

Article E

Hilliard Academy, Negligent?

Greenville, South Carolina - At the Greenville county court house, on February 22, 2014, court came into session over the unfortunate death of 18 year old Jordan Simon due to an overdose on EPO. Jordan was a track star at Hilliard Academy and coached under Terry Swift. Kelly Simon, Jordan's mother, is suing Terry Swift for allegedly encouraging the use of steroids in his athletes and Hilliard Academy for being negligent in identifying Jordan Simon's use of EPO.

Kelly Simon was a runner in her high school days and always had high hopes for her son to follow in her footsteps. When her son received a full scholarship to attend Hilliard Academy for track she was overjoyed. To keep his scholarship, Jordan needed to keep his track times low and continue to improve. In his junior year, Mrs. Kelly Simon received a promotion from her job and was not able to be home as often. Because of this, Jordan had to take on more chores and responsibilities at home. He had less time to train, and his track times suffered. During his senior year Jordan began taking EPO and saw rapid improvements in his track times. In a trust fund left behind by Mrs. Simon's late husband, there was \$ 50,000 that Jordan had full access to when he turned 16. Mrs. Simon went to check the balance to find that \$25,000 had been taken out. Jordan had taken out three withdrawals of \$8,500. When Mrs. Simon confronted Jordan about the money at track practice Jordan said to ask Coach Swift because he knew what it was for. Unfortunately on May 6th 2012, Jordan was found dead at home by his mother. He died of a heart attack that was induced by an EPO overdose.

Morgan Pierce, Jordan's best friend, noticed changes in Jordan his senior year. He began to worry Jordan was using steroids, so he went to their track coach, who allegedly did nothing. After the track banquet of Morgan and Jordan's junior year, Morgan tells the court about a conversation that he and Coach Swift had. In this conversation Coach Swift told Mr. Morgan that he needed to work hard in order to get a college scholarship and that his competitors would be using things that would help them have an edge such as supplements.

Dr. Lynn Roper an expert in exercise physiology with a focus in steroid usage testified that Jordan was an otherwise healthy teenage boy. Roper stated "though EPO is hard to detect with a test because it is a naturally produced hormone, it is still possible". Jordan's blood EPO levels for example were extremely high.

Terry Swift testified saying that he pushed his athletes but never condoned steroids or any type of performance enhancing drug. In fact, when the coaching staff at Hilliard voted for random drug tests to be implemented in their athletic department, Coach Swift was the only one to vote for the policy. At Mr. Swift's last occupation at USE, there was a steroid scandal that he was fired over before his name was cleared. A month before Jordan was found dead, Coach Swift received an article the librarian found that Jordan had printed out from Mrs. Jamie Hagar. This article described the negative side effects that EPO can have. Coach Swift never talked to Jordan about this article.

The vice principal of Hilliard Academy, Jamie Hagar holds a workshop for all coaches annually informing them on signs and symptoms on substances and drugs and education on how to prevent usage. Any complaints or drug rumors are taken to Mrs.

Hagar and she investigates each claim thoroughly and takes them very seriously. Three athletes have broken the Hilliard Academy drug policy before Jordan, and these cases were very different. There were differences in their school performances and each of these boys was known to be trouble makers. Jordan was not a trouble maker and his grades excelled in his senior year at Hilliard. Mrs. Hagar received one rumor about Jordan taking cocaine but after looking into it, she disregarded the rumor assuming it was created out of jealousy.

Mrs. Aubrey Brady, an expert in rules and regulations concerning drug use, testified that in her expert opinion, "Hilliard academy did everything they were legally required to do to prevent drug use".

The jury is still out on deliberation.