



# ***ANTI-DOPING Q & A***

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## INTRODUCTION

Doping in Powerlifting is the burning issue of our sport. It has become a complicated political, moral and technical battlefield, but the IPF remains committed to winning the war on drugs.

Many lifters and officials find the now extensive rules and regulation on anti-doping difficult to keep up with. However as anti-doping work intensifies, it is necessary to close loopholes, allow for reasonable exceptions, make penalties fairer and so on, to create a balanced but effective system, even though this increases the complexity of the system.

Thus all those in Powerlifting owe it to themselves and their sport to remain abreast of the IPF anti-doping system. To help with this, following are some of the typical questions asked by athletes and others about IPF doping control. Answers are kept as simple as possible and reflect the changes to the system as it has evolved and as it stands as at July 2011.

However the following information is no substitute for close study of the full IPF Anti-Doping Rules. If in any doubt the athlete should rely on those Rules. The answers here are merely signposts to that complete document.

### Q1. WHAT IS DOPING?

Doping in sport is the practice of an athlete using, or attempting to use, one or more specified drugs which may enhance their athletic performance. The concept of doping extends from this to also include instances of the athlete not cooperating with doping control methods, trafficking drugs, possessing a performance enhancing drug or being involved with another athlete carrying out a doping practice.

### Q2. WHY IS DOPING PROHIBITED?

Doping is prohibited in Powerlifting and virtually all other sports as it is universally regarded as a practice which renders sport artificial. Sport is a social institution, based on the athletes' expression of their skill, native ability and dedication. If athletic contests are significantly determined by the arbitrary use of external chemical agents, then those ideals are rendered meaningless and the pedagogy and beauty of sport is lost. As well, many prohibited doping agents involve significant negative health effects, further undermining the value and purity of sport and exposing athletes to needless risk.

### Q3. HOW DOES THE IPF CONTROL DOPING?

The IPF has involved itself in the definitive world-wide anti-doping initiative, the **World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)**. The IPF follows the practices and regulations of WADA in terms of directly conducting drug-testing on its international standard athletes and imposing penalties if such tests reveal the presence of performance-enhancing drugs in the athlete, as well as regulating other doping practices such as trafficking, tampering, etc. In turn, the IPF requires its member nation federations to conduct similar national-level doping control programmes and oversees those national programmes. **The IPF Anti-Doping rules** set out the IPF anti-doping regulations. Click here for the IPF Anti-Doping Rules - [http://www.powerlifting-ipf.com/fileadmin/data/Anti-Doping/IPF\\_Anti\\_Doping\\_Rules\\_2011.pdf](http://www.powerlifting-ipf.com/fileadmin/data/Anti-Doping/IPF_Anti_Doping_Rules_2011.pdf)

## Q4. WHAT EXACTLY IS WADA? WHAT IS THE WADA CODE? AND WHAT IS AN ADO?

WADA is a world-wide agency founded back in 1999 by the resolve of many national governments. Its mission is to promote and coordinate the fight against doping around the World. WADA's guiding document is the **WADA Code**, a series of articles setting out its principles and methods. That *Code* is supplemented by many WADA technical documents. WADA's head office is in Montreal, Canada and it has branch offices around the world. More details about WADA are available on its website: <http://www.wada-ama.org>

The IPF is connected to WADA by being recognized as an **Anti-Doping Organization (ADO)**. That is, the IPF has been formally accepted by WADA as the only international Powerlifting body which has set up anti-doping rules and practices consistent with the WADA Code. This recognition of the IPF began in 2004 and WADA has since monitored the IPF's performance as an anti-doping body and has found the IPF to be code-compliant i.e. satisfactory in its rules and practices. It is this status as an ADO that gives the IPF its authority to apply anti-doping programmes to its athletes and to supervise national doping programmes.

## Q5. WHERE DO APPROVED LABORATORIES SIT IN THE ANTI-DOPING SYSTEM?

Analytical laboratories may be set up by governments, universities or private organizations and these offer the service of analysing the urine or blood samples taken from athletes, to determine if prohibited substances are present in a sample. Such laboratories will generally seek to be approved by WADA. That is WADA will examine the soundness of the laboratory's technical and other procedures; if satisfactory WADA will add a laboratory to its list of approved labs and ADOs, such as the IPF, may use that laboratory for the analysis of samples taken in drug-testing. For a list of approved laboratories see - <http://www.wada-ama.org/en/Science-Medicine/Anti-Doping-Laboratories/Accredited-Labs/>

## Q6. WHAT IS THE WADA PROHIBITED LIST?

WADA publishes a list, updated at the beginning of each year, of substances and methods that are prohibited in sport. This includes various anabolic agents, hormones, diuretics, stimulants, narcotics and other drugs and methods, including gene doping.

When an athlete's urine or blood sample is taken in a drug-testing process, that sample will be sent to a WADA-approved laboratory and the laboratory will report back to the ADO (i.e. the IPF) whether a substance on the prohibited list has been detected in the sample or a prohibited method (e.g. urine substitution) has been attempted on the sample. To view the Prohibited list see – [http://www.wada-ama.org/Documents/World\\_Anti-Doping\\_Program/WADP-Prohibited-list/To\\_be\\_effective/WADA\\_Prohibited\\_List\\_2011\\_EN.pdf](http://www.wada-ama.org/Documents/World_Anti-Doping_Program/WADP-Prohibited-list/To_be_effective/WADA_Prohibited_List_2011_EN.pdf)

Athletes should study the WADA Prohibited List and be quite familiar with its content, as the **principle of strict liability** applies i.e. if a laboratory reports to an ADO, such as the IPF, that a prohibited substance has been found in, or a prohibited method applied to, an athlete's urine or blood sample, that is an absolute finding, the athlete almost certainly cannot be excused for having that irregularity with their sample.

One question that is often asked is whether caffeine is on the Prohibited List. Caffeine was removed from the list some years ago, but remains a substance monitored by WADA, with the possibility of it again being added to the list if there is evidence of abuse of caffeine by athletes.

## Q7. BUT WHAT IF FOR GENUINELY MEDICAL REASONS I NEED TO TAKE A DRUG WHICH IS ON THE WADA PROHIBITED LIST?

The WADA and IPF anti-doping system allows for this, if the athlete can establish that there is a genuine and diagnosed medical need for this drug and that there is no reasonable therapeutic alternative to the use of the otherwise Prohibited Substance or Prohibited Method.

To do this, the athlete must make an application for a **Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE)** by means of completion of a standard form, which is submitted to the IPF Medical Committee. Note. Athletes included in the current IPF Registered Testing Pool (IPF RTP) at any given time must apply a TUE directly from the IPF Medical Committee - and all other lifters participating in an international Event may apply a TUE from their National Anti-Doping Agency (or equivalent), i.e. the IPF recognizes the *NADO-TUEs* for all other lifters but not for the lifters who are in the IPF RTP. Click here for an IPF TUE application form – [http://www.powerlifting-ipf.com/fileadmin/data/Anti-Doping/TUE\\_Application\\_Form\\_2011.docx](http://www.powerlifting-ipf.com/fileadmin/data/Anti-Doping/TUE_Application_Form_2011.docx)

The TUE form requires medical documentation of the athlete's need for the drug. In recent years efforts have been made to simplify the TUE process, but it remains an area where athletes must be vigilant. For example, all **beta-2 agonists** (including both optical isomers where relevant) are prohibited, **except salbutamol** (maximum 1600 micrograms over 24 hours) and **salmeterol** when taken by inhalation in accordance with the manufacturer's recommended therapeutic regime (see article 4.4.2 of the IPF Anti-Doping Rules). Where an athlete needs to use beta-2 agonists as a treatment for asthma he/she needs a TUE in advance (TUE application should be submitted no later than 30 days before the Athlete needs the approval, for instance an Event).

Where an athlete needs to use *salbutamol* or *salmeterol* in the way described above, he/she does not need to apply a TUE for the use, but must declare the use on the Doping Control Form at the time of testing.

### **Glucocorticosteroids:**

All glucocorticosteroids are prohibited when administered by oral, intravenous, intramuscular or rectal routes - and the use require a TUE in advance. Note. Glucocorticosteroids are prohibited only In-Competition. See pages 7 & 8 of the Prohibited List 2011.

There are no longer substances or methods on the Prohibited List that require a Declaration of Use (DOU) and therefore it is not necessary to file a Declaration of Use, see clause 9.1 of the International Standard for Therapeutic Use Exemptions (ISTUE) - see it here:

[http://www.wada-ama.org/Documents/World\\_Anti-Doping\\_Program/WADP-IS-TUE/2011/WADA\\_ISTUE\\_2011\\_EN.pdf](http://www.wada-ama.org/Documents/World_Anti-Doping_Program/WADP-IS-TUE/2011/WADA_ISTUE_2011_EN.pdf)

### **Retroactive TUE:**

No retroactive TUE will be granted if the requirements of clause 4.3 (see below) of the ISTUE are not met - meaning that any positive sample reported by the laboratory in these circumstances will be counted as an anti-doping rule violation!

- 4.3 An application for a TUE will not be considered for retroactive approval except in cases where:
- Emergency treatment or treatment of an acute medical condition was necessary, or
  - Due to exceptional circumstances, there was insufficient time or opportunity for an applicant to submit, or a TUEC to consider, an application prior to *Doping Control*.

Once again, it can't be emphasized too much that it is essential that athletes who use any medication which may be on the Prohibited List familiarize themselves with the List, the requirements of the IPF and WADA

TUE process and if still in doubt should contact the IPF Medical Committee. Remember any lack of vigilance on your part can end with you having a positive drug test result and serving a suspension!

## Q8. IS IT OK TO USE SPORT SUPPLEMENTS?

Many supplements are commercially available, often heavily advertised as being performance enhancers. These range from protein powders, to herbal products to various exotic substances. The claims made for those products almost invariably exceed their substantiated benefits.

From the anti-doping perspective, the danger with many commercial supplements is that they may be tainted with prohibited substances. Alarming high rates of such contamination have been documented in independent analyses of supplements purchased over the counter in health food shops or the like. The contamination can come about either inadvertently, through less than sterile conditions in the manufacturer's production facility, or deliberately, such as when a manufacturer laces a supplement with an anabolic steroid, to give it an effect it would not otherwise have. Remember, the **principle of strict liability** (see Question 6) applies in drug-testing and if an athlete has inadvertently ingested a prohibited substance via a supplement and that is detected in his or her sample, which will almost certainly stand as a doping offence.

Given that there is significant risk and little objective gain in using supplements, athletes are advised to avoid using these altogether.

## Q9. HOW DOES THE IPF CHOOSE WHO TO DRUG TEST?

Fundamentally, the IPF can test any athlete at any time, as long as that athlete is a member of an IPF-affiliated national federation.

More particularly, IPF testing can be divided into in-competition testing (ICT) and Out-of-Competition testing (OCT).

**ICT** is conducted at international competitions, such as when 2 or 3 or more athletes are selected immediately after competition in a particular weight class is completed.

**OCT** can be conducted at any time, any day of the year, at any location. To be able to carry out OCT, the IPF requires a number of high-level lifters to provide an ongoing log (called Whereabouts) of their daily location around the year, using WADA provided software called ADAMS (Anti-Doping Athlete Management System) – see Appendix 3 of the IPF Anti-Doping Rules. Also, as from 2011, the IPF requires most World Championships entrants to lodge a modified Whereabouts log with their preliminary entry. Further, the IPF can also use national federation information and other sources to locate athletes to conduct OCT.

For both ICT and OCT, selection of particular lifters for testing is not necessarily random. Selection is actually mostly targeted, on the basis of criteria suggested by WADA e.g. changes in performance, abnormalities in previous tests, behaviour indicating doping and so on – see Appendix 4 of the IPF Anti-Doping Rules.

In addition to the IPF ICT and OCT systems, each national federation is expected to conduct a national-level ICT and OCT programme and many nations do so with government assistance.

## Q10. WHAT DO I ACTUALLY GO THROUGH IF I'M SELECTED FOR A DRUG TEST?

Appendix 4 of the IPF Anti-Doping Rules gives a sense of the process of the conduct of a drug test. Essentially, be it at a competition or out of competition (such as at your home or training venue), you will be approached by the **Drug Control Officer (DCO)**, informed that you have been selected for a drug test and given a written notification of that, which you will be asked to sign. From there you will be accompanied by a **Chaperone** and/or the DCO until you attend at the testing facility. A representative you choose may also accompany you through this process.

At the testing facility you will be called on to provide a urine and/or blood sample, with a Chaperone of the same gender observing the process. Then, with you observing, the sample will be split into two (the **A and B samples**) and sealed into separate, secure containers and you will be asked to sign that you have been satisfied with the sample collection process. You will also be asked to declare any medications or supplements you may have taken in the preceding 7 days.

From there you will be excused and the sealed samples will be transported in conditions of medical-standard security to the WADA accredited laboratory. There sample analysis will be carried out and in due course the IPF and then yourself will be notified of the result.

As Appendix 4 indicates, the full process is more complex than in this simple description and involves many technical features to ensure the integrity of drug-testing. Suffice to say that this process has been refined over some decades now and is very sound indeed.

## Q11. WHAT HAPPENS IF I DO RECORD A POSITIVE DRUG TEST RESULT?

The IPF Anti-Doping Rules set out a process for the careful handling of seemingly positive drug test results. These are described mostly in Articles 7 and 8 of the Rules.

In essence, if a sample result is received from a laboratory which has been determined by that lab to be an “**adverse analytical finding**”, the first step is for the IPF Disciplinary Committee to check whether the athlete has a TUE (previously lodged) which might explain the finding, or whether there might be some other departure from normal standards in the laboratory which could explain the abnormal result. If that first examination does not clear up the adverse finding, the lifter is notified and allowed the option of having the second half of his or her sample (the B sample) analyzed, with the athlete and/or their representative allowed to be present at that analysis. If the B analysis confirms the A analysis (or the A analysis is accepted due to the athlete not making a B analysis request), the athlete, his or her national federation and WADA are notified and also the athlete is usually provisionally suspended by the IPF (after allowing for a provisional hearing on the matter).

After that, the case will be referred to the IPF Doping Hearing Panel (DHP). The DHP will appoint three independent persons, at least one of whom is a lawyer, who will conduct a hearing on the case. In such a hearing, the athlete has the right to be represented, to respond to the alleged violation, to present evidence and to question witnesses. Subsequent to the hearing the DHP will present its decision in writing, that including the penalty to be applied.

Cases where the alleged violation does not involve an adverse test sample, such as tampering or possession, follow a similar progression to the above, although with the IPF Disciplinary Committee conducting a more wide-ranging investigation.

## **Q12. WHAT PENALTIES CAN APPLY IF I AM ULTIMATELY FOUND TO HAVE COMMITTED AN ANTI-DOPING VIOLATION?**

For many years, penalties for anti-doping violations were somewhat standard, often being 2 years suspension for a first offence and life for a second offence.

However now the penalties for anti-doping violations are more complex and flexible. Generally, a positive drug test result for an anabolic agent; possession of same, or like offences, will still have a benchmark penalties of two years for first and life suspensions for second offences. However aggravating or mitigating circumstances may alter such penalties e.g. the athlete may be allowed a reduced penalty if they assist in establishing anti-doping violations by others. On the other hand, offences such as trafficking now attract penalties of a minimum of four years suspension and a maximum of life for first offences.

Note also that suspension periods apply to involvement by the athlete in competition, coaching, officiating or the like, at any level, be it international, national or local. However during a period of suspension the athlete must remain available for testing. If the athlete does participate in a competition during his or her suspension period, their suspension time can start over again.

Article 10 of the IPF Anti-Doping Rules sets out the parameters for anti-doping violation penalties and presents examples. This should make salutary reading for IPF athletes and the best advice is to avoid any involvement at all with illicit substances!

## **Q13. IF I WAS COMING BACK FROM A SUSPENSION, WOULD ANY CONDITIONS APPLY?**

Yes. Article 10.11 of the IPF Anti-Doping Rules sets this out. Firstly, during the period of suspension the athlete must remain available for OCT by the IPF and thus could be tested any number of times. Article 10.11 also imposes a second requirement, that the IPF test the athlete at least once just prior to the end of their suspension time.

Further, as with almost all aspects of the IPF international anti-doping programme, it is expected that National Powerlifting Federations apply similar rules in their domestic programmes. So if an athlete was suspended on the basis of a national anti-doping offence, they would similarly have to stay a member of the national federation and thus testable for the period of suspension and also be tested at least once at the end of the suspension time.

## **Q14. I'VE HEARD THAT ATHLETES CAN BEAT TESTING BY USING TESTOSTERONE INSTEAD OF ANABOLIC STEROIDS. IS THAT TRUE?**

In the WADA Prohibited List testosterone is a prohibited substance, in the category Anabolic Agents. And just like anabolic steroids, testosterone use can be detected by analysis of a urine sample. In the past complicated long-term analyses of a lifter's natural hormones levels and changes in those were carried out to assess artificial testosterone use, but this has largely been replaced by direct methods and so injection, patch or inhalation of testosterone can be well detected.



## **Q15. IF I DECIDE TO RETIRE FROM POWERLIFTING HOW DO I END TESTING ON MYSELF?**

If an athlete wishes to retire from Powerlifting, he or she needs to make a formal, written declaration of this to the IPF if they are on the IPF's RTP list (see Question 9) or if they are currently subject to proceedings for an anti-doping violation or they are serving a period of suspension.

Article 5.6 of the IPF Anti-Doping Rules sets out the basic procedures for retirement and also for comeback if an athlete formally retires and then later decides to again compete. In essence, to retire you should give written notice to the IPF and your retirement date is the date that notice is received. Your involvement in the anti-doping programme would essentially cease at that point. However there are provisions elsewhere in the Rules such that the hearing process for an alleged anti-doping violation cannot be thwarted by retirement, whilst a period of suspension effectively goes on hold if the suspended athlete retires i.e. the suspension clock stops and the time remaining on the suspension stands, to be served if and when the athlete comes back.

If a retired athlete wishes to come back to competition he or she must give written notice of that to the IPF. From the date that notification is received, the athlete must wait 6 months before they can again compete and in that time they are subject to OCT.

Again, those rules on retirement and come back essentially apply to international level athletes, who are on the IPF's RTP or involved in violations or suspensions. However it is also the case that national federations and agencies have similar rules which apply to national-level athletes and you should check these with your federation.

## **Q16. THIS IS A TOUGH SYSTEM. HOW LONG WILL THIS CONTINUE?**

Forever. Unfortunately there is no sign of any method for preventing drug use in sport without a system of surveillance, detection, enforcement and sanctioning. Virtually all sports federations and governing bodies around the world condemn the use of drugs as also do, on the whole, governments and the public. Hence the impetus will remain for creating an even more sophisticated and effective anti-doping system in sport and the IPF will be a significant participant in that.

***Robert Wilks***

*IPF Anti-Doping Commission*

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