



WADA Athlete Committee Meeting April 3–4, 2008

WADA's Athlete Committee met at WADA headquarters in Montreal, Quebec (Canada), on April 3–4, 2008. The Committee covered several key topics.

I. Athlete Passport

The Committee stressed the need for progress to be advanced as quickly as possible in the development of the Athlete's Passport concept and its potential benefits to anti-doping efforts. Proving that the fight against doping is an ever-evolving endeavour that benefits from innovations in scientific thinking, the Athlete's Passport, based on the longitudinal monitoring of athlete biological parameters to detect abnormal profiles, is currently being explored for its potential to improve the detection of doping and the monitoring of athlete health. Initially conceived of by WADA in 2002, it gained further momentum as a result of questions raised during the 2006 Olympic Winter Games surrounding "no start" suspensions of athletes by their federations following health checks that reported high haemoglobin levels. Research and pilot projects conducted in the past several years have helped to contribute to the advancement of this anti-doping method targeting a long-term aspiration of universal application of the method. The Committee supported WADA's commitment to the Athlete's Passport and urged that WADA not be deterred by the stoppage of a pilot project in cycling and to actively pursue another partner more suitable for collaboration.

II. ADO Athlete Committees

The Committee urged all Sports Federations, National Anti-Doping Organizations (NADOs) and National Olympic Committees to establish effective Athlete Committees in order to better deliver feedback up the chain of command and ensure the athlete's voice is heard at all levels.

III. Testing

Committee members expressed concern that not all Anti-Doping Organizations (ADOs) are implementing testing programs that are both comprehensive and high-quality. They were especially concerned that out-of-competition testing programs be based on best practices in the field. These concerns were based on the fact that testing serves not only for detection of doping, but also as a deterrent, and if athletes do not believe that they will be tested, then there is a greater risk for doping. The Committee stressed that testing should be omnipresent so that clean athletes have great confidence in the anti-doping programs.

The Committee was provided an overview of testing under the World Anti-Doping Program, which clarified that WADA's role is that of a monitor and it is the responsibility of the ADOs (Sports Federations, NADOs, etc.) to implement comprehensive testing programs both in- and out-of-competition. As a result, several suggestions were offered by the Committee:

1. National sports federations (NFs) need to tell NADOs and WADA when they perform tests and when these tests are positive for doping. If all ADOs were to use ADAMS, then this concern would be taken care of automatically.

2. Athletes need to receive education on how testing is best done (i.e., quality), and they need the ability and opportunity to express their concerns if the testing is being done poorly; athletes should notify their federations and WADA about testing that is poorly done so that quality can be improved.
3. Doctors can assist WADA with their wealth of information in intelligence gathering. WADA might usefully develop better connections with sport physicians in order to have intimate knowledge of doping strategies, and therefore have better information for detection and deterrence.

The Committee was led through an article-by-article review of the **draft revised International Standard for Testing** and provided the following comments:

1. As a whole, the Committee supported the currently proposed provision in the standard as relates to whereabouts and missed tests, which include mutual recognition between Code signatories of whereabouts failures such as 'missed tests' and failures to provide or update whereabouts information. These failures may constitute an Anti-Doping Rule Violation where 3 such failures or 'strikes' are confirmed during an 18 month period for an individual athlete. Furthermore, mandatory whereabouts information must be provided by athletes who are identified in the Registered Testing Pool of their Anti-Doping Organization. This information shall include their mailing address, accommodation information, regular training activities, competition schedules and a daily 60 minute period in which a missed test may be declared should an athlete not be present for testing.
2. In relation to Registered Testing Pools (RTP) and whereabouts collection, Committee members suggested that more information be collected from athletes, even if there are limited resources to perform testing, in order to provide a deterrent to cheating.
3. Rules for mandatory inclusion in an RTP (e.g. return from retirement) should be standardized, especially for those who are at the top of their sport, to ensure that those at risk for doping are being tested.

Committee members discussed the importance of athletes on the ground being able to tell WADA if their sport or NADO is not implementing testing, or if it's not being done properly. Several ideas were discussed, including:

- Performing a survey on the spot/in-competition to learn more about how testing is being done;
- Using the outreach program to ask them questions about their experience with testing;
- Sending a survey through ADAMS, to those who are registered in ADAMS.

Committee members said that WADA cannot rely on the athletes coming to WADA with the information, but that WADA needs to go to them and give them the opportunity to share information. On the other hand, WADA pointed out that it has had to devote its formative years to the establishment and implementation of the anti-doping rules throughout sport and that quality control will be an important next step. The long-term goal is for all anti-doping organizations around the world to be perceived as equal in terms of quality.

IV. ADAMS

The Committee reiterated its position that all ADOs should be using ADAMS as the basis for their anti-doping programs as it will improve testing strategies and maximize the resources of all organizations involved. The Committee stressed that ADAMS is athlete-friendly, and therefore there should be no hesitation for implementing it.

V. Education

The Committee encouraged all stakeholders to use the model education and outreach programs developed and approved by WADA to ensure that correct information about the dangers and consequences of doping is being disseminated to all athletes in all sports and in all countries. The need for consistency of content and message was emphasized.

VI. Youth

When queried by WADA staff about what type of messages and delivery mechanisms should be used in the development of awareness programs targeting youth, Committee members offered several suggestions:

1. incorporate tools such as rap music;
2. at event-based programs, use the socialization opportunity for youth to connect with peers as a hook;
3. deliver the anti-doping message using both positive (inspiring stories of sports legends) and negative (risks of doping) themes;
4. there needs to be a campaign leading up to the games/events in order to broaden the reach of the messages;
5. the message is most effective when it is simple, informal and delivered face-to-face; and
6. possible themes/titles for anti-doping outreach to youth include: "First Step to the Future," "Stay True - Play True," and "Future Heroes."

VII. Improving Athlete Buy-In

Athletes were asked how ADOs can improve athlete buy-in in the anti-doping programs. The Committee suggested that there needs to be continued progress in standardization, that there needs to be an ongoing and consistent presence of testing, and that ADOs need to be proactive and take responsibility for communicating and sharing information with their own athletes on anti-doping.

VIII. Future Topics

Committee members said that they would like to learn more about the following topics at their next meeting: gene doping; the List and doping methods/technology (e.g. new swim suits); and doping control officer training.