

## Take it From Me. Drugs Are a Really Bad Idea.



By Sean Pitts

I never thought it would happen to me. I thought I was safe from drugs because I'm not part of "the crowd." But I was wrong, and that's what I'm writing to tell you.

My sport is golf. Sure, I'm no Nancy Lopez, but my dad and his friends always took me out on the course – I'd ride on the back bumper of the golf cart and keep score, even keeping track of their putts with little numbers I'd circle next to the overall score for each hole. For my eighth-grade graduation, Dad took me to Wal-Mart and we came home with a full set of official Jim Thorpe men's golf clubs. (That's not Jim Thorpe the Olympic athlete, it's Jim Thorpe the African-American golfer who had three PGA tour victories in 1985 and is currently playing on the Champions Tour.) We figured out pretty quick that I could hit the ball a long ways – even if I did have a BIG slice!

I always enjoyed playing with my dad, but after a couple of years I felt bad that, because my mom home-schools my little sister and me, I wasn't able to play competitively at the high school level. Well, Mom did some asking around and pretty soon we had a six-man team of home-school guys, ready to compete with the smaller high schools around my town. We didn't have much, but we had spirit!

The first year was tough, I won't lie. Some of those teams we played were from real "country club" schools, and they weren't too nice to us. One team would insult our mothers as we took our backswings, and another team refused to let us play on their home course unless we were wearing shirts with collars! (My mom had to make an emergency trip home to get six of my dad's work shirts for us to play in.) Another time, I was in the first foursome – two of us and two of our opponents – and after the other guys out drove us on the first hole, they just went ahead and kept playing. When they holed out on the 9th hole, we were still chipping up on the 5<sup>th</sup>!

Well, you can probably guess that this sort of thing got real old real fast. As we gathered for our first practice this year, our faces were sure long. Nobody was looking forward to another year of being laughed at. It was a weak moment, and that's when it happened. I was standing at the ball washer with my buddy, who I won't name here, when he reached into his jacket pocket and pulled out a gum wrapper, a ticket stub from Jeepers Creepers II, and a little white pill that he said was a steroid. He said he got it from his brother, who works out on the free weights in their basement. He said it would help me hit the ball farther and show those prep school guys a thing or two. He said it wouldn't hurt me. He said he'd already taken one. As it turned out, those were all lies. (Except for the one about the pill being a steroid – that was true. Actually, my mom thinks maybe it was just an aspirin, but the point is, it was a drug, and drugs and golf don't mix.)

I was worried, but I was kind of flying from having just slammed a Red Bull on an empty stomach, so my judgment wasn't what it should have been and I took the pill. I felt strong and powerful at first, but by the time I stepped up to the tee, I was feeling kind of light-headed. I teed the ball up, and the cheering of my friends was like a dull roar, like in sports movies when everything slows down and all you hear is the breathing of the guy making that big shot, and all the cheerleaders and everyone are jumping around in slow motion in the background, kind of fuzzy and out of focus. It was like that.

I pulled the club back, and I could feel the drugs pumping through my veins. I felt like I could hit that sucker just about to the moon. When I swung at the ball, it was like a lightning bolt was traveling down through my Utes cap into my skull and into my hands. I hit the ball with a loud SMACK, but I soon saw what a big lie drugs are because I totally shanked the shot. Instead of flying majestically down the fairway, it flew at a very low angle over to the green on #2, which is located next to and a little in front of the #1 tee (which is poor course design, but never mind). There was a guy standing there waiting for his friend to putt out, and my ball nailed him right in the leg, just above his knee. There was this terrible thwacking sound, and the innocent man cried out in surprise and pain. I had to very humbly walk over and pick my ball up as he limped away with a huge frown on his face.

But the good part is that I was one of the lucky ones. I learned right away that drugs are a bad idea. You might not be so lucky. Consider this my warning to you.

