



# BULL'S EYE THE ISSF IPOD ON DOPING

## 3 QUESTIONS

**THIS EDITION OF THE IPOD ANSWERS THREE RELATED YET DISTINCT QUESTIONS. THE TOPIC ENCOMPASSES ALL THE VALUES THAT ARE INHERENT TO FAIR PLAY AND DRUG-FREE SPORT.**

**THE ISSUES TACKLED IN EACH SCENARIO CAN OFTEN BE DIFFICULT TO ADDRESS AND TO DEAL WITH; ESPECIALLY FOR ATHLETES.**

**ALL ATHLETES, COACHES, MEDICAL STAFF, PARENTS AND TEAM-MATES ARE ENCOURAGED TO CAREFULLY READ THIS IPOD AND CONSIDER ITS CONTENTS, ITS IMPLICATIONS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.**

All athletes, coaches, medical staff, parents and team-mates are encouraged to carefully read this IPOD and consider its contents, its implications and its consequences.

**#1. In preparation for the next World Cup, my coach has encouraged me to start taking a pill every day, he says it will help me focus and be the key to my getting a place on the podium. I am pretty sure what he is telling me to take is banned. So I really don't want or think I should take it. But, he is the coach. He says I can win. He picks the team. If I don't do it, I am scared I won't be on the team next year. What am I supposed to do?**

**#2. I think an athlete on my team is cheating. It is more than a suspicion, I saw him take some pills out of a plastic container, not a real pill bottle you know, like he was purposely hiding something. Then when I saw him take one, I asked him what it was and he just brushed me off and said it was vitamins. But his results are way better than they have been. So, a month later, I happened to see him taking the same pills again; luckily I don't think he saw me this time. I am pretty sure he is doping. What can I do?**

**#3. I have been taking prohibited substances for a while now. But I feel terrible about it. And to be honest, my results aren't really that much better. I did get a podium finish in a few events and that made everyone around me proud. But I don't think I can continue lying about this. I really don't want to be cast aside, I was encouraged by our medical trainer to try this stuff and he just kept giving it to me. Now, I think he may be doing the same thing with other younger athletes on our team and I just don't know how to deal with the situation. Can you help me?**

There are some fundamental ethical, human and legal principles, rights and responsibilities that apply equally to all three scenarios that must be emphasized prior to addressing each question individually.

First, is the ethos of sport. It is the very basis of why athletes compete in sport and of why other persons get involved in sport in any capacity. This ethos is sometimes also referred to generally as the "spirit of sport". It is a celebration of the human spirit, body and mind, and encompasses many elements: Excellence, teamwork, dedication and commitment. Fairplay and honesty. Respect for rules of the law,

respect for self, and respect for other participants. Courage. Only to name a few...

Then, there are the human values that drive and compel athletes to train day after day, year after year, and to put in all the hard and often painful work necessary for sport success; values that are ideally maintained notwithstanding the pressures from peers, coaches, family and society in general. These human values all play an indispensable role in motivating athletes to remain true to clean sport, even when shortcuts like doping exist: Integrity, inner-strength and true self-worth. Love of sport, love of family, and national pride. Legacy. Healthy living, etc

Also, to be reiterated is that all athletes have and share the right to compete in doping-free sport. In fact, all athletes have and share a responsibility to ensure they, their team-mates and their adversaries are competing without the use of prohibited substances or methods. But, this is not always an easy right to safeguard. There is pressure coming from all sides. Athletes do not want to "tell" on their team-mates, they do not want to report the conduct of coaches or medical staff. There is a fear of being cast aside, or of being kicked off the team. What about the fear of not being listened to and not being believed? What about the friendship code? Or peer pressure? Not to mention the overwhelming desire to please families, coaches, nations and themselves?

This is why, over and above the ethical and human rights and responsibilities associated with being an athlete, there are regulatory responsibilities that help govern sport as a whole. Anti-doping rules, like competition rules, are sport rules governing the conditions under which sport is played. They are there to help safeguard every athlete's right to compete in doping free-sport. Accordingly, as a condition of membership to their teams, their national federations, and their international federations, all athletes and athlete support personnel consent to respecting the very important rights and responsibilities that are conferred upon them by various anti-doping regulations.



The ISSF Anti-Doping Rules, an athlete's National Anti-Doping Organization anti-doping rules and the WADA Code all dictate certain conditions under which sport may be played. One of the many conditions for all athletes and athlete support personnel to be able to participate in sport is to be aware of the anti-doping rules that are in place, respect them and follow them.

Indeed, the regulatory rights and responsibilities that come with being an international federation, a national anti-doping organisation, a national Olympic committee, an athlete or athlete support personnel are many. Focusing solely on the topic addressed in this edition of the IPOD, the following provides some of the specific roles and responsibilities imposed by the WADA Code on all these entities and individuals:

### **20.3 Roles and Responsibilities of International Federations (like the ISSF)**

**20.3.3** To require all athletes and each athlete support personnel who participates as coach, trainer, manager, team staff, official, medical or paramedical personnel in a competition or activity authorized or organized by the International Federation or one of its member organizations to agree to be bound by anti-doping rules in conformity with the Code as a condition of such participation.

### **20.4 Roles and Responsibilities of National Olympic Committees**

**20.4.5** To require each of its National Federations to establish rules requiring each athlete support personnel who participates as coach, trainer, manager, team staff, official, medical or paramedical personnel in a competition or activity authorized or organized by a National Federation or one of its member organizations to agree to be bound by anti-doping rules in conformity with the Code as a condition of such participation.

### **20.5 Roles and Responsibilities of National Anti-Doping Organisations**

**20.5.6** To vigorously pursue all potential anti-doping rule violations within its jurisdiction including investigating into whether athlete support personnel or other persons may have been involved in each case of doping.

### **21.2 Roles and Responsibilities of Athlete Support Personnel**

**21.2.1** To be knowledgeable of and comply with all anti-doping policies and rules adopted pursuant to the Code and which are applicable to them or the athletes whom they support.

**21.2.3** To use their influence on athlete values and behaviour to foster anti-doping attitudes.

#### **21.1 Roles and Responsibilities of Athletes**

**21.1.1** To be knowledgeable of and comply with all applicable anti-doping policies and rules adopted pursuant to the Code.

**21.1.3** To take responsibility, in the context of antidoping, for what they ingest and use.

**21.1.4** To inform medical personnel of their obligation not to use prohibited substances and prohibited methods and to take responsibility to make sure that any medical treatment received does not violate anti-doping policies and rules adopted pursuant to the Code.

In sum, having all those involved in sport respect their common values and respective roles and responsibilities is the cornerstone of true sport: Sport that is clean, healthy, played on an even playing field and fun; win or lose.

Always taking into consideration the equal importance of the emphasized principles, rights and responsibilities alongside each scenario provided, these are the answers to the questions:

# #1

**In preparation for the next World Cup, my coach has encouraged me to start taking a pill every day, he says it will help me focus and be the key to my getting a place on the podium. I am pretty sure what he is telling me to take is banned. So I really don't want or think I should take it. But, he is the coach. He says I can win. He picks the team. If I don't do it, I am scared I won't be on the team next year. What am I supposed to do?**

As a general rule, athletes should not take any medication before checking with a qualified doctor. Athletes must ask all the necessary questions and make all the necessary inquiries until they are sure that whatever they will ingest is not prohibited. Athletes must also apply for a Therapeutic Use Exemption if the intended use of any

substance or method is in fact therapeutic. In this case, I would suggest that you make the necessary verifications with your medical staff or family doctor to enquire about the medicinal ingredients in this pill to confirm if indeed it is prohibited or not. If it is prohibited, and you seem to indicate it is, because the intended use of the substance obviously would not be therapeutic, then you cannot and should not, under any circumstances, take it.

Please be reminded of the ISSF Rules and the WADA Code's fundamental principle: the concept of strict liability. Strict Liability means that athletes will be held personally responsible for any prohibited substance found in their system, regardless of how it got there. So this means that if you get caught, you cannot point the finger in somebody else's direction. It is your body. You and only you controls what goes in it. All athletes, especially those new to elite sport, need to make sure they are fully aware of their anti-doping responsibilities. Therefore, if you were to take this "pill", then later got drug-tested and got caught, you could not blame your coach. In the end, you would receive a sanction, regardless of the reasons why you took it.

No one will argue that there is a lot of pressure on athletes to succeed and to win medals. But do not be swayed by your coach. Never forget that winning a medal because you took a performance enhancing substance does not make you a winner; it only makes you a cheater. And in the end cheaters get caught. You say that your coach is encouraging you to take these pills, telling you that they will make you win and threatening you if you don't. What you are supposed to do? The answer to your question is that, under the circumstances of this case, you should not be following your coach's recommendations.

**Did you know that anti-doping Rules apply as equally to your coach as they do to you?**

The simple truth is that through his actions and suggestions for you to use performance enhancing substances, and by providing them to you, your coach is committing a serious anti-doping rule violation and various professional and ethical breaches.

Your coach is committing an anti-doping rule violation by trying to assist you in taking prohibited substance. Under article 5.11.6 of the ISSF Rules your coach could be banned from coaching for up to 4 years for doing what he is doing. Article 5.3 of the ISSF Rules (and article 2 of the Code) defines what constitutes an anti-doping

rule violation. At article 5.3.8 the definition includes: The administration or attempted administration to any athlete in-competition of any prohibited method or prohibited substance, or administration or attempted administration to any athlete out-of-competition of any prohibited method or any prohibited substance that is prohibited out-of-competition, or assisting, encouraging, aiding, abetting, covering up or any other type of complicity involving an anti-doping rule violation or any attempted anti-doping rule violation.

It may not be easy to do, but you must report your coach's conduct and denounce him (or her). There are far too many dedicated individuals who can and want to coach to have your team and your professional career be tainted by his or her actions and his or her threats. Make no mistake about it: denouncing an individual who is committing an anti-doping rule violation is well within your rights.

It must also be noted that your coach cannot arbitrarily "kick you off" the team. To even suggest that he would do so if you did not cheat is unthinkable. Most countries have regulatory mechanisms in place in order to ensure that their national federations are run ethically. There must be clear team-selection criteria and these must be followed.

More to the point, most National Anti-Doping Organizations (NADOs) or National Olympic Committees (NOCs) have regulatory mechanisms in place, as well as trained staff, to assist in dealing with situations like these, when possible anti-doping rule violation are being committed.

In fact, as mentioned above, NOCs hold the requirement to establish rules requiring each athlete support personnel who participates as coach, trainer, manager, team staff, official, medical or paramedical personnel in a competition or activity authorized or organized by a National Federation or one of its member organizations to agree to be bound by anti-doping rules in conformity with the Code as a condition of such participation.

Similarly, NADOs have the responsibility of vigorously pursuing all potential anti-doping rule violations within their jurisdiction including investigation into whether athlete support personnel or other persons may have been involved in each case of doping.

Your NOC and your NADO have the resources, the power, the legal requirement and the moral obligation to do something about this situation. Contact them. If they fail to assist you, contact WADA.

Finally, do not keep this to yourself. We encourage you to talk about this to someone you trust as soon as possible. Remember which ethical values have gotten you this far in sport and remember what is important to you. Be proud to take your responsibilities as an athlete and as a human being seriously.

**Be strong. Be courageous.**

**Be true to your sport and to yourself.**

## #2

***I think an athlete on my team is cheating. It is more than a suspicion, I saw him take some pills out of a plastic container, not a real pill bottle you know, like he was purposely hiding something. Then when I saw him take one, I asked him what it was and he just brushed me off and said it was vitamins. But his results are way better than they have been. So, a month later, I happened to see him taking the same pills again; luckily I don't think he saw me this time. I am pretty sure he is doping. What can I do?***

That fact that you are asking this question shows that you are respecting your own responsibilities and personal values as an athlete. Clearly, you are not sure what to do because he is a team-mate. But, in your sporting heart, you know that you must not allow him to continue cheating everyone.

Is it fair for him to compete and train and get better results than the rest of you who are competing clean? No, it is not.

Does it not bother you to know that by him winning, he is taking the glory and achievement from somebody who has worked for it and earned it the right way – the clean way? Yes, it does. Then you must do something about it!

It is never easy to denounce those around us, our friends or our team-mates. But remember this: your team-mate is not only cheating himself, he is cheating your whole team, your country and your sport in general. If he gets caught, he will personally suffer the consequences by being banned. Yet you, your team, your coaches and support personnel, your country, and the sport in general will also be affected. Perhaps this individual does not realize that everything he does affects others around him. But you can be assured that it does.

Ultimately, the decision to denounce your team-mate is yours. There are many ways by which you can do this. Contact your NOC or NADO. In fact, some NADO's, like UKAD and USADA (only to name a few),

already have confidential hotlines in place where athlete's share confidential information on coaches, support or medical staff, or athletes who may be cheating. If you feel you need to inform someone outside of your national circle, you can also contact the ISSF directly at [Barbara@issf-sports.org](mailto:Barbara@issf-sports.org).

In any event, regardless of which organisation you contact, so long as your suspicion is well-founded and not frivolous, fabricated or abusive, you should be confident that whoever receives the information will not divulge your name and take it seriously. Usually an investigation would follow. You might be asked to provide more information but it will be up to you whether or not you want to assist further. There are many ways the athlete in question may eventually be investigated and your identity would never be known. For example, if anti-doping organisations have reasons to suspect a specific athlete is using prohibited substances, they can test him or her during competition or out of competition in order to truly catch the athlete using the substance.

**The ISSF encourages you to fulfill your responsibility of stamping out doping by reporting this suspicious activity as soon as possible.**

## #3

***I have been taking prohibited substances for a while now. But I feel terrible about it. And to be honest, my results aren't really that much better. I did get a podium finish in a few events and that made everyone around me proud. But I don't think I can continue lying about this. I really don't want to be cast aside, I was encouraged by our medical trainer to try this stuff and he just kept giving it to me. Now, I think he may be doing to the same thing with other younger athletes on our team and I just don't know how to deal with the situation. Can you help me?***

True athletes compete clean for many powerful and personal reasons. Similarly, as individuals, athletes make decisions in the course of their career that are guided by many powerful and personal reasons.

Some of these decisions are good. Some of these decisions are bad. You are admitting to making a bad decision. It takes courage to do so and for that you are to be commended. However, this does not mean that your bad decision will not have its consequences. You will still be sanctioned if you admit to an anti-doping rule viola-