

# IAAF: Gatlin's coach could face sanction

*Special to Sentinel-Voice*

Sprinter Justin Gatlin isn't the only one facing a ban in the wake of doping violations against him. His embattled coach also could be barred from track and field if allegations against the Olympic and world champion hold up.

The focus has shifted to Trevor Graham, who trains Gatlin and has been involved with at least a half-dozen other athletes who have received drug suspensions. Track's international governing body announced Graham could face a two-year ban if Gatlin is found guilty.

"Once we have enough evidence to prove it, then we have the power to prosecute him," spokesman Nick Davies of the International Association of Athletics Federations said.

The IAAF isn't the only agency considering going after Graham.

The U.S. Anti-Doping Agency can penalize him if it confirms Gatlin's positive doping test. And the U.S. Olympic Committee has been on a continuing quest to find ways to sanction coaches who violate the rules, including withholding credentials to major events and barring them from training facilities.

At least six athletes who trained under Graham have received doping suspensions. Graham, however, has always denied direct knowledge or involvement with drug use.

USOC spokesman Darryl Seibel said the federation would never back down on its stance that athletes are ultimately responsible for what goes into their bodies.

"That said, we believe there are others who carry significant influence with athletes who must also share in the responsibility for clean competition," Seibel said. "Specifically, agents, coaches and trainers must also be held accountable when there is a pattern of doping positives."

Of course, nobody has more on the line than Gatlin himself. This would be his second doping violation, which could bring with it a lifetime ban.

"I can't say anything about this," Gatlin said Tuesday after answering the door at his family's home in Pensacola, Fla.

On Saturday, the co-world-record holder ac-

knowledged that doping regulatory agency informed him of a test indicating he had used testosterone or other steroids. He promised cooperation with the agency, which was formed by the USOC in 2000, but said he didn't know how steroids got into his system.

The IAAF said it gave little credence to Graham's claim that Gatlin was the victim of a vengeful massage therapist who rubbed testosterone cream on his legs without his knowledge.

"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," Davies said.

Cameron Myler, Gatlin's attorney, said Graham was "not speaking on behalf of Justin." She said her client's case would be based "on the 'exceptional circumstances' clause of the World Anti-Doping code."

That clause allows for a lesser penalty if it can be proved that the athlete wasn't responsible for the positive test. The exception is rarely granted.

"It's a difficult standard, but it's definitely something that we're working toward," Myler said.

In addition to the life ban, Gatlin would lose the world 100-meter record.

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

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

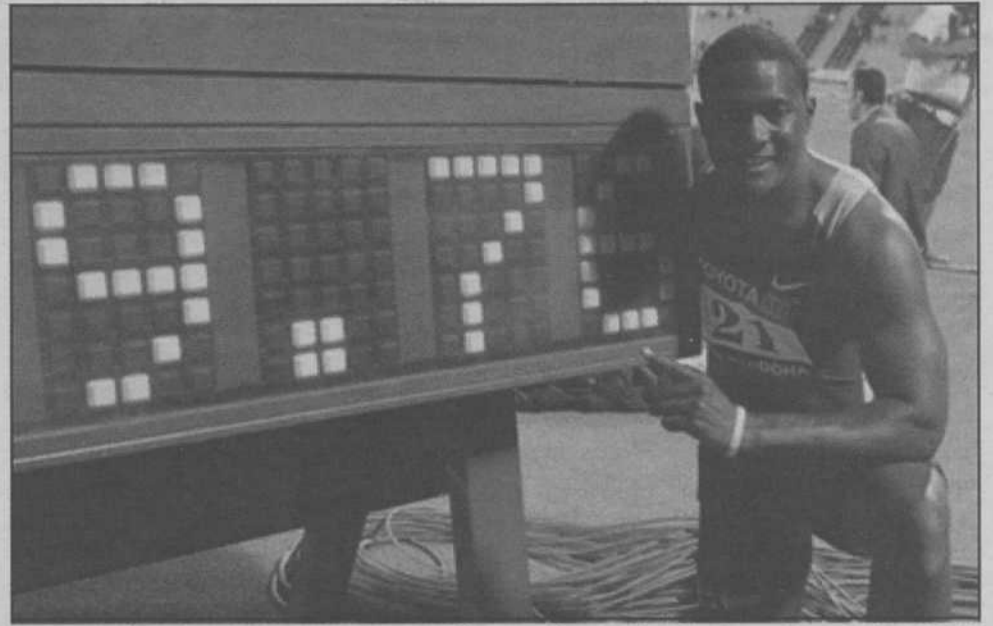
Graham, who answered the door Tuesday at his house in Raleigh, N.C., said Gatlin would "have his day in court. He's a good kid." He refused to comment on a possible suspension.

"I've already made my statement," Graham said. "My attorney already made a statement."

His attorney, Joe Zeszotarski, told The Associated Press in an e-mail that his client has never taken part in distributing illegal sub-

stances to athletes.

"It is curious that people who are not familiar with the situation can claim that Trevor has somehow done something wrong," Zeszotarski wrote. "It is worth reminding everyone that one of the chief reasons the issue of doping has come to the forefront is because of Trevor's integrity and courage in turning in the sample that led (to) the uncovering of the BALCO enterprise."



Justin Gatlin poses after setting a new 100m world record at the Qatar Super Grand Prix with a time of 9.76sec earlier this year in Doha. Gatlin is being investigated for doping.

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