

However, this Conan-like transformation came at a frightening cost. During his first cycle, Rick began experiencing dizziness and nausea, accompanied by a tightness in his chest.

"When I went to the doctor, I found out my blood pressure was sky high and my liver test came back abnormal. I was also becoming very aggressive. I once tore a phone out of the wall because I didn't like what the person was saying to me. The scary thing is, I wasn't even taking that large of a dose by gym standards."

Rick's negative experience is not uncommon. Steroids have been associated with numerous side effects, including long-term liver damage, heart attacks, strokes, kidney disease, increased aggression, shrinking testicles and high blood pressure.

HOWEVER, DESPITE the health risks, athletes have continued to devour the drug. In the past two years, steroid sales have more than tripled. In 1989, the Food and Drug Administration estimated that steroids were a \$100 million a year industry. In 1991, annual black market sales of steroids are estimated at between \$300 million and \$400 million. Although such national figures do little to indicate local appetite for steroids, many leaders in the local fitness community are concerned.

"I know the kids are taking them," says John Crook, owner of the Mishawaka Gold's Gym. "I caught a couple of high school football players (in northern Indiana) taking steroids, and I called their parents in for a meeting to confront them. When I told the fathers that their kids were on steroids, each said, 'I know. I'm giving them to him.'"

Most leaders in the local sports community feel education is the key to preserving steroid-free sports. Tom Kurth, Elkhart Central High School's football coach, believes that education, combined with a closely monitored sports training program, does a lot to inhibit steroid use in high schools.

"I fill the locker rooms with posters and show the kids films discouraging steroid use," Kurth says. "I strongly encourage the athletes to See **SIDE LINES**, Page D2

Side Lines

From Page D1

work out at the school's facility so they will not be exposed to steroids at another gym. I also have some of the Big Ten players talk to the kids and encourage them to stay clean."

Chris Geesman, Penn High School's football coach says, "We monitor our athletes closely and at the start of the weightlifting program, we tell them all about the health hazards associated with steroid use."

Dr. James Moriarity, general practitioner at the University of Notre Dame, does not believe education always works in preventing athletes from using steroids because the temptation to get an edge over the competition is so great.

"The best approach to prevent steroid use in amateur sports is random, unannounced drug testing with severe penalties if they test positive," Moriarity says. This is the policy at Notre Dame.

"If the athletes are caught once, they receive a warning. If they are caught twice, they will never participate in Notre Dame athletics again," Moriarity says.

Moriarity believes steroids are an unnecessary risk to take. "It is possible to achieve the same results naturally," he says. "We have proof. We won the National (Football) Championship without steroids, and we played against teams that supposedly use them."

While testing may be the best approach, it is too costly for most amateur athletic programs. Crook, sponsor of the Gold's Classic Body-building Competition, says he would like to test competitors but feels he cannot afford it.

"Steroid testing involves a blood or urine test which requires medical supervision. An average competition profits \$600 or \$700. The cost of testing could run anywhere from \$2,000 to \$3,000 depending on the number of competitors."

Jake Burton, football coach at McCutcheon High School in Tippecanoe County, has opted for a new approach. Since August of 1989 his school has conducted random weekly drug tests. These tests are paid for by a federal drug education grant. The tests do not routinely include a test for steroids, but if there is a reason

for suspicion, steroid tests have been run.

Of the 1,200 tests that have been conducted over the past two years, only one athlete tested positive and that was for marijuana. Burton believes this either indicates that the athletes never used drugs to begin with or the random drug tests have been a successful deterrent to drug use. "Realistically," he says, "it's probably the latter."

For Rick it was neither steroid testing nor education that convinced him to get off steroids. It was marriage that made him realize taking steroids was not only harming himself but those he loved, with the possibility of endangering his future children.

"When my wife became pregnant, I was really scared. I had been off steroids for a number of years, but I didn't know if I had done any permanent damage. I still don't know. I may suffer from kidney failure later on in life or cancer. There's just no way to know. Thankfully, our baby was healthy. I don't know if I could have lived with myself if an innocent person had to suffer the consequences of my stupidity."

Rick's face becomes clouded with a dreamy expression and a faint smile. Then he shakes his head and makes a terrible confession.

"It's stupid, isn't it? But I miss them (steroids). I miss being big. When I walked in the room, people use to stare. Professors suddenly noticed me. People really respected what I had done. I felt strong and big and invincible and I miss that feeling."

Bob Goldman, author of *Death in the Locker Room*, believes steroids are only a symptom of the real disease. He writes in his book, "The true illness is the way we view sports — win at any cost, you're a bum if you lose. We must seriously look at ourselves to cure the illness and not just mask the symptom. Like a cancer, this sickness eats away at the very virtues and benefits of sport competition and further perverts and destroys it for our young people and children."

(Stephanie Roth is a junior at IUSB, majoring in English with concentration in writing.)

By Stephanie Roth

SIDE LINES



Difficult to break steroid use

ELKHART — He spent hundreds of dollars a month on a habit he had tried to break for three years. Each time he handed his money to the dealer he thought, "This is it. This is the last time."

But each month he went back. As the needle punctured his skin, he felt the familiar psychological rush. The physical impact came later. Rick (not his real name) was not another New York heroin or crack addict. He is an Elkhart businessman and an amateur athlete. Four years ago Rick was addicted to steroids.

"I started using steroids in college, in preparation for college body-building competition," he says. "I thought I would only use them one time. Nobody goes on steroids thinking they are going to stay on the drugs. They think they will use steroids just to get over a hurdle or just for one competition, but it doesn't work out that way."

INITIALLY, THE results were exhilarating. Within 12 weeks, Rick gained 20 pounds of lean weight and by his third cycle, he had increased his bench press by 190 pounds. (A typical cycle is eight weeks on the steroids and eight weeks off).