

# BALCO agent searches for steroids in supplements

July 24 2009, By EDDIE PELLIS , AP National Writer

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(AP) -- The investigator who led the BALCO probe has taken aim at a San Francisco-area supplement manufacturer, claiming the products they sell are laced with designer steroids.

Authorities filed a search warrant under seal Tuesday in federal court to raid the home of American Cellular Labs CEO Maurice Sandoval and a Max Muscle supplement store he's associated with for evidence the company sells [steroids](#) under the guise of a supplement.

The court documents were made available to the public Thursday.

In an affidavit, Jeff Novitzky, special agent for the [Food and Drug Administration](#), said the company's products Tren Xtreme and Mass Extreme contained designer steroids "Tren" and "Madol," which were identified during the investigation into the Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative.

Novitzky led the way on BALCO, the focal point of a scandal involving performance-enhancing drugs that included top-level athletes, including Marion Jones, Tim Montgomery and Barry Bonds.

Novitzky used some of the same techniques he employed in BALCO to gather evidence supporting the search warrant in this case, including digging through the trash outside Sandoval's house in Pacifica, Calif.

Travis Tygart, the CEO of the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, said the raid

was welcome news about a multibillion-dollar industry that is not as stringently regulated as the drug industry.

"It ought to give clean athletes renewed hope that the 'A Team' that was on BALCO is still out there, protecting their rights by continuing to do their best to shut down places that are putting designer steroids out," Tygart said.

Data seized by investigators could include lists of purchasers of the company's products. Although major sports and Olympic sports test for Madol and Tren, the drugs are not widely tested for in high schools, many of which have started testing programs in recent years.

Novitzky wrote in the affidavit about his conversation with a salesman at a San Francisco Max Muscle store, who said he would not sell the products to high school kids because there were too many side effects.

Novitzky did not identify himself to the salesman, who told him about a proposed rule to label the products anabolic steroids and said the products would not be around for long because of increased investigations by the FDA into the supplement industry.

The FDA regulates the industry, though some studies show steroids make their way into a number of supplements.

Steve Mister, president of the Council for Responsible Nutrition that represents the supplement industry, conceded in an interview last month that the industry was not spotless.

"There are some small manufacturers who don't always abide by rules and regulations that are in place," he said. "But there's an awful lot of regulation in this industry and to say there isn't, that's false."

Council spokeswoman Judy Blatman said she couldn't comment on a legal matter.

"But if a company is putting steroids in a product, it's an adulterated product, an unapproved drug, but it's not a dietary supplement," she said.

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