O
ver and above these practical mechanisms, in an effort to un-
cover doping violations, the anti-
doping movement is now also relying more
and more on athletes to report doping and/or
suspicious activities.

To this end, the “Substantial Assistance”
provisions were added to the World Anti-
Doping Code and by reference all Code Sig-
natories’ anti-doping rules, to allow athletes
who have committed anti-doping rule viola-
tions to provide information that could allow
an anti-doping organisation to charge other
individuals with anti-doping rule violation
in exchange for a lesser sanction.

Closely related to the concept of substan-
tial assistance is that of whistleblowing. This
is when an athlete reports or becomes an
informant on other athletes or coaches about
their possible contraventions to the rules.

Whistleblowing is what first exposed the
recent Russian doping scandal when Russian
athlete Yuliya Stepanova and her husband
Vitaliy Stepanov “blew the whistle” on what
have now been proven to be wide-spread
state sponsored and institutionalized Russian
doping practices.

Had these two athletes not come forward,
the scandal and all the information that came
out of the various investigations undertaken
date into the same never would have been
revealed.

As a result, whistleblowing is now per-
cieved as being one of the most powerful
tools anti-doping organisations may have to
effectively identify cheating athletes and /or
coaches.

“REPORT DOPING” HOTLINES

Many national anti-doping organisations
(NADOs) and International Federations (IFs)
have set up confidential “report doping” tele-
phone hotlines or/online form submissions
through which individuals can share suspi-
cious events or activities related to doping.

In all cases, athletes are encouraged to “re-
port doping” by being reminded of their duty
to help promote the integrity of sport, protect
clean athletes and provide an even playing
field and by being applauded for their willing-
ness and courage to protect the clean sport.

The following provides excerpts taken from
some prominent NADO’s websites as to how
this seeks to be achieved:

UKAD’s Report Doping in Sport program
web page reads as follows and then provides
a form to fill out or a toll free number to call
with information: “Help us protect the clean
athlete and the integrity of sport. Every time
someone steps forward with information on
doping, we move closer to a clean and fair
playing field for all.”

The CCES Report Doping web page reads
as follows and provides a list of type of infor-
mation that could be provided: “The CCES
needs your help to eliminate doping. Together
we can protect sport and create a fair and
ethical Canadian sport community. You do not
have to include your name or contact details.
You may provide information anonymously.”

And finally, USADA’s Play Clean Tip Center
reads as follows: “In its mission to preserve
the integrity of competition, inspire true sport,
and protect the rights of athletes, USADA is
unwavering in its belief that every athlete has
the right to compete on a clean and level play-
ing field, free from the pressures and influences
of performance-enhancing drugs. For this rea-
son, USADA makes available a number of ways
to report the abuse of performance-enhancing
drugs in sport in an effort to protect clean ath-
etes and promote clean competition.”

All these “report doping” website link or ho-
tlines are founded on the same principles of in-
tegrity, fairness and courage and provide means
and ways by which athletes or other persons
can report suspicious activity anonymously.

However, while the opportunity to do has
been there for a few years, athletes have not
been using these report doping mediums
consistently for various reasons, the most
important being the desire to truly remain
anonymous. As can be expected, if an athlete
is going “to tell” on a fellow athlete, he or she
typically will want to make sure that their
identity is never revealed, that they are not
subject to reprisal and that the information
they do divulge is really treated by independ-
ent and impartial individuals.

The counter this problem, the International
Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF) created
the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU). According
to its webpage, the AIU promises that all
information submitted relating to possible
doping is received and transmitted via secure
networks and access to any information pro-
vided is locked down for access by authorized
staff only and subject to professional assess-
ment in line with internationally recognised
intelligence models.

In so doing the IAAF became the first in-
national sporting federation to delegate
complete authority for the management of its
integrity programs to an independent body.

Yet, whereas the IAAF is to be commended
on its efforts, the simple reality is that most
International Federations do not have the
means or budget to establish such a system.
Therefore, while the work of the AIU will cer-
tainly be beneficial for athlete competing in
athletics, various other athletes who compete
in other sports do not share the same good
fortune.

THE WHISTLEBLOWER PROGRAM

The World Anti-Doping Agency has now taken
the matter in its own hands. WADA has taken
great care in developing, drafting and estab-
lishing its Whistleblowing Program Policy
and Procedure for Reporting Misconduct. The
Program offers clear policies and procedures
for reporting doping misconduct and outlines
what WADA will provide to all its informants
and whistleblowers in terms of support, confi-
dentiality, protection and reward.

The Whistleblowing Program has been put
in place to encourage athletes, administra-
tors, and others, from across all sports and all
Because confidentiality is rightly of utmost concern to WADA’s Intelligence and Investigations Team all legal and technical privacy safeguards are explained in detail on the webpage, as they are in the Whistleblower Program. The Speak Up page also expressly reads: You have chosen to put your trust in us and we take this very seriously. This website is a secure way for you to report activity that you think goes against anti-doping rules. Whether you decide to open a secure mailbox, or provide us with your contact information, everything you tell us is strictly confidential. In other words, all individuals who provide information on possible misconduct are granted various rights and protected by well established privacy legislation.

In short, WADA has sought to ensure that any person who wishes to report doping on Speak Up can do so without fear or reprisal.

**SPEAK UP!**

By launching “Speak Up” WADA’s seeks to actively engage the athlete community in reporting doping. WADA, like all NADO’s and IF’s that have established a way for individuals to report doping, understands that for an athlete or other person to decide to come forward with sensitive information is a big decision – one that an athlete would not enter into lightly. Therefore, logically, WADA has sought to make its program user-friendly and easy to understand. WADA has also taken great care to establish security and privacy safeguards to certify that submitted information remains confidential.

When now visiting the WADA website at www.wada-ama.org, the Speak up logo is prominently displayed on the top right corner for easy access. Once on the Speak up page, the program is simply explained as follows: First, the courage and conviction required to raise concerns about cheating is applauded. The web page then explains that anyone can report a doping misconduct. Athletes or other persons may report any alleged Anti-Doping Rule Violation, and alleged World Anti-Doping Code (Code) non-compliance violation, or any act or omission that could undermine the fight against doping. And, anyone who has detected, identified, witnessed, known of, or have reasonable grounds for suspecting that cheating has occurred, is encouraged to let WADA know via Speak up.

**WHAT IS THE PROCESS?**

WADA’s Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure documents explain that WADA has set up an Investigation Department solely for the purposes of running the Whistleblowing Program. This team of investigators is responsible for carefully looking at and scrutinizing all submitted information. Once they decide that it is actionable, they will proceed in accordance with their protocol and established criteria.

More specifically, Appendix 1 of the Policy outlines this assessment process. Article 1.2.1 of Appendix 1 provides that all information and/or evidence(s) provided by the Informants will be assessed by the Investigation Department to determine its degree of veracity and whether it falls or not within the scope of application of the Code.

Then, depending on the allegation, the Investigation Department will use various internal and external intelligence platforms to assess the case. E.g. ADAMS, Athlete Biological Passport, open source, and intelligence already possessed by WADA.

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**LOOKING AHEAD**

It is fair to say that doping in sport has not decreased since the inception of the World Anti-Doping Code; it has just become more sophisticated. And, as stated by WADA director’s General Olivier Niggli, with the integrity of sport at a crossroads, quietly accepting doping is not a viable way forward.

Time will tell the extent to which WADA’s Whistleblowing Program as well as those of relevant NADOs and IF’s will be successful. In the meantime, athletes can find solace in knowing that there is always someone out there willing to listen, confidentially, if they have information to share and are courageous enough to come forward in the interest of sport and fair play.

It has been proven by Yuliya Stepanova as well as other athletes’ courage that one of the most powerful ways to create and maintain a zero-tolerance culture for doping across sports and countries is for clean athletes and others to speak up and raise concerns in good faith when they have reason to believe that an athlete is doping. Accordingly, we should all hope that that these various platforms through which athletes can report doping will continue to yield actionable results.

Speaking out exemplifies the kind of leadership, courage, and character consistent with the spirit of sportsmanship and fair play. ISSF reminds each of you that you have an inherent role to play in the fight against doping in sport but even more pointedly in the fight against doping in shooting sport.

If you wish to report suspicious doping activity you are encouraged to go to the WADA Website, click on the “Speak Up” link and follow the steps outlined (www.wada-ama.org).

Janis Soublatès BSS, LLM, LLB.

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