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Track Runner Tragedy

For a runner, there's no such thing as too fast! Or is there? In the case of Kelly Simon v. Hilliard Academy, there is. Kelly Simon's seventeen-year-old son Jordan died of an overdose of erythropoietin, or EPO, two years ago. The plaintiff, Ms. Simon, brings the compound charges of neglect and wrongful death against her son's former high school.

Jordan came to Hilliard after receiving a scholarship offer because of his track skills. Hilliard's Coach Terry Swift drove his runners hard, encouraging them to do their very best. But did he push them too hard? Perhaps to the point of encouraging them to use "supplements"? Morgan Pierce, Jordan's best friend and fellow team member believes so. She noticed a change in Jordan near the end of their junior year. He became withdrawn and didn't want to hang out anymore. "He got sick a lot," she testifies. Jordan's mother also noticed that something was wrong. He didn't want to run with her in the mornings anymore, which had been their daily routine for many years. She offered to take him to the doctor, but he brushed her off, saying he was fine. He got frequent nosebleeds, and suddenly developed acne, which he had never struggled with before. Dr. Lynn Roper, an expert in the field of use and abuse of steroids, affirmed that these are the main obvious side effects of the use of erythropoietin. And yet, no one confronted Jordan.

One morning, Kelly got a call for the Hilliard office, stating that Jordan was not at school. Immediately, she knew that something was wrong and rushed home to find Jordan still in bed. But he was not asleep. The examining physician at the coroner's later

determined that Jordan had died of an overdose of EPO. When Ms. Simon went through her son's things, she found a shoebox full of syringes and vials of clear liquid, which she now knows to be the drugs that took her young son's life. Jordan had apparently been taking money from the trust fund his father left him to pay for these drugs, illegal speed supplements. They made him faster, dropping his sprinting times by hundredths of seconds. But in the end, the speed wasn't worth it. Kelly Simon lost her son, Hilliard Academy lost an excellent student and promising athlete, and Jordan lost his life. The author's condolences go out to the grieving Simon family.

The jury and court have yet to make a decision regarding this case.