

Heard of eye, brain tampering?

A Bewildering Range Of Performance Enhancers In Sports

Deepak Natarajan

Now that the can of worms has opened there will be the usual round of denials. The reaction of pure innocence at being caught with your pants down is incredulous. They would like you to believe that cricketers never dreamt of using a PED (performance enhancing drug) regardless of the Shoaib eye-opener.

Athletes have been doing it for as long as you care to remember. Barry Bonds, the ace baseballer, is under a cloud. The top cyclists are going straight into their graves laced with EPO (erythropoietin), stimulants and growth hormone, our own weightlifters and throwers are not much behind, tennis continues to be under doping microscope, but only cricketers claim to be squeaky clean.

Shoaib's nandrolone was certainly a bit gauche. But there are a number of new drugs that could be rather attractive for the discerning cricketer. Like Mark McGwire, the cham-



HANDROLONE WAS GAUCHE

pion US baseball batter, he might be tempted to use a combination of performance enhancing steroids, roctendione and contact lenses.

Natural vision is 20/20, but McGwire's contacts enhanced his vision to 20/10 so that he was able to see at a distance of six metres what the average batter saw at three metres. Any cricket fan can see the possibilities for this pure piece of genius.

Tiger Woods in 1999 had laser eye surgery that got him the incredible vision of 20/15. He murdered the opposition for the next 10 events. The playing field since then has levelled because the rest of the golfers also joined the fun and got their eyesight enhanced — among them, Vijay Singh, Padraig Harrington, Lee Westwood and Tom Kite. As the game

must go on, the golfing establishment prefers not making eye contact and looks the other way.

Dr Deepak Natarajan is a senior cardiologist.

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