005

ATHLETICS: LIFE IN THE FAST LANE

BYLINE: Mike Rowbottom

LENGTH: 1407 words

At the request of the photographers crouching in the rockery outside the unremarkable facade of the Hilton Croydon hotel, the Olympic 100 metres champion placed his hands on his hips and stared down at them.

As the shutters whirred for Justin Gatlin, the 23-year-old who surprised nearly everyone except himself by taking the blue riband gold in the Athens Games last summer, the man from whom he inherited that title, Maurice Greene, was slipping quietly into a courtesy car. As his driver moved off, the man who has dominated the 100m event in recent years "unable to run in today's Norwich Union London Grand Prix because of an injury" stared balefully out of the window at the young man now being fted.

A year earlier, Greene had been the star turn in the same room where Gatlin had just given a press conference. The man who won three successive world championships and set a world record presented the familiar, brash persona exemplified by the latest addition to his tattoos "G.O.A.T, standing for 'Greatest Of All Time'.

There is no such showboating from Gatlin, whose bright and lively face has more than a hint of the Prince of Bel Air himself, Will Smith. When he smiles, his teeth shine as brightly as the diamond in his left ear. He smiles a lot. And he has a lot to smile about. The Olympic final last year was seen as a rivalry between the belligerent defending champion and the 22-year-old Jamaican who beat him decisively in the pre-Games meeting at Crystal Palace last year, Asafa Powell. But both were surprised by Gatlin, who became the youngest Olympic 100m champion since Jim Hines in 1968. He went on to take silver in the relay and bronze in the 200m.

A year earlier, Gatlin had emerged to international recognition by beating Mark Lewis-Francis to win the world indoor title in Birmingham.

He has been fortunate, as well as successful, in his career so far. At 19 he received a two-year ban for doping when amphetamines were discovered in a sample, but the international authorities pardoned him within two months because the test result had been caused by medication he was taking for attention deficit disorder.

Clearly he is not overly sensitive to the issue, as his coach is now Trevor Graham, the former guru to Marion Jones, who has admitted that he sparked off the investigation into the Balco lab which threatens to bring down both Jones and her partner, the former world record holder Tim Montgomery, by sending the US anti-doping authorities a sample of the new designer drug THG anonymously.

Gatlin is open about the question of doping, and accepts that people are wary of outstanding performers in his events given the bad publicity generated by the Balco scandal. "There is a cloud, but we can take that cloud away," he said. "I know what to say no to and what to say yes to. If any allegations come up, I know it doesn't involve me."

Fortune also favoured Gatlin at the US trials last month in Carson City, where he appeared to be out of the World Championships after false-starting but was restored after a lengthy appeal when it was adjudged he had been reacting to the runner next to him.

So here he is, ready to extend his Olympic success with another impressive performance at the World Championships which start on 4 August in Helsinki, where he will seek both the 100m and 200m titles.

With Greene, who turns 31 tomorrow, looking increasingly on the wane, the question hangs in the air: who will succeed him? Gatlin hopes he will be that athlete but he acknowledges that there are several contenders in what he

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describes as being more of a young man's event nowadays.

Powell, who lowered the 100m world record to 9.77sec earlier this season, is the obvious rival, albeit that he is still carrying a groin injury as an unwanted legacy of that run.

He feels the rivalry can take the event to a new level. 'I think so,' he said with a dazzling grin. 'Don't you love that? The story behind it? The Olympic champion against the world record holder. And that's what we're trying to do right now " uplift track and field. Of course, we both have respect for each other, but when we go out there we want to annihilate each other, basically. The world record has been ticked down by a notch the last three times. I want to go out there and put another notch on it, make it 9.75.'

He accepts that becoming the Olympic champion has changed him. 'It turns you into a man,' he said. 'You have to go out there knowing you have a lot of responsibility to a lot of kids. I have a lot of young athletes in America who call me and tell me about their progress in their track and field meets, and I support them in the same way they support me. And that support system has helped me this year to be more aggressive and to go out and win my races.'

'Everyone thought I had a chance to win in Athens but no one thought I would win. That's the thing I love about track and field " it's unpredictable. Even in the 200m there's so much talent around. You have Wallace Spearmon and Tyson Gay of the United States, you have Usain Bolt in Jamaica, you have great talent in Britain.'

Gatlin will double up in Helsinki, but he believes the hardest part will not be the running. 'It will be preparing for each round " going home on time, being responsible, not hanging out, taking ice baths and getting massages. It's knowing how to prepare myself to be a champion. Being aged 23, it's hard to be disciplined. You want to go and hang out with your friends: a lot of my friends don't run track, they're out socialising, going to clubs, drinking, just being young. But obviously I can't do that right now " I have to go out there and concentrate on my races.'

This young man is being carefully monitored by his agent, the former world high hurdles record holder Ronaldo Nehemiah.

'I've told him that when it's time for him to leave the sport, if he's only remembered for how fast he ran I'd be sort of disappointed in him. He has obligations to give back to the sport,' Nehemiah said.

'He comes from a middle-class family in Brooklyn " his father has a military background, his mother works in marketing with a New York advertising company. He is a very disciplined and respectful young man, who has been reared with those fundamentals in mind. He allows me to give him direction. He never feels he's bigger than life.'

'My whole motivation when I was running, I called it the Wow System. I always wanted to wow people. It was about how much fun I had, taking time out to meet people, to have people cheer for me and have the utmost respect for me because of the way I played the game. That's the same thing I try to impart to all of my clients, including Justin. You're not a one-dimensional person.'

Crystal Palace awaits the latest demonstration of Gatlin's special talent.

New kids on the block: Five runners who can take the 100 metres by storm at the World Championships

DARRELL BROWN

A 20-year-old Trinidadian, he became the youngest 100 metres medallist in the history of the world championships two years ago when he took the silver medal in Paris behind Kim Collins. Recorded the world's fastest times for 100m at 15, 16, 17 and 18 and has already run 9.99sec in the 100m.

FRANCIS OBIKWELU A member of the ethnic minority Ibo group in Nigeria, he emigrated to Portugal and took up citizenship in 2001. Since then, he has established himself as a major contender, taking an unexpected silver medal in last summer's Olympic Games behind the equally unexpected winner, Justin Gatlin.

USAIN BOLT

Emerged on the international scene when he became the youngest male world

junior champion at the age of only 15, setting a 200 metres age-group best time of 20.58sec. He went on to lower that time to 19.93 last season. Still aged only 18, Bolt is clearly a huge talent.

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ASAFA POWELL

The 22-year-old Jamaican was the outstanding 100 metres runner of last season " up until the Olympic final, when he finished only fifth. His world record time of 9.77sec last month, however, indicated that he is capable of reaching the very top of his event. But he is currently nagged by a groin strain.

SHAWN CRAWFORD

He styled himself 'cheetah man' after racing against a zebra and a cheetah on Fox TV in 2003, since when the South Carolina runner, who specialised in American football at college, has established himself at both 100m and 200m, becoming Olympic champion at the latter event in Athens last year.

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Chicago Tribune (Illinois)

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July 29, 2006 Saturday

Star sprinter Gatlin tests positive for testosterone

BYLINE: By Philip Hersh, Chicago Tribune

SECTION: SPORTS

LENGTH: 1287 words

DATELINE: CHICAGO

CHICAGO _ First, the winner of cycling's premier race. Two days later, the winner of track and field's signature event.

Never has the credibility of sport been more undermined by doping, nor has the morality of leading U.S. athletes been more called into question.

Saturday's announcement that 2004 Olympic 100-meter champion Justin Gatlin has tested positive for the same substance, testosterone, as 2006 Tour de France winner Floyd Landis means two of the United States' leading athletes risk having their entire careers tarnished by stunning ethical lapses.

It also means their scandal-battered sports have suffered another damaging blow.

"This truly compromises the integrity of sport and strikes at its very essence," said Merrill Melnick, a sports sociologist at SUNY-Brockport. "We presume the field is level and the most courageous athlete will prevail.

"The bottom line is, this is terrible for sport."

Gatlin, 24, of Raleigh, N.C., would be the most decorated track and field athlete ever sanctioned for doping. He won gold, silver and bronze medals in the 2004 Olympics, is co-holder of the world record in the 100 and winner of both the 100 and 200 at the 2005 world championships.

His situation is worse than Landis' for several reasons.

Gatlin, who denied having knowingly used performance-enhancing drugs in a statement announcing the positive, has been found positive for "testosterone or its precursors" in both the "A" and "B" samples from a doping control at the April 22 Kansas Relays.

Those positives were confirmed by sophisticated secondary analysis using carbon isotopes, a test that determines if the testosterone involved came from an external source rather than being produced naturally.

"My understanding is the (carbon isotope) test is generally reliable and accurate," Cameron Myler, Gatlin's attorney, said in a telephone interview Saturday from her New York office. "At this point, we are focusing our efforts on what caused the positive test."

Gatlin also faces a life ban from his sport because he was found guilty of a previous doping violation.

"I cannot account for these results because I have never knowingly used any banned substance or authorized anyone else to administer such a substance to me," Gatlin said in the statement.

Under the World Anti-Doping Code, an athlete bears full responsibility for banned substances that appear in doping control.

Gatlin's likely defense will involve questioning the reliability of the tests or flaws in the handling of his urine sample.

Landis, who simply denies having used testosterone, awaits his "B" sample analysis, likely to be conducted next week. It has been reported his "A" sample carbon isotope test showed the presence of external testosterone, but he officially has been found positive only for a testosterone/epitestosterone ratio exceeding the allowable limit of 4-1.

The Tribune has independently confirmed the accuracy of a German TV report that said Landis had an 11-1 ratio on his "A" sample. Such a ratio, if reproduced on the "B" sample, would make it almost impossible for Landis to argue his positive owed simply to having a normally high natural testosterone level that went over the allowable within a statistically acceptable range.

"I know we have two superstar athletes in the press," Myler said. "I don't know if it's the same issue."

The Gatlin and Landis cases follow three years in which superstar U.S. athletes like Barry Bonds and Marion Jones have been implicated in the BALCO doping scandal.

Fourteen track and field athletes, including former 100-meter world record-holder Tim Montgomery, have been sanctioned for doping on evidence related to the BALCO investigation.

"This does raise the issue of what we teach kids about ethics and sportsmanship," Melnick said.

"Perhaps we need to take a look at the whole U.S. sports system, beginning in T-ball. Perhaps there is a poison corrupting everything."

There has been a torrent of criticism against U.S. athletes and the U.S. Olympic Committee for being quick to throw stones while living in a glass house. Only recently have U.S. sports leaders been perceived as getting serious about battling performance-enhancing drug use and punishing offenders.

"We have reached a tipping point in the fight against doping in sport," USOC Chairman Peter Ueberroth said Saturday. "The cold reality is this: we are not winning the battle."

USA Track & Field CEO Craig Masback said in a statement his organization is "gravely concerned" over the Gatlin situation.

"Justin has been one of the most visible spokespersons for winning with integrity in the sport of track and field, and throughout his career he has made clear his willingness to take responsibility for his actions," Masback said.

Gatlin, who tied the 100 world record with a time of 9.77 seconds May 12 in Qatar, has presented himself as part of the new generation of track athletes who would pull the sport out of the BALCO morass.

"I understand what it would mean to track and field if I ever tested positive or went down in some scandal," Gatlin told Sports Illustrated for its May 22 issue.

"Not to have an ego about it, but it might be the KO for our sport."

Yet Gatlin also allowed himself to be viewed with a jaundiced eye because of his refusal to disassociate himself from coach Trevor Graham, who formerly coached Montgomery and Jones. At least seven athletes who trained under Graham have tested positive.

Gatlin's attitude is not unlike that of Lance Armstrong, who defiantly continued to work with an Italian doctor linked to doping after their relationship was revealed. That increased suspicions about doping that swirl around the seven-time Tour de France winner.

Graham turned in the syringe that led to the discovery of THG, the previously undetectable steroid at the heart of the BALCO scandal.

The New York Times reported July 20 the grand jury investigating Bonds also is investigating Graham.

"With what happened way back in college and the coach I have now, I know that my career will always be shrouded with this allegation," Gatlin said in June.

"It's something I've grown to live with, something that keeps me fighting as an athlete, helping other sprinters and other youth come along and try to steer track and field in the right direction."

Gatlin faces a lifetime ban if the positive tests are confirmed as a doping violation because he had tested positive for another banned substance in 2001, when he was a student at the University of Tennessee.

That positive was for an amphetamine, and Gatlin was banned two years by the international track federation. The suspension was halved when he successfully argued the amphetamine came from a prescription medicine he had been taking 10 years for attention deficit disorder.

According to Myler, Gatlin learned of the testosterone "A" positive about June 15 and the "B" positive about a month later. He has withdrawn from several meets since early June, citing a leg injury. An athlete is allowed to compete while awaiting the result of the "B" sample.

"He did have an injury, but Justin and everyone around him decided it would be in his best interests to withdraw voluntarily from competition," Myler said.

Myler said Graham is not among those advising Gatlin how to handle the doping situation.

"I hope when all the facts are revealed, it will be determined I have done nothing wrong," Gatlin said.

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News & Observer (Raleigh, North Carolina)

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July 30, 2006 Sunday

Doping charge stuns Gatlin

BYLINE: Ned Barnett, The News & Observer, Raleigh, N.C.

SECTION: SPORTS

LENGTH: 1049 words.

Jul. 30--Justin Gatlin, the reigning world champion in the 100- and 200-meter dashes and co-holder of the world record in the 100, has tested positive for a banned substance and may be barred permanently from competing.

Gatlin, who lives in Raleigh and trains in the Triangle with Trevor Graham's Sprint Capitol group, tested positive for testosterone or its precursors after the Kansas Relays in April, the sprinter disclosed Saturday.

In a statement released through his publicist, Gatlin said:

"I cannot account for these results, because I have never knowingly used any banned substance or authorized anyone else to administer such a substance to me."

Gatlin's attorney, Cameron Myler, told Reuters that Gatlin's B -- or second -- sample from the Kansas event was tested in July and also produced an unusual level of testosterone.

The positive test could be especially costly because it is a second violation. In 2001 while running for the University of Tennessee, Gatlin tested positive for an amphetamine. Gatlin said it was a prescription drug he had been taking for years to treat attention deficit disorder.

The International Association of Athletics Federations cut short his two-year ban but said another violation would lead to a life ban.

"That experience made me even more vigilant," Gatlin said in his statement, "to make certain that I not come into contact with any banned substance for any reason whatsoever, because any additional anti-doping rule offense could mean a lifetime ban from the sport that I love."

Gatlin's positive test comes amid speculation about why he has remained in the Graham camp despite a swirl of rumors and investigations about drug use by Graham's athletes.

Several of Graham's athletes have received suspensions for doping, including Tim Montgomery, who was stripped of his 100-meter world record. Marion Jones, who won five medals at the 2000 Summer Olympics while being trained by Graham, was accused of using drugs before and during the Sydney Games.

The New York Times reported last week that Graham, along with baseball star Barry Bonds, is the target of a San Francisco federal grand jury investigating steroids distributed by Victor Conte and his company, the Bay Area Laboratory Co-operative.

Graham could not be reached for comment.

So far, Gatlin is not challenging the accuracy of the tests. He is expected to argue to the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency that the banned substance was given to him without his knowledge.

Gatlin may be spared sanctions if he can demonstrate he had no knowledge he was receiving a drug in a specific instance. But USADA policy holds athletes responsible for the company they keep and does not accept a blanket defense that an athlete never asked what was in supplements and creams he received from others.

News of the charge stunned coaches and supporters of Gatlin who described the 24-year-old sprinter as a role model for young track athletes and an outspoken advocate of a drug-free sport.

USA Track & Field chief executive officer Craig Masback said in a statement on the federation's Web site, "Justin has been one of the most visible spokespersons for winning with integrity in the sport of track and field."

Jay Cormier, Gatlin's high school coach when he was a hurdles and 100-meter state champion at Woodham High in Pensacola, Fla., said, "There's no way he would do anything to jeopardize his career. There's too much at stake. He's the greatest track athlete in the world."

Gatlin is the second prominent American athlete to be connected to doping in the past week. Tour de France winner Floyd Landis' Phonak team announced earlier this week that he had tested positive for excessive testosterone. He is awaiting the results of a test on his B sample.

St. Augustine's track coach George Williams, the U.S. Olympic men's track coach in 2004 when Gatlin won the 100-meter gold medal, said he was "crushed" to learn of the positive test.

"I hate that because Justin is a good guy. I have not seen a better person than him since I have been in the business," he said.

Vince Anderson, an assistant track coach at Tennessee when Gatlin was there and now an assistant at Texas A&M, said Gatlin was so wounded by his first suspension he wouldn't risk another.

"It reduced him to the core of his being," Anderson said. "It's just impossible to believe he would venture there again.

"In a lot of ways, it galvanized him and made him what he was. It was painful, but it strengthened him. Because of that, it's impossible to believe he would slip again."

Anderson said that if Gatlin's violation stemmed from something applied to his skin, "he probably has a case."

"People lay hands on him all the time," Anderson said. "It's the nature of the business. People are on the physio table and massage table constantly."

Myler, Gatlin's lawyer, told Reuters that Gatlin was in shock after learning of his positive test in mid-June. He defended his title in the 100 meters at the U.S. championships in Indianapolis later that month but has not competed since.

Gatlin and Asafa Powell of Jamaica both have equalled the world record of 9.77 seconds this season but have yet to meet on the track this season. The pair had been scheduled for two meets in Britain, but Gatlin withdrew from both events citing injury.

Cormier, Gatlin's high school coach who often speaks with his former star, doesn't think Gatlin knowingly took a banned substance, but he said there's no escaping the effect of a positive test.

"Just to come under that cloud of accusation, that just ruins it for me and for everybody," he said. "You're guilty until proven innocent. And that stain, it never goes away."

Williams said the Gatlin test is the latest blow to a sport trying to regain credibility after the BALCO scandal.

"All this stuff keeps casting a cloud over track. It's terrible," he said. "I just hope it clears up, and I hope he gets cleared up."

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Now for the Real Test; Evidence of a Steroid Is Just One Part of the Gatlin Story

BYLINE: Amy Shipley, Washington Post Staff Writer

SECTION: Sports; E01

LENGTH: 2295 words

The news that came six months ago seemed all too familiar: A champion athlete tests positive for a performance-enhancing drug. The athlete immediately professes his innocence and vows to clear his name. And one day, sprinter Justin Gatlin will perhaps be remembered as nothing more than another cheat busted in the steroid era.

But an examination of Gatlin's case finds nothing routine. What emerges is a convoluted web of poorly fitting pieces of evidence that lead to no clear conclusions. It's a tale that includes an unlikely rules violator, a renegade coach, a masseur, an assault, private investigators and a strange-looking tube of cream.

The only thing not in dispute is this: All parties agree that Gatlin did indeed fail a drug test. A possible punishment is an eight-year suspension from the sport.

Gatlin, 24, arrived in Lawrence, a city in northeastern Kansas, for the Kansas Relays last April, at the forefront of a new generation of competitors who pledged to clean up the sport by proving they could win without cheating.

The Kansas Relays is a second-tier track event used primarily by American athletes as a tuneup for the European summer circuit. Gatlin anchored a winning relay, then in May traveled to Qatar, where he equaled the 100-meter world record of 9.77 seconds. It set the stage for a showdown with co-record holder Asafa Powell of Jamaica to see who was the fastest man on Earth.

They never got to race.

On June 15, Gatlin was informed that a urine sample taken from him in Kansas had shown evidence of a steroid. Like many before him, Gatlin said he was innocent. Except here the story took its first strange turn: Gatlin and his lawyers didn't dispute the test result. They said someone had managed to sneak a steroid into Gatlin's system.

The case has attracted the attention of federal investigators, according to several sources, and the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) has allowed an unusual extension to give Gatlin's lawyers time to assemble their client's defense.

The idea that Gatlin was doped without his knowledge has been dismissed by some as implausible and a smokescreen. Others, however, have raised questions about the chain of events in Kansas that illuminate the more sordid side of big-time track and field.

"I would find it really hard to believe" that Gatlin was doped unknowingly, said Peter Stubbs, an agent who

represents more than a dozen track and field athletes but not Gatlin. "On the flip side, I believe pretty strongly that Justin is a clean athlete . . . and there's a problem here somewhere."

Gatlin, who won three medals at the 2004 Olympics in Athens, tested negative on at least six other occasions this year, according to USADA and the IAAF, the world track and field governing body.

When Gatlin, who would not comment publicly for this article, learned of the positive result for testosterone or its precursors, his supporters at first looked with suspicion at Trevor Graham, his North Carolina-based coach. Graham gained fame for giving USADA a steroid-filled syringe in 2003 that led to the Bay Area Laboratory Cooperative (BALCO) sports doping case. The BALCO probe has ensnared more than a dozen athletes, among them track and field champion Marion Jones and baseball slugger Barry Bonds.

But Graham, who like Gatlin was under contract with Nike before Gatlin's positive test, also has coached more than a half-dozen athletes charged with doping violations. In November, he was indicted on federal charges of lying to investigators in the BALCO probe and faces a possible 15 years in prison.

Graham denied any involvement in doping Gatlin. A day after Gatlin announced the positive test result, however, Graham claimed he knew who was responsible. "We know who the person is who actually did this," Graham said. "We hope this individual has the guts to come forward and say he did it."

In subsequent interviews, Graham pointed to Chris Whetstine, a massage therapist who Graham said lathered the runner's legs with what he believes was a steroid-based cream at the race in Kansas. Graham said he believed Whetstine had sabotaged Gatlin in an act of vengeance, possibly over a months-old financial dispute between the two or as part of a deeper plot to get back at Graham for his role in setting off the BALCO probe.

Whetstine, who lives in Eugene, Ore., denied the accusation through an attorney. Others ridiculed Graham's assertions as preposterous. Unsure what to believe, Gatlin's attorneys hired a private investigator in June to trail both Graham and Whetstine, though the probe turned up little.

If there was a conspiracy, the trail had seemingly gone cold. Except for one interesting fact: The results of the lab report on Gatlin's urine sample, which was obtained by The Washington Post, were consistent with the heavy application of the type of steroid cream that Graham said he saw Whetstine rub on Gatlin, according to two chemists who reviewed the results. The lab report showed the presence of small amounts of synthetic testosterone precursors in Gatlin's urine. Both chemists added that it was impossible to state conclusively that the cream was the source.

The chemists, who have no connection to Gatlin or his legal team, spoke on condition of anonymity because they did not want to be publicly associated with the case.

One of the chemists said Gatlin would have been foolish to have allowed himself to be massaged with the product Graham said Whetstine was using -- and that Graham would have been foolish to have sanctioned its use on his star sprinter, for that matter -- because its active ingredient was Dehydroepiandrosterone, also known as DHEA.

DHEA is not known to enhance athletic performance. On top of that, according to specialists in the field, it is easily detected.

"The only reason someone would give DHEA to an athlete," one of the chemists said in an e-mail, "would be to assure a positive test."

Elite track and field athletes are massaged nearly every day during the competitive season, often with anti-inflammatory creams. Massage therapists are considered so vital to helping athletes recover that some shoe and management companies sign them to contracts and pay for them to travel with their athletes.

Gatlin made regular visits to a personal massage therapist during the winters in Raleigh, N.C., and in the spring and summer took advantage of the services of Whetstine, who was under contract with Nike and has worked with Nike-sponsored athletes since at least 1998.

Whetstine arrived in Raleigh in late March, Graham said, and was the only one who massaged Gatlin before the Kansas Relays. In the days leading to the April 22 drug test, Whetstine massaged Gatlin two or three times, Graham, a track official and athletes from Gatlin's group recalled.

Cedric Walker, USA Track and Field's former relay program manager, said he observed Whetstine working on

sprinter Shawn Crawford and Gatlin after a training session in Lawrence. Walker said he noticed that after Whetstine finished with Crawford he reached in his bag for a different cream to rub on Gatlin.

"All I saw was the massage therapist go into a bag and bring out something else," Walker said. "He rubbed something else on Justin. . . . It was right there in front of me. It wasn't what he used on Shawn."

Whetstine massaged Gatlin the day before the race, applying cream so heavily it seeped through his wainup pants, Graham said. After Gatlin competed, Whetstine approached him as he was heading to the drug-testing station and ushered him to his table underneath the stadium scoreboard for another massage, Graham said. There, Graham said, Whetstine applied a cream to Gatlin's inner thighs and behind his knees. Graham said he didn't see what was written on the white tube of cream, though he remembered it had a pink squiggle on it.

Graham said he asked Whetstine what was in the tube and that Whetstine refused to tell him, stuffing it into his pocket. As Graham tried to grab the tube, Graham recalled, Gatlin looked behind him, apparently unclear what the fuss was about, and said, "Let him do his job, man!"

Graham said he dropped the matter, not wanting to overreact. But after he learned Gatlin had tested positive, he said, he searched the Internet for testosterone creams until he found a photo that showed a white tube that was just like the one he had seen being used by Whetstine. The pink squiggle, he said, was actually the letter S for Sarati Laboratories. The cream, Deep Hydrating Essential Aloe Cream by Sarati, contains DHEA and is marketed to menopausal women as an alternative to traditional hormone therapy. Available over the Internet, a two-ounce tube costs \$21.95.

Whetstine declined to comment for this story. His attorney, Rick Roseta, issued an "absolute, vehement denial" of Graham's allegations. Said Roseta: "I think probably [Whetstine's] position is borne out by the recent indictment [of Graham] by a federal grand jury, which seems to indicate he has a problem with the truth."

Whetstine previously worked on several athletes sanctioned in the BALCO case, including Kelli White and Chryste Gaines. Their coach, Remi Korchemny, pleaded guilty to misbranding a prescription drug as a result of the probe.

"Chris is a very honest and a very good guy," Korchemny said of the massage therapist. "I doubt he would ever commit anything related to unprofessional behavior."

In 2003, however, Whetstine was disciplined by the Oregon Board of Massage Therapists for "unprofessional conduct that could endanger the health or safety of a client or the public," according to the settlement order. The board declined to reveal the details of the case.

After blaming Whetstine, Graham at first theorized that Whetstine was angry because Gatlin refused to give him a bonus on top of what Nike paid him for his work the previous year. The dispute, Graham said, was followed by unexplained absences by Whetstine and caused his track group to advertise for another therapist.

Later, Graham speculated that he -- not Gatlin -- might have been the target because of anger in the track and field world surrounding his decision to send the syringe filled with steroids to USADA in 2003. The federal investigation that Graham launched resulted in five criminal convictions and more than a dozen athlete suspensions. According to that theory, Graham's enemies wanted to take him down by implicating Gatlin, his star runner.

"He sold all of us for the benefit of himself," Korchemny said of Graham and his role in the BALCO case. But "everything comes back. It's like a boomerang. . . . He threw it against us, but it will hit him."

Those around Gatlin say he didn't seem to understand how poorly Graham was perceived outside his camp of runners. Citing the success he had achieved under Graham and their friendship dating from his departure after two years from the University of Tennessee in 2002, Gatlin rejected the advice of his agent, former track star Ronaldo Nehemiah, who suggested after the Athens Olympics that he find another coach.

But Gatlin's supporters say Gatlin did understand the implications of a positive drug test. A stimulant in his attention-deficit disorder medicine had triggered a positive in 2001. Though anti-doping officials ruled he did not intend to cheat in that instance, the violation remained on his record. Another positive could bring a lifetime ban.

Gatlin was known to order room service when traveling to avoid the possibility of ingesting contaminated food. He kept his luggage and sports bags locked and avoided cold and flu medication, for fear they could contain banned

substances.

A month after Gatlin's positive test result was announced, Nike suspended Gatlin's contract and fired Graham. It has taken no public action and made no comment regarding Whetstine.

There was, however, a public dispute between Whetstine and one of his Nike supervisors. The supervisor, Llewellyn Starks, is alleged to have assaulted Whetstine outside an Indianapolis hotel last June during the U.S. track and field championships, according to the police report. The incident occurred less than a week after Gatlin was notified of the positive test.

Using a profane expression, Starks accused Whetstine of messing with Nike's athletes, Whetstine and his girlfriend told police, according to detective Philip Beaver. Starks, who once worked with Gatlin's former management team, declined to comment. Nike Global Sports Marketing Director John Capriotti did not return numerous phone messages seeking comment.

Though Gatlin's case could go to arbitration with USADA as early as next month, his legal strategy remains a mystery. USADA rules provide for the possibility of reduced sanctions for athletes who provide information against their coaches or other sources of drugs, but Gatlin and his attorneys have not revealed what he will tell the panel.

Some of Gatlin's supporters say they question whether the evidence points to Graham. Others say the massage therapist theory -- even if true -- would be difficult to prove.

Those who know Gatlin well, however, agree on this: He is innocent.

"I have no doubt in my mind he didn't do anything," said Robin Beamon, the ex-wife of legendary long jumper Bob Beamon and a friend of Gatlin's who is involved in youth track and field in Miami. "It just goes against everything this kids stands for. Once you wade through all the craziness, what did he stand to lose or gain? It was the Kansas Relays. He was . . . at the top of the world."

All of which leaves Cedric Walker, like many others in the track and field world, scratching his head.

"I believe in my heart something's wrong," Walker said. "This is starting to look more every day like 'All the President's Men.'"

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Associated Press Worldstream

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Pressure on for Gatlin to explain positive test

BYLINE: By EDDIE PELLIS, AP National Writer

SECTION: SPORTS NEWS

LENGTH: 586 words

The defense for American sprinter Justin Gatlin in his career-threatening doping case could revolve around a massage therapist who Gatlin's coach accused of sabotage.

Coach Trevor Graham said Sunday that Gatlin, the reigning Olympic and world champion and co-world-record holder in the 100 meters, was victim of a massage therapist who rubbed testosterone cream on Gatlin without his knowledge.

The coach declined to name the therapist.

"We know who the person is who actually did this," Graham told The Washington Post. "Justin is devastated. Myself, too. We're extremely (upset) right now. We are trying to go out and make sure we can prove his innocence, and we hope this individual has the guts to come forward and say he did it."

On Saturday, Gatlin acknowledged he had been informed by the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency that he tested positive for testosterone or other steroids after a relay race in Kansas in April. The revelation came just two days after Tour de France champion Floyd Landis' victory was thrown into question for allegations of similar doping violations.

Gatlin said he didn't know why the test came back positive and promised cooperation with USADA, as it continues with the case. He didn't return messages left by The Associated Press on his cell phone Sunday.

Gatlin's connection with Graham is viewed by many as problematic. Gatlin has long positioned himself as a champion of drug-free competition in a sport dogged by problems, while Graham is a key figure in the BALCO investigation and has coached several athletes who have tested positive for steroids.

Gatlin's attorney, Cameron Myler, didn't return messages left on her cell phone by The AP. On Saturday, she said she and Gatlin had ideas about how his drug tests came up positive, but she wouldn't get into details and said she didn't condone Graham's allegations.

If Gatlin is proven guilty, his world record would be stripped. He tied Jamaican Asafa Powell's mark (9.77 seconds) in the 100 meters in May, after the positive test.

Gatlin would also be banned for life, the standard discipline for a second positive test. The head of the World Anti-Doping Agency, Dick Pound, called for such a penalty.

"He needs to be banned for up to life," Pound said in an interview on BBC Radio Five Live. "There may be some extenuating circumstances to come out, but I think if he just continues to come out with some bland denial that, 'I never did anything, I can't imagine how this result occurred,' that will not help him when it comes to sentencing.

"If they can find someone who did, in fact, spike it, then it is for them to prove but short of something like that I think he has a very serious problem."

WADA bylaws do provide relief for accused athletes who can prove they have been victims of sabotage, although the burden of proof is steep.

The International Association of Athletics Federation said in a statement Sunday that Gatlin will be suspended for life if his positive drug tests both his 'A' and 'B' samples came back positive are confirmed. Gatlin was suspended for two years in 2001 after testing for illegal substances, the result of taking medication to control attention deficit disorder.

"If the USADA procedure concludes by confirming the violation, the sanction under IAAF rules will be a life ban," the IAAF said.

Gatlin's case next goes in front of a review panel. If the positive test is upheld, Gatlin could then take the case to arbitration, which could be his best chance to prove he was sabotaged, if that's the course he pursues.

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USADA 0275

<http://w3.nexis.com/new/delivery/PrintDoc.do?fileSize=6615&jobHandle=1822%3>.

Friday, August 4, 2006
Updated: August 7, 1:51 PM ET

'I know it was sabotage'

By Mike Fish
ESPN.com

Since he began the Raleigh, N.C.-based Sprint Capitol track team in 1999, Trevor Graham has operated under a cloud of suspicion. This past week, star pupil Justin Gatlin, the Olympic champion and co-world record holder in the 100-meter dash, revealed he has tested positive for testosterone or a similar performance-enhancing substance. Graham has placed the blame on masseur Chris Whetstine, whom he claims had a grudge against Gatlin. Whetstine denies any involvement. Graham suggests Whetstine might have been paid by someone to sabotage Gatlin's career. Earlier this week, ESPN.com's Mike Fish sat down with Graham for a lengthy interview. Here is an excerpt of the transcript, as it pertains to Graham's explanation for Whetstine's role in Gatlin's positive test.

ESPN.com: OK, the Relays in Lawrence, Kansas -- what happened there, the positive test?

Trevor Graham: Well, there is a number of things that happened. Victor [Conte] got out [of prison] in March. [In] April, got [doping] control. We don't know how many people are actually behind this thing; but leading up to the Kansas Relays, we had trouble with this masseuse. It is the same masseuse that actually worked with Marion [Jones] and everyone else. And we always had problems; but somehow, he does great work. So we had let him go and was not going to work with him any more. We put on the Sprint Capitol Web site that we were trying to find a new masseuse. [We] get closer to the season, we needed a masseuse and we interviewed different people. None of them had the skills like Chris. So at the last minute, I decided to give him another chance. We called him. We invited him back to the Mt. Sac Relays. He came to the Mt. Sac Relays. When he arrived there, his first thing was like, that motherf----- Gatlin, he is this and he is that. He kept going off about Justin trying to get rid of him. 'He's gonna get his.' I'm like, 'Look, Justin has nothing to do with you. I'm the coach. I'm the one that actually don't want you to work with him, so I made that decision. And I made the decision now to bring you back, but don't come with any BS.' He's like, 'No, it's not you, it's Justin. I know it is him. I heard it is him.' I said, 'Who did you hear that from?' He couldn't tell me.

So we're going through this big argument on the track at the Mt. Sac Relays. That night, he was going out and I asked him. He said, 'I'm going out drinking with some friends of mine.' I was like, 'Who are these friends? You don't know no one here.' He was like, 'Of course, I know some people here.' So he left that night and came back the next morning. After that, he left earlier than us for the Kansas Relays. That Monday morning, he was bitching about his ticket, that his ticket wasn't right. That, 'You guys have me arriving early in the morning and you guys are gonna be sleeping in all day. I got to be sitting in the airport all day waiting for you guys, [you] got me flying out all over the world.' I said, 'We didn't do your ticket' ...



We got up next morning for the relays. We ran the relay. After the relay, they grabbed Justin for doping. But at the relay, there was other groups there, too. Somehow, some of these other groups that was there didn't get tested. Just my athletes got tested, and others. But a particular group did

not get tested at the Kansas Relays. And we noticed that. Somehow, when we are going to doping control, Chris stopped Justin and is like, 'Let me massage him really quick, coach.' I was like, 'No, you ain't got to massage it, man. We're going to doping. He just run a relay. What do you need to rub him for? It's a relay. We ain't got no meets coming up in next two weeks. So he'll be alright.' Then, he kept coming at Justin. 'Let me massage it.' Justin was like, 'Let him do his job, coach.' I was like, 'No.' Then, Justin walked over to the massage table and he pulled Justin's pants down. Justin was on the phone, I think. He pulled Justin's pants down to his ankle. Then he told Justin to lay on the table real quick. Justin laid on the table. He pulled a tube out of his pocket, not out of his bag, and then he just squirted a tube on Justin's leg.

ESPN.com: A tube?

TG: Yeah, it was a tube with like an "S" on it, like a crooked "S" on it. I said to him, 'That is not Voltaren.' And he was like, 'Get away. Move back.' So I was trying to get around him now but he already squirted it on him, so then he stuck it in his pocket. I tried to reach my hand in his pocket. And then he just applied it inside Justin's inner thigh and back of his knee. I walked over to him and just gave him this look, like 'What the hell is going on?' He turned his back and kept turning around. So we went on now to doping, I looked back at Chris, and Chris is packing up his table real fast, trying to get on out of there. I turned to Justin □ 'Is something wrong with your leg?' He said, 'No, nothing's wrong with it,' so I left it alone. Justin said I was too paranoid.

ESPN.com: What was it?

TG: I'm not gonna -- if you know what is in his body, you'll know what it is.

ESPN.com: A cream?

TG: It is a cream, yeah.

ESPN.com: The same cream that Victor [Conte] had?

TG: No, it is not the same cream Victor had. It is a completely different cream.

ESPN.com: Where do you think it came from?

TG: I think he either purchased it online, or maybe he got it from whoever he went drinking with that night. Or he purchased it himself. Now we're leading up to Doha [where Gatlin equalled Asafa Powell's 9.77 world-record]. To Japan. After we left there, left Kansas, we got home that Monday. The doping people were sitting at the track, waiting to test Justin. After they tested Justin ... they tested Saturday in Kansas, Monday they tested. We got to the Penn Relays, they grabbed him again. They just kept on testing him. They tested him three times in one week. So after we found out, eventually someone probably called them, like they knew something was going to happen. Telling them to keep testing this guy until you find whatever they had put in his body.

ESPN.com: So it looks like someone had alerted USADA [United States Anti-Doping Agency] or somebody that they needed to test him, right?

TG: Yeah.

ESPN.com: Do you know who they contacted?

USADA 0277

<http://sports.espn.go.com/espn/print?id=2539596&type=story>

TG: I don't know. But after you find out certain things, you find out that the person that was selecting him -- that person picking him out all the time -- maybe has something to do with it. Maybe. We're looking at everyone. Right now, everyone is a suspect.

ESPN.com: So do you think this is sabotage?

TG: I know it was sabotage. I don't think it was sabotage at all, I know it is.

Mike Fish is an investigative reporter for ESPN.com. He can be reached at michaeljfish@gmail.com.

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Associated Press Worldstream

August 2, 2006 Wednesday 6:16 PM GMT

Masseur denies using testosterone on sprinter

BYLINE: By ANNE M. PETERSON, AP Sports Writer

SECTION: SPORTS NEWS

LENGTH: 599 words

DATELINE: PORTLAND Oregon

A massage therapist who has worked for years with elite athletes at the Prefontaine Classic track meet denied Wednesday that he applied testosterone cream on American sprinter Justin Gatlin.

On Saturday, the Olympic and 100-meter world champion co-world-record holder acknowledged that the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency informed him of a test indicating he had used testosterone or other steroids after a relay race in Kansas in April.

Gatlin has said he didn't know how steroids got into his system.

But Trevor Graham, Gatlin's coach, has contended Gatlin was the victim of a vengeful massage therapist who rubbed testosterone cream on his legs without his knowledge. The massage therapist has been identified as Christopher Whetstine, who has a practice in Eugene.

Whetstine, who's under contract to Nike, denied the allegation.

"Trevor Graham is not speaking on behalf of Justin Gatlin, and the statement about me is not true," Whetstine said in a statement read by his attorney, Elizabeth Baker. "I have fully cooperated with the investigation into this matter."

Baker said Whetstine denies using a banned substance on Gatlin "or any other athlete."

Whetstine, 40, has served for seven years as the massage therapist for the Prefontaine Classic, an annual elite meet at the University of Oregon's Hayward Field, according to meet promoter Tom Jordan.

Jordan doubts the allegations against Whetstine, saying "He really wants what's best for the athletes."

"He is, in my view, considered one of the best in the world," Jordan said.

Whetstine provides his services for Nike-sponsored athletes at various events, said Dean Stoyer, a Nike spokesman.

Stoyer would not reveal the length of Whetstine's contract or any other details.

"We won't speak to the allegations made by Trevor Graham," or any other aspects of the matter, Stoyer said.

Whetstine was not available to speak personally to the media, Baker said.

If the allegations against Gatlin hold up, he would face a life ban and the loss of the world 100-meter record. Gatlin equaled Jamaican Asafa Powell's mark of 9.77 seconds in May, a month after the positive test.

USADA 0279

He would keep his Athens gold medal in the 100 and world 100 and 200 titles from 2005.

Gatlin's lawyers, without supporting Graham's sabotage claim, have said they will seek to clear him on grounds of "exceptional circumstances."

Under international rules, athletes are responsible for any banned substance found in their system. However, bans can be waived or reduced if an athlete can prove "no fault" in the positive test.

Gatlin was suspended in 2001 after testing positive for an amphetamine found in medication he was taking for attention deficit disorder. Track's world governing body gave him early reinstatement, but said the suspension remained on his record and he would face a life ban for any second violation.

The IAAF said it gave little credence to Graham's claim about Whetstone.

"We have a strict liability rule that what's in your body is your responsibility, so unless there was an independent witness who saw everything clearly, there really isn't a possibility that there would be something in that," IAAF spokesman Nick Davies said.

Graham has been involved with at least a half-dozen other athletes who have received drug suspensions. Graham's attorney, Joe Zeszotarski, told The Associated Press in an e-mail that his client never has taken part in distributing illegal substances to athletes. 2005.

Graham has been involved with at least a half-dozen other athletes who have received drug bans. If the allegations against Gatlin hold up, Graham could be barred for two years.

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The San Diego Union-Tribune

August 23, 2006 Wednesday

Gatlin has dope ban trimmed; Deal lets sprinter keep Olympic hopes alive

BYLINE: Mark Zeigler, STAFF WRITER

SECTION: SPORTS; Pg. D-1

LENGTH: 649 words

Sprinter Justin Gatlin admitted yesterday that his urine showed the presence of a banned substance and that his test results constitute a doping offense, agreeing to a maximum suspension of eight years.

The announcement, however, amounts to a procedural compromise and legal maneuvering that likely won't culminate for another six months -- and in the end may mean Gatlin can defend his 100-meter gold medal at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing.

Yesterday's compromise: Gatlin agreed not to dispute the scientific evidence of synthetic testosterone in his body in exchange for the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency downgrading a 2001 doping offense. Otherwise, Gatlin faced a lifetime ban as a two-time offender.

"It's an eight-year ban unless or until an arbitration panel decides to reduce it," said Travis Tygart, general counsel for USADA, which prosecutes doping offenses against American athletes in Olympic sports. "When he appeals, he's not going to argue the science or whether a doping offense was committed. He will argue other factors."

That arbitration hearing isn't scheduled for six months, and Gatlin, 24, appears to have two basic strategies at his disposal.

One is to plead "exceptional circumstances," as he did in 2001 by claiming he was taking medication for attention deficit disorder that included a banned amphetamine. The other is to provide "substantial assistance" to USADA in ferreting out drug cheats and their enablers, which would be factored into any reduction of his suspension.

The most realistic hope, according to anti-doping experts, is a reduction to a standard two-year doping ban that is retroactive either to April 22, when Gatlin's urine sample was collected at the Kansas Relays, or June 23, when he last raced. That would make him eligible to compete at the 2008 U.S. Olympic Trials from June 27 through July 6 in Eugene, Ore.

Gatlin's Chicago-based attorney, John Collins, wouldn't divulge details of their strategy, but he hinted Gatlin would go the "exceptional circumstances" route.

"The last time this happened," Collins told the Associated Press, "he went to the (arbitration) panel and explained he neither cheated nor intended to cheat. This time, we'll explain the full stack of circumstances and everything around it and, hopefully, we'll get a similar result."

Gatlin had a two-year ban cut in half after the IAAF, track and field's world governing body, agreed he innocently ingested the amphetamine that triggered the positive test at the 2001 U.S. Junior Championships. The IAAF also warned Gatlin that any future doping offense could result in a lifetime ban.

Either defense -- exceptional circumstances or substantial assistance to USADA -- figures to involve Trevor

USADA 0281

Graham, Gatlin's Raleigh, N.C.-based coach.

Graham has been quoted as saying Gatlin was sabotaged by a disgruntled massage therapist who rubbed testosterone cream on him before the Kansas Relays. Gatlin has not confirmed the allegations, and Chris Whetstone, the masseur in question, has vehemently denied them.

Graham also is reportedly a target of a federal grand jury that continues to investigate the BALCO scandal. By some counts, Gatlin is the 11th current or former Graham athlete implicated in doping. Graham also has coached Tim Montgomery, who is serving a two-year ban, and Marion Jones, who recently tested positive.

"Trevor knows he has done nothing wrong in his relationships with Justin or any of his athletes," Graham's attorney, Joe Zeszotarski, said in a statement, "and only wants the truth to come out."

The other revelation from yesterday's announcement was that Gatlin was nabbed by the carbon isotope ratio (CIR) test, which determines whether testosterone in the body is synthetic or naturally produced. In the past, urine samples were first subjected to a testosterone/epitestosterone ratio test, and only if that showed elevated levels was the more expensive CIR conducted.

LOAD-DATE: August 25, 2006

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GRAPHIC: 1 PIC; CAPTIONS: Depending on appeals, Justin Gatlin could return to the track in time for the 2008 Olympics.; PHOTOBY: Getty Images

PUBLICATION-TYPE: Newspaper

Copyright 2006 The San Diego Union-Tribune

The Indianapolis Star (Indiana)

June 22, 2007 Friday
FINAL EDITION

Gatlin story hard to believe

BYLINE: BOB KRAVITZ

SECTION: SPORTS; Pg. 1

LENGTH: 917 words

One year later, the Justin Gatlin story still stinks. In fact, it's become even more noxious than ever before, having revealed itself as a tale of corruption, subterfuge and drug-related paranoia.

Remember, it was one year ago here at Carroll Stadium at IUPUI that Gatlin, despite having learned of a positive test for performance-enhancing drugs June 15, was allowed to run in the U.S. Track & Field Championships. Meet organizers felt they had no right to prohibit the world-class sprinter from running -- he still hadn't received the results of the 'B' sample.

That, however, was just the beginning.

On June 21, a week after Gatlin learned of the positive test results, there was an altercation outside the Downtown Westin involving men who were in town for the meet.

One of them was Chris Whetstine, an Oregon-based massage therapist who was later accused by Gatlin and his disgraced coach, Trevor Graham, of having sabotaged Gatlin by secretly rubbing him with a testosterone cream during a meet earlier in the spring.

The other man involved in the fight was Llewellyn Starks, a former long jumper and a current Nike employee.

There are two distinctly different versions of what went down that night, and surveillance video isn't completely clear. It appears to me that Starks initiated the scuffle, and while Starks walked back to his hotel unharmed that night, Whetstine was hospitalized at Wishard with several injuries.

One year later, Whetstine says he remains physically and emotionally debilitated from the injuries he said he suffered during that fight, and is suing Nike and Starks for \$3.8 million.

As for what precipitated the fight, that's the intriguing issue.

In a witness statement obtained by Nike, Mark Pryor, a track agent and former Nike runner, defended Starks and said Whetstine got in Starks' face about a business disagreement and Starks simply reacted.

In the video, you see Pryor getting entangled with Whetstine and Starks, although it's hard to tell if Pryor is attempting to pull Starks off or is taking part in the fight.

In police statements, Whetstine and his girlfriend reported that Starks became enraged after learning of the Gatlin positive test -- the issue had been discussed earlier that day in a meeting of Nike and track officials -- and began screaming, "Stop (bleeping) with Nike athletes. We know what you've done."

Whetstine wanted to press charges, flooding the Indianapolis Police Department and the Marion County Prosecutor's office with information he hoped would inspire a felony charge.

USADA 0283

That hasn't happened. And that won't happen, according to a county spokesman. The prosecutor's office is claiming that it's "mutual combat." Whetstine, who is seen on the video bouncing back after the initial shove and throwing punches, says he was out on his feet at the time.

Not odd enough?

Little more than a month after the meet here, Gatlin publicly acknowledged he had tested positive for testosterone or its precursors.

Two weeks later, his coach, Graham, went on a media offensive, insisting Gatlin was the victim of doping sabotage by Whetstine. He said he believed Whetstine held a grudge against both of them, the result of business-related disputes in the past. More recently, Graham added to the story, telling The Star he believed Whetstine was a doping dark angel sent by longtime Graham enemy Victor Conte.

That's right, the same Victor Conte who was in the middle of the BALCO scandal.

Conte denies the charge.

"There has never been any kind of conspiracy involving Chris Whetstine and myself. I've only met Chris a couple of times and have never had any type of relationship with him. Trevor Graham is not being truthful about his role in providing drugs to track athletes," Conte said by e-mail.

Graham, who has had 11 of his athletes test positive and is now under indictment for lying to a federal grand jury, was the one who blew the whistle on BALCO.

It's not at all surprising that Graham is holding tight to this theory.

What is surprising -- and new, especially after his representatives distanced themselves from Graham -- is that Gatlin now says he, too, is a believer in the masseur-as-saboteur theory.

"He (Whetstine) was the only person who had access to my body (during the Kansas Relays in April), so it had to be him," Gatlin told The Star. "I know it was him . . ."

It will be interesting to see if that's part of Gatlin's defense when he tries to reduce his eight-year ban in front of a Court for Arbitration in Sport panel in late July.

It should be mentioned, most folks in track and field, many of whom are here again this week for the U.S. nationals, find the Evil Masseur theory pretty laughable. Whetstine summarily denies all the charges, although he'd just as soon let Graham's and Gatlin's history of deceit speak for itself.

So one year later, here we are: Gatlin is preparing to fight his ban in late July in Atlanta. Graham, who has become persona non grata in American track since this latest scandal, is facing federal charges.

And yet, the biggest victim in all of this is the 42-year-old massage therapist who somehow got thrown into the middle of last year's biggest track-and-doping mess. When he's not taking medication for the migraines that come every day, he wonders why he has been forgotten, why he is suffering in ways neither Graham nor Gatlin can understand.

Ultimately, he wonders where the justice is.

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