



*Preserving the integrity of competition. Inspiring true sport. Protecting the rights of athletes.*

November 29, 2010

The United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) lauds the creation of the Alliance to Address the Youth Safety Crisis in America and the good work the National Athletic Trainers' Association has done to bring about an imperative awareness to the ever-increasing issue of youth sports safety.

Consistent with its vision to be the guardian of the values and life lessons learned through true sport, USADA has recognized the increased pressures that young athletes in this country face, and the win-at-all-cost mentality that has encompassed America's youth sports culture. This has pushed even our youngest athletes to the brink of physical harm in their efforts to improve performance, make teams, and play year-round at the highest levels.

USADA obviously has a focus on the real and potentially life-threatening dangers of performance-enhancing drugs, but also aims to protect the health and safety of athletes by bringing important awareness to issues including adulterated and nutritional supplements; the increased popularity of protein powders and energy drinks; proper diet and nutrition habits; as well as body type and body image, all of which become exploited when winning at any cost becomes the norm.

In recent years, in addition to its better known audience of elite, Olympic-level athletes, USADA has put an increased emphasis on awareness and educational outreach targeted at the culture and mindset of youth sport in our country. With a firm understanding of the "play through the pain" mentality that exists, USADA has made it a top priority to influence this culture by attending numerous athletic summits, club events, youth development camps, training camps, as well as national events and industry conferences to urge the importance of safety and smart decision-making with young athletes as well as with the coaches and parents who have influence on them.

The Alliance to Address the Youth Sport Safety Crisis in America's call to action on this issue is an important step in the right direction. Youth sport in this country is a powerful and extremely influential culture and one that has certainly gained in intensity in recent years. Educational and targeted influence is imperative to ensure that youth sport, which remains an important staple and defining characteristic of the American way of life, does not evolve into a dangerous and negative aspect of our society.

USADA appreciates this great effort and is looks forward to furthering the cause of youth sports safety.

Sincerely,

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Chief Executive Officer

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**United States Anti-Doping Agency**

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